College of Science
Texas State University-San Marcos

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SPECTRUM

UNIVERSITY MOURNS LOSS OF DEAN OF SCIENCE

Stanley Israel, dean of the College of Science at Texas State since September 1997, died suddenly on November 2, 2003 apparently of a heart attack. He was 60.

A polymer chemist and director-at-large of the American Chemical Society, Israel will be missed by all who knew him. "Under Dr. Israel's leadership, the College of Science has responded to many critical needs. He was an outstanding leader and educator," said Dr. Robert Gratz, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Texas State. "Stan was an energetic, inspiring leader for our society and a well-respected polymer chemist. His untimely passing leaves a big void at ACS as well as at Texas State University-San Marcos," says Peter J. Stang, professor of chemistry at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, and editor of the Journal of the American Chemical Society.

After receiving a B.S. degree in chemistry from Parsons College/ University of Iowa, Fairfield, in 1965, Israel earned his Ph.D. in physical organic chemistry from Lowell Technological Institute, Lowell, Mass., in 1970. He began his professional career in 1968 at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, where he stayed for the next 29 years. He served as head of the chemistry department from 1992 to 1997. He then became dean of the College of Science at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University). He also acted as visiting professor at the University of Utah. Besides his directorship at ACS, Israel was very active in the ACS Division of Polymer Chemistry, serving as its chair in 1989 and had served as the editor of Polymer Preprints, the divisions scientific journal, since 2000. He was a founder of the division's POLYED education committee.

Israel's recent research efforts included pioneering the techniques of direct pyrolysis-chemical ionization mass spectrometry to study the reactions and mechanisms of thermal decomposition of polymers, the identification and characterization of materials by high-temperature pyrolysis, and surface characterization of fibers by laser contact angle goniometry. In addition, Israel co-founded Optimers Inc., Lowell, which licenses a family of soft contact lens materials to Bausch and Lomb, and Rochal Industries, Boca Raton, Fla, which licensed wound dressing materials to 3M.

Widely known professionally, Israel also impressed everyone with his demeanor as well as his scholarship. "He couldn't stand the status quo," said Pat Cassidy, associate vice president for academic affairs at Texas State. He made the move to Texas State because he wanted to help build the school's science programs, Cassidy said. Under Israel's leadership, the college added a bachelor's program in biochemistry and a doctoral program in aquatic resources. He led ongoing efforts to establish an engineering department and pushed initiatives to attract more minority students to math and science fields. "He was a firm believer in getting people educated, particularly in areas where they could really go out and do things to benefit society," said James Irvin, chairman of the chemistry department at Texas State. Said Texas State's President Denise Trauth, "He was a wonderful man and a vital part of our academic community, devoted to education and to encouraging young people to pursue careers in science and technology. We are deeply saddened by his passing. Texas State will miss him." Memorial contributions can be made to the Stanley C. Israel Memorial Fund in care of the Texas State University-San Marcos Development Foundation, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666, Attention: Dr. Kitty-Sue Schlink.

MATHWORKS

Mathworks is a center for innovation in mathematics education at Texas State University. Discovery learning for young students is woven into a unique student-teacher training program using Japanese Lesson Study. Summer math camps and after school programs include undergraduate counselors mentored by more experienced math teachers, who themselves are being trained as teacher-leaders for their districts. Developing students' natural math abilities earlier is critical to their success in algebra and more advanced math. Mathworks programs are raising the level of mathematics for all students, while developing our leaders for the 21st century.

In 2003, Honors Summer Math Camp (HSMC) students participated in the Siemens-Westinghouse competition. We are excited to announce that nine students were semi-finalists: six regional finalists and three national finalists. Araceli Fernandez, Yiduo "David" Wang, and Hannah Chung made up the national finalist team. Their project consists of mathematical proofs exploring the structure and properties of eccentric graphs that can be constructed from block graphs and trees, two related classes of graphs. The team began their research at the Mathworks Honors Summer Math Camp at Texas State University. The HSMC students were mentored by Diana Gu and Jian Shen, professors of mathematics at Texas State. The Siemens Foundation provides more than $1 million in college scholarships and awards each year for talented high school students in the United States. Its signature programs, the Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science & Technology and the Siemens Awards for Advanced Placement, reward exceptional achievement in science, math, and technology.

Mathworks hosted a Fall 2003 Conference with special guests Dr. Gail Burrill, and Dr. Nadina Duran-Hutchings. Dr. Burrill, a mathematics professor at Michigan State University and past president of NCTM, presented a lesson to teachers at Pearce Middle School as part of our teacher training program and gave a colloquium at Texas State on teacher preparation and development. Dr. Duran-Hutchings, a mathematics professor at Texas A&M Corpus Christi, illustrated how technology can be used in the math classroom. Representatives from UT Brownsville, UT Pan American, McAllen ISD, and Austin ISD attended.

In Spring 2004, three school districts will begin after school math programs for their students in Brownsville, Austin, and San Marcos. Beginning this summer, Mathworks will train teachers from districts in central Texas and the Rio Grande Valley.

SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDIES RELATED TO THE EDWARDS AQUIFER

The San Antonio Conservation Society was formed in 1924 to preserve and encourage preservation of cultural and natural resources that relate to the history of Texas. From the Native Americans that settled along the prolific springs of the Edwards Aquifer to the Colonial Spanish Mission system that developed along the San Antonio River, the agricultural community and the new 1.6 million people that depend on water resources to fuel the livelihoods, the cultural history of Texas and in particular, central Texas, begins and ends with the regions water resources.

One of the San Antonio Conservation Society's first efforts was to save the San Antonio River Bend in downtown San Antonio and the Spanish Colonial Missions located along the San Antonio River. The San Antonio Conservation Society recognizes the importance of water and water resources to the history and future of San Antonio and Texas. To this end the San Antonio Conservation Society wishes to fund a competitive scholarship in the amount of $2,500 for graduate studies of students pursuing research and a career in Aquatic Resources. This will specifically fund thesis projects that relate to the Edwards Aquifer or its springs. The funds from the scholarship can be used to purchase research equipment and supplies, travel for research or professional meetings, or for books or other supplies needed for the students research or course work. Once these needs ar met, the funds may be used for tuition or other University fees. For more information regarding eligibility, selection, and the application process, contact Dr. Glenn Longley at (512) 245-3581.

FEATURING FACULTY

Biology

Dr. Gary Aron was recently elected Treasurer of the Texas Branch of the American Society for Microbiology. **Dr. John Baccus** will serve as the Biology Dept. Associate Chair for undergraduate matters. Dr. Baccus received a B.S. (1966) and a M.S. in Biology (1968) from Midwestern State University and a Ph. D. (1971) from the University of North Texas. He served as an associate professor, Department of Biology chair and chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics at Wiley College before coming to Texas State University in 1975. He served as the acting chairperson in 1989. He is a professor of Biology and Director of the Wildlife Ecology Program. **Dr. Joe Koke** will serve as the Biology Dept. Associate Chair for graduate matters. Dr. Koke received a B.S. (1966) and a M.S. (1968) from the University of Oregon, and a Ph. D. (1971) from the University of Alberta. He was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship in Medicine (Cardiology) at the University of Wisconsin before joining the faculty at Texas State University in 1978. He is a professor of Biology and Director of the Integrative Microscopic Facility. The Department of Biology faculty members are pleased to have two such dedicated and qualified individuals serving in these positions. **Dr. Michael Forstner** was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor as of September, 2003. In June 2003, **Dr. Dana Garcia**, former grad student Shannon Weigum, and **Dr. Joe Koke** had a confocal micrograph published on the cover of Brain Research. This is the third Brain Research cover from the laboratories of Drs. Garcia and Koke in the last two years. Dr. Koke, on the basis of work done by Shannon Weigum and in collaboration with Dana Garcia, Tim Raabe, and Nick Christodoulides, published the following paper in BMC Neuroscience Journal 2003 4:6: Discrete Nuclear Structures in Actively Growing Neuroblastoma Cells are Revealed by Antibodies Raised Against Phosphorylated Neurofilament Proteins. **Dr. Bob McLean** was recognized in the 18th Edition of Who's Who in the World and the 57th Edition of Who's Who in America. Dr. McLean's experiment that was aboard the Columbia survived the breakup of the space shuttle and he is currently investigating the microorganizms that survived the disaster.

Chemistry

Dr. Michael Blanda is serving as a Presidential Fellow this year, compiling planning information that will be used to develop a proposal for a school of engineering. Dr. Blanda was promoted to Full Professor as of September, 2003. **Dr. Walter Rudzinski** participated in an NSF Review Panel on New Technologies for the Environment on June 23, 2003 in Arlington, VA. Dr. Rudzinski and Vidja Rai presented a poster entitled "Identification of Polyaromatic Sulfur Heterocycles Using Post-column Addition of Tropylium and Tandem Mass Spectrometry" on October 16, 2003 at the 20th Montreaux Symposium in Savannah, Georgia. **Dr. Linette Watkins** received the 2003 Presidential Award for Excellence in Service. She was also received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor as of September, 2003.

Computer Science

Dr. Xiao Chen has become an associate editor of IASTED International Journal of Computers and Applications. She presented a paper titled "Algorithms for Multiple IP Address Lookups" at the 15th IASTED International Conference on Parallel and Distributed Computing and Systems and served as a session chair. Before that, she presented a paper titled "A Quorum-Based Fault-Tolerant Method for Distributed Mutual Exclusion" at the 7th Joint Conference on Information Sciences and served as a session chair at the conference.

Mathematics

Dr. Thomas Keller was invited to visit the University of the Basque Country in Spain and gave a colloquium talk on June 25, 2003. He also attended the MAA Mathfest 2003 in Boulder, Colorado. The trip was paid for by the "Program for Excellence in Teaching and Learning" which he had completed in May 2003. Dr. Keller and his wife recently became the proud parents to a son, Marco Keller. **Dr. Terence McCabe** received the 2003 Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching. **Dr. Susan Morey** and Don Wallace welcome a new son, William.

Physics

Dr. Wilhelmus (Wim) Geerts received tenure and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor as of September, 2003. **Dr. Don Olson** received the 2003 Presidential Award for Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activities.

Technology

Dr. Karl Stephan received tenure as of September, 2003.

Dr. Winek's Faculty Development Leave

Dr. Gary Winek, Department of Technology, spent his Spring 2003 Development Leave working in the Department of Manufacturing Technology & Construction Management at Colorado State University (CSU). There he attempted to establish scholarly/research joint ventures with faculty at CSU. He is working with Dr. James Folkestad at CSU on two presentations and one article researching how Rapid Prototyping can be used with existing and emerging Architectural and Construction specific three-dimensional Computer Aided Design software for construction applications in planning and scheduling. Another goal was to become an American Council on Construction Education certified program evaluator. This knowledge will be helpful when the rapidly growing Construction Program at Texas State seeks accreditation in the future. Dr. Winek completed the classroom portion of the program and in March of 2004 he will complete the field portion of the program by serving as an evaluator in training at Eastern Kentucky University as this institution seeks re-accreditation. While at CSU, he was able to update his technical knowledge by attending conferences and visiting selected classes to gain knowledge in the areas of Green/Sustainable Building, construction /contract law, and other advanced design concepts.

Endangered Asian Turtles

This is a bad time for turtles. In a hundred million years of existence, only the great extinctions at the end of the Cretaceous Period have effected as great a loss of diversity as the modern extinctions for this group. Foremost, habitat losses and anthropogenic impacts are extirpating local populations and fragmenting the range for nearly all species. Unfortunately, only a few long-term studies on wild populations of turtles have been completed, making the work by the researchers in the Texas State University, Department of Biology especially relevant.

The critical necessity of gathering data on wild populations of turtles has become anything but the slow plodding process erroneously associated with these animals. Indeed, in the past decade more turtle species have been added to worldwide endangered species lists than virtually any other vertebrate group. While the loss of amphibian diversity has become a well known crisis, the crisis in turtles is only now gaining a wide appreciation in scientific and public circles.

The Department of Biology has several faculty working with these animals. Dr. Francis Rose is a renowned expert on the Texas tortoise, a threatened species in our state, and leads the decade long investigation of the turtles in Spring lake and the San Marcos river. Drs. Manning and Simpson are long-term contributors to that project. All have worked with graduate students on projects ranging from population demographics to commensal ecology for the turtle species in the San Marcos and Blanco river systems. Their foresight in beginning these investigations over a decade ago is making valuable contributions to the current needs of researchers around the world. Dr. Forstner, also a faculty member in the Department of Biology, is active in turtle conservation in other areas of the state, U.S., and abroad. He is a Steering committee member for the Turtle Survival Alliance of the IUCN and the Taxon Management Group coordinator for several rare turtle species. Currently, he has two grants examining rare Texas river turtles and continues conservation work with taxa in Florida, Mexico, and Asia.

Taken together these researchers are able to compare the status of threatened or endangered taxa to the long-term dataset from the healthy population in Spring Lake and the local rivers. The most important application of their results is to enable predictive and effective management decisions for these species. The goal is to enable recovery and prevent extirpation or even extinction of any additional species in the wild.

Spotlight on Students

The Math Club and Pi Mu Epsilon sponsored a paper titled "Synopsis on Escher Tessellations and Connections with Measurement Geometry," at the Ninth Annual MAES Science Extravaganza on March 1, 2003. The paper was co-presented by Dr. John Edgell, Jr. a mathematics professor at Texas State University along with Ryan Martinets, a graduate mathematics student. This presentation to groups of fifth and sixth graders provided a hands-on introduction to the mathematical concepts of tessellations and moebius strips. Students created their own moebius strips and investigated the artwork of M.C. Escher to become more familiar with these rather complex mathematical concepts.

In the summer of 2003 a group of graduate students from the mathematics department worked to improve an existing mathematical theorem. Dr. Hazelwood, professor of mathematics at Texas State University, assisted the following graduate students: Lingguo Bu, Shane Bryan, Joshua Buckner, Brent Hamilton, Travis Knodel and Ryan Martinets. Their paper titled "Parallel Implementation of the AKS Algorithm," discusses the task of creating a computer program that can determine whether a number is prime. The program they created uses parallel processing to modify previous programs with a similar purpose. The students plan to present their results at a Mathematics Department Colloquium sometime in the spring of 2004.

EARTH FRIENDLY EARTHWORMS

Dr. Joe Koke, a cell biologist and professor Biology at Texas State and Dr. Bob McLean, a microbiologist and associate professor of Biology at Texas state are hoping to team up to study the environmental implications of earthworms.

Earthworms play an important role in processing organic matter and cycling of nutrients in soils throughout the world. The better-known processing occurs in the gut, in which a relatively transient microbial population contributes to digestive processes. A less familiar association occurs in paired excretory organs in each segment of the worm, found to contain a dense, stable culture of apparently beneficial bacteria. Thirty species of earthworms found in Europe, Asia, Africa and America harbor these rod-shaped gram negative bacteria in the same region of their nephridia, the ampulla. Recent results show that different species of worms harbor distinct strains of the bacteria.

Koke and McLean hypothesize that this is a beneficial association in which the bacteria assist in waste transformation and elimination, and this association could provide a ³platform² upon which an earthworm/bacterial soil decontamination system might be developed.

Potential water supplies amenable to earthworm remediation include soil contaminated by in-ground, leaky gasoline storage tanks and other hydrocarbon spills, abandoned and existing oil fields, and perhaps “bad water” zones such as the area SE of San Marcos where ground water is contaminated by underground hydrocarbons.

Dr. Koke has expertise in confocal and electron microscopy necessary for the cellular aspects of this study. Dr. McLean will bring the necessary expertise in microbiological techniques, including study of quorum sensing and unique bacterial metabolic pathways. Dr. Seana Davidson at the University of Washington in Seattle will serve as a consultant and will provide needed assistance for the proposed study.

MY SUMMER AT LAWRENCE LIVERMORE NATIONAL LABORATORY

Anne H. Ngu, Department of Computer Science

I was offered a summer Faculty Fellowship with the Data Science Group at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) during the months of June-August 2003. It was a wonderful experience to be there at the summer because of their very well established summer program. Each summer, LLNL hosts approximately 400 students and faculty. The summer fellowships are usually advertised in the month of January or February at the LLNL official website. All faculty are housed in one single building and are given big and nice offices with the computer equipment of their choice. Each day during the summer months, there are seminars being presented by scientists from the laboratory or eminent researchers within USA or around the world. The seminars that I found particularly interesting are, “Querying Sensor Networks”, “An Integrated System to Surveillance Prediction and Optimized Response to a National Crisis”, and “Computer Network Mapping for Vulnerability Assessment”.

During my visit, I spent most of my time working with Terence Critchlow, the leader of Data Science Group on automatic discovery and intelligent interaction with bioinformatics data sources. I first catalogued the different characteristics of interaction pattern for BLAST bioinformatics data sources. Two algorithms are implemented for identifying the common interaction patterns. Three shortcomings are identified in the first heuristics based algorithm. A second more robust and efficient algorithm based on computing page difference (PageDiff) between two HTML pages are proposed. A set of experiments is conducted which demonstrated that PageDiff approach out performs heuristics by a factor of four. Integrating my PageDiff algorithm with the current LLNL bioinformatics classifier resulted in around 10% increase in the number of correctly identified sources. LLNL has kindly let me have a binary version of the software for continuous collaboration. I am looking forward to work with biologists to validate the usefulness of this system.

ALUMNI ANNOUNCEMENTS

1970

Jim Burris (BS Chemistry) is currently a criminalist in the toxicology section at the Texas Department of Public Safety.

1990

Rodney Rohde (BS Microbiology, and 1992 MS Biology), currently on the faculty at Texas State**,** served as an invited faculty member for the National Laboratory Training Network workshop entitled "Molecular Diagnostic Techniques for the Public Health Laboratory" October 20-24 in Richmond, CA. Distinguished faculty from around the country provided lectures and "hands-on" laboratory projects with respect to cutting edge molecular technology in the clinical laboratory, including rapid identification of suspected bioterrorism agents.

1995

Karl Griswold (BS Chemistry) is pursuing a Ph.D. in the Iverson/Georgiou Laboratories at UT-Austin. **Tina (Smeal) Hernandez (BS Chemistry)** is a Lead Engineer at ThermoElectron Corporation.

1996

Katharina Hathaway (BS Chemistry) completed medical school and residency and has just begun a new position at Fort Hood.

1997

David Zamora (MS Biology) is currently a Ph.D. student at Oregon Health Science University in Portland, where he is working on uveitis, a disease of the eye. This spring he will be finishing his dissertation and welcoming a new baby.

2000

Alfredo Gonzalez III (MS Biology) is currently teaching at TAMIU in an adjunct faculty position, while also starting his own business as a registered representative of an insurance company. He has recently been invited to write a series of quizzes for a new physiology textbook. **Amanda (Hilburn) Parks (BS Biology)** will complete her Doctorates of Pharmacy from UT-Austin in May, 2004 and is currently on experiential rotations.

2001

Jamie Dixon (MS Biology) is currently employed at A. E. Woods State Fish Hatchery in San Marcos, Texas, where he is engaged in various projects including using molecular markers to track stocked fishes.

2002

Greyhm Furst (BS Chemistry) is currently a graduate research assistant, pursuing a Ph.D. in Chemical Physics at UT-Austin.

INTEGRATING INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES INTO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Dr. Joyce Fischer and Dr. Sharon Gronberg have been invited to be presenters at the SITE 2004 Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) is an international association of individual teacher educators, and affiliated organizations of teacher educators in all disciplines, who are interested in the creation and dissemination of knowledge about the use of information technology in teacher education and faculty/staff development. The Society seeks to promote research, scholarship, collaboration, exchange, and support among its membership. SITE is the only organization that has as its sole focus the integration of instructional technologies into teacher education programs.

Dr. Fischer will present a paper entitled, "A Qualitative Study Assessing the Difficulty of Middle School Pre-service Teachers Related to Two Problem Solving Processes". The study examines the ability of pre-service middle school teachers to solve a problem of two types: a formulaic problem based on patterns and memorization or a problem involving analytical skills and abilities.

Dr. Gronberg will present a poster session on "Inquiry Based Curriculum for Middle School Teacher Preparation". The poster session is based on the two NSF grants received by the Math Department which address shortages in middle school mathematics teachers. One of the grants developed the certification program for pre-service middle school teachers. The other grant developed a Master's degree in Middle School Mathematics Teaching which is intended to prepare teachers who are not certified in mathematics, to become middle school math teachers. The content in these courses is delivered in a sequence of inquiry labs, using a hands-on approach, incorporating the use of technology.

First Large Exhibit Opens in Foyer of New Mitte Complex

With the opening of the Mitte Complex, a number of new and exciting opportunities have come about. The south wing of the complex, called the roy F. Mitte Wing, includes a foyer that is two stories tall and has an eighteen foot tall water wall fountain. This foyer was designed to have many special displays that illustrate a number of interesting aspects of the science, technology, and engineering fields. While designing the building, the foyer was to include small interative displays, study areas, an electronic message board, and large rotating exhibits. In late October, our first large exhibit was put on display.

In cooperation with the Technology Department, Mr. And Mrs. Dick Burdick and Mr. And Mrs. Ken Downing were kind enough to loan us a vehicle from their impressive collection of automobiles. The vehicle is a 1918 Milburn electric. It is part of the vintage utomobile collection owned by Burdick and Downing and is generally kept at the Central Texas Museum of Automotive History in Rosanky, Texas. The antique vehicle has brought many visitors to our building, which we are quite happy about. Future plans are to rotate vehicles on a regular basis. We thank the Burdicks and Downings for sharing part of their prime collection of vehicles with us, and we look forward to a long lasting relationship with them on this and many more cooperative projects.

Joseph E. Winek Endowed Construction Scholarship

Dorothea Winek and her four sons, including Dr. Gary Winek who teaches in the Department of Technology, donated $30,000 to establish the Joseph E. Winek Endowed Construction Scholarship. This endowment was established during the Fall 2003 semester, in memory of Joseph Winek, who was Dorothea's husband and Gary's father. Joseph passed away at the age of 83, on September 26, 2001.

The endowment was created to provide a constant source of scholarship money to attract the best and brightest freshmen interested in entering the Construction Program offered through the Department of Technology. The scholarship money generated by the endowment will be first awarded during the Fall 2004 semester. Individuals interested in contributing money to this endowment can contact Dr. Kitty-Sue Schlink at (512) 245-1722 or by email at kitty-sue@txstate.edu.

New Degree Program Update

Mathematics-New Master's Degree Program in Industrial Math

The department has completed the process of adding a Master's Degree Program in Industrial Mathematics: Graduates from this program will be provided with the knowledge and skills demanded by industry and business.

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Dr. Stanley C. Israel—Dean, College of Science Barbara Pascoe--Newsletter Editor

New Faculty in Science

Dr. Bahram Asiabanpour joined the Technology Department in Fall 2003 as a faculty member in the Manufacturing Engineering program. He received a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles in Fall 2003. His doctoral thesis involved the optimization of a new rapid prototyping process called "Selective Inhibition of Sintering process." He also has a BS and MS in Industrial Engineering from the Sharif University of Technology in Iran. Mr. Asiabanpour has published books on Computer Aided Design and Robotics. He presented at several prestigious engineering conferences in the U.S. and Iran.

Dr. Michael Huston comes to Texas State after a twenty-year career at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Prior to coming to Oak Ridge, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, for experimental research on forest succession in Costa Rica, and completed his undergraduate career at Deep Springs College in California and Grinnell College in Iowa. Dr. Huston is best know for his work on species diversity, which began early in his graduate career with a theoretical paper that has now been cited over 1000 times. His recent research involves the interaction of hydrology with ecological processes and patterns, the invasions of exotic plant species, global patterns of plant productivity and diversity, and the statistical analysis of ecological experiments. Dr. Huston is married to Mary Ann McBride Huston, originally from Fort Worth, who works as a hospital chaplain and teaches the Education for Ministry theological studies course of the Episcopal Church. They have two children, Ann, 16, and Thomas, 12.