

The Battalion

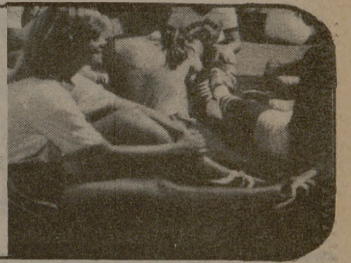
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MSC Council allows use of grounds

By LIZ NEWLIN
Battalion Staff

Now you may walk on the grass. According to Memorial Student Center Council policy approved Thursday night, the use of MSC grounds "will not be discouraged." The grass has been unofficially memorialized for several years.

Wayne Stark, MSC director, said the tradition of not walking on the grass was "born and bred in the Corps" many years ago. The Texas A&M University Board of Regents has never memorialized the grass, although the MSC building is an official memorial. The unofficial tradition became a "terrible embarrassment" when students rudely told visitors to stay off the grounds, Stark said.

The council rejected a request by the Texas A&M Student Government to designate the grass in the University Center a "memorial to those men of A&M who have given their lives in combat."

In response to the failure of the request, student body president Robert Harvey said the Student Senate will either present the issue to students in a referendum or appeal to a higher level of administration.

"The students will tell them (the Council) they don't create traditions, and they don't have traditions, either," Harvey said. The Student Senate meets in regular session Nov. 10.

The council also approved a recommendation to President Jarvis Miller to notify the student body and faculty of the policy.

Policy regarding the MSC grass has not been clear. The MSC Handbook said use of the grounds "will be left to the discretion of the individual." Minutes from a March, 1974, council meeting stated that walking or using the grounds would be discouraged.

Dr. Rod O'Connor, professor of chemistry and faculty representative to the council, said he would like the grass to be memorialized, but he voted for the policy. "Realistically, I think this will work without abuse. The other cannot work."

Other council members agreed during the hour-long discussion that enforcing a policy to keep students off the grass would be hard to enforce.

The council approved \$2,500 for professional fees requested by the Recreation Committee. Experts in billiards, frisbee and bridge will be financed through these funds.

A spring-break trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Political Forum, was okayed in the two-and-a-half hour meeting. Interviews for at least 37 openings on the trip will be available for all interested Texas A&M students. Students will pay about \$290 for the trip, said Paul Haensly, committee chairman.

Lack of information on use of soft drink vending machines and ways to camouflage them prompted the council to table a recommendation to move two vending machines in the MSC. The MSC Building Studies committee recommended "that the two vending machines located on the first floor near the elevators (and Post Office) be moved to the vending location near the main desk. This is an effort to consolidate all the vending machines in one location that was designed for that intent."

Harvey said students have "no desire to consolidate Coke machines." Several council

members noted that students use the machines and that they are located in a heavy traffic area.

MSC and Association of Former Students employees also use the machines, Johnnie Taylor, council former student representative, said.

Dr. Arnold Vedlitz, faculty representative and assistant professor of political science, suggested camouflaging the machines to make them less of an "eyesore." The recommendation will probably be considered at the council's next meeting, Nov. 14.

Robert Redford, actor and environmentalist, was approved along with six other Great Issues speakers. The council also approved four Political Forum speakers and four SCONA speakers. A decision to accept Dr. Timothy Leary, requested by Great Issues, was tabled pending further information.

A resolution calling for food service reserved by table in the Tower Dining Room received no action.

MSC director Stark reported that MSC committees may have to pay from \$5,000 to \$20,000 a year for the use of musical arrangements under a new music copyright law. Committee members will meet with music licensing agencies in November to determine what the new law, which becomes effective Jan. 1, 1978, will mean for the University. "It looks like we'll still have to pay even if the composer has been dead 300 years," Stark said.

Texas' malpractice suits increase rapidly

By MARGIE KOVAR

In the last five years the number of medical malpractice suits in Texas has quadrupled, and 70 percent of all suits and claims ever filed in this state have been filed since 1972, said Wichita Falls lawyer and state senator Ray Farabee.

Sponsored by Political Forum and Great Issues, Farabee told a group of about 75 Thursday night in Rudder Tower that the increase resulted for several reasons.

"The main reason is that you couldn't get one doctor to testify against another doctor," Farabee said. "Now you can get anybody to testify about anything in this country."

Other reasons were that juries were more conservative in the past, doctors were held in higher esteem by the public and there was a more personal relationship between doctors and patients which caused them to often overlook a doctor's mistakes, Farabee said.

He also said a greater number of modern medical techniques increased the chance for mistakes to occur.

The increase in malpractice suits in Texas, he said, has caused major insurance companies to quit selling malpractice insurance.

"There are not enough doctors and hospitals to provide a risk base," Farabee said. "Insurance companies need a whole lot of people paying a little money to create a big pot."

But in the case of malpractice insurance, there are a few people paying money, which results in a small pot, and when the company is hit with a big claim they still have to pay."

Farabee added that the increase in suits has also caused runaway insurance costs, increased health care costs, "defensive medicine" and limited small-town practices.

Farabee said it has been estimated that additional charges of \$200 are included with surgeon's fees to absorb their high insurance costs.

Many doctors are beginning to practice "defensive medicine," he said.

"This means they may order more x-rays than are really necessary, or more lab tests than would ordinarily be needed, out of fear of being second-guessed," Farabee said.

Farabee, cited by Texas Monthly magazine as one of the ten best Texas legislators, serves as vice chairman of the Texas Coordinating Commission for State Health and Welfare Services.



Dr. Charles Johnson conducting the B-CS chamber orchestra.

City Council debates, approves

University Drive to be extended

By RUSTY CAWLEY
Battalion City Editor

Ignoring the protests of City Planner Al Mayo, as well as amending the city's comprehensive plan, the College Station City Council last night approved extending University Drive east to FM 158.

In the past, the council has discouraged development to the east, preferring to encourage city expansion to the south.

But last night's decision virtually assures city expansion across the flood plain near the east by-pass.

In a meeting Oct. 5, the council instructed Mayor Lorence Bravenec to vote against the extension in his capacity as a member of the Bryan-College Station Urban Transportation Study steering committee.

He did so at the committee's meeting two days later. But the committee approved expanding University Drive in a 3-1 vote.

Last night, Councilman Lane Stephen-

son asked the council to reconsider its instructions. It did, and ended up approving the road extension.

Six of the councilmen stuck by their Oct. 5 votes: Bravenec and Councilmen Jim Dozier and Gary Halter in favor of the extension, Councilmen Jim Gardner, Anne Hazen and Larry Ringer against it.

The deciding vote was cast by Stephen-

son. "I think this area's going to develop no matter what we do," Stephenson said. He said the state funds available for extending the road should be used.

Bravenec also said the funds should be used while they're available.

"I keep hearing it's not on the comprehensive plan, but we made up the comprehensive plan," Bravenec said. "I see no reason why we can't change it."

But Gardner opposed the change, arguing against expanding across the flood plain.

"If we approve extending FM 60 (University Drive) past the flood plain, we

might as well be ready to annex that area," Gardner said. "This is something we've discouraged for a long time."

"I don't think it's right to approve this just because there are state funds available," Gardner continued. "I don't think that's any way to plan."

City Planner Mayo sided with Gardner. "Money's not a good reason to change the comprehensive plan," Mayo said. "Extending FM 60 is going to force us to cross the flood plain."

"We'll have to annex everything to FM 158."

City attorney to study motorcycle helmet law

City Attorney Neeley Lewis was instructed by the College Station City Council Thursday night to see if the city can legally require motorcyclists to wear helmets in the city limits.

The Texas Legislature last spring repealed a state law requiring adult

motorcyclists to wear the helmets. The law does require motorcyclists under age 18 to wear helmets. Councilmen aren't sure if they can overrule the Legislature's decision.

The council responded to a request from Wayne Schrier, a Texas A&M University graduate student, asking the council to require the helmets.

"If I were involved in an accident in which a motorcyclist were injured because he wasn't wearing a helmet, I would feel responsible because I didn't try and prevent it," Schrier told the council.

He said the legislature's lifting of the law will cause insurance rates to rise. Some motorcyclists, some of whom attended the meeting, argue that the law would infringe on their personal rights. But Schrier insisted not requiring helmets would also infringe on the rights of the majority.

"I feel a motorcyclist riding without a helmet is infringing on my rights, and everyone's rights, to lower insurance rates," he said.

Councilman Jim Dozier questioned Schrier's argument. The decision to wear a helmet is the responsibility of the adult individual, he said.

"If he's gonna kill himself, let him," Dozier said.

Jay Grimes, a Bryan resident, argued against the requirement. He said he has ridden motorcycles for 23 years without a serious accident.

"I guess I owe one-third of that to God, one-third to Jay Grimes and one-third to the Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company," Grimes said.

"I think I've earned the right to decide," Dozier said.

But Councilman Gary Halter challenged Grimes' view.

"Don't I have the right not to support someone who's become a ward of the state because he wasn't wearing a helmet?" Halter asked.

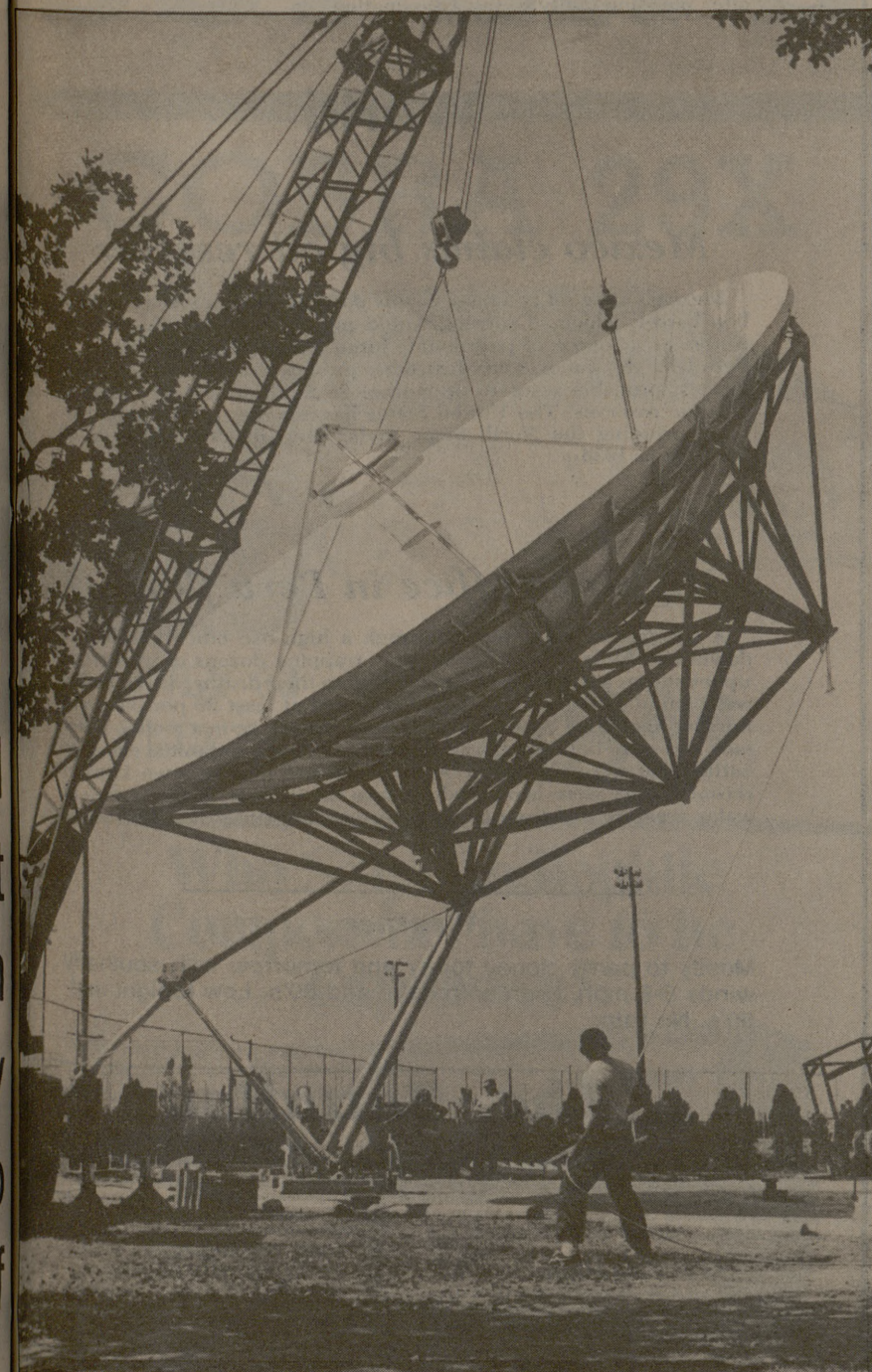
"Everyone's talking about rights. I want someone to show me where in the Constitution it says you have the right to injure yourself on a motorcycle."

Councilman Anne Hazen agreed with Halter.

"As a nurse, I'd like to support Mr. Schrier's request," Hazen said. "But I don't see how we can take action at this time."

So the council, with Dozier voting no, told City Attorney Lewis to explore the matter.

"It's a waste of time," Dozier, himself a former city attorney, said after the vote was taken.



Battalion photo by Les Chrietberg

KAMU readying for space waves

KAMU-TV station installed its new microwave satellite antenna Thursday, behind its studio next to Kyle Field. The new antenna was placed by the studio on its west side and replaces the present microwave system now used for receiving the PBS network. Here, Israel Pacheco, an employee of Wavaco of San Diego, California, helps to stabilize the antenna.

Dr. Koldus says impartial audit of loan fund needed

By GLENN WHITLEY
Battalion Staff

An audit of the Campus Chest loan fund records prepared by former fund director Susan Price is "inappropriate," and an audit by an impartial agency is needed, said Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services Thursday.

"Though I trust Susan Price, I think it's inappropriate for someone who was responsible for the fund to do an audit," Koldus said after reviewing Price's report.

Koldus has asked Dr. Carolyn Adair, director of student activities, and Dr. Charles Powell, director of student affairs, to get an impartial agency to audit the records "as soon as administratively possible."

The report by Price came after an Oct. 13 Battalion story reported that \$3,000 could not be accounted for in the fund's records. Campus Chest is an emergency loan fund administered by student government.

Koldus said he contacted Adair after reading that story and requested an audit. Adair and Price apparently decided a report by Price would be sufficient.

Adair had no comment and Price was unavailable for comment.

Price's report deals only with the school years 1975-76 and 1976-77, the years she was involved with Campus Chest. The Battalion story included 1974-75.

Price's audit shows that there are \$3,662.75 in loans outstanding for the years 1975-77. Fred Pfeiffer, present director of the fund, previously said there were only \$1,200 in unpaid loans.

The report lists 40 persons who have loans overdue, several student leaders among them. Mary Ellen Martin, director

of the fund for 1975-76 is shown as having an overdue loan of \$125. The loan was taken out in Oct. 1975. Martin said earlier she paid the loan, but didn't remember when.

Local concrete firms to protest load limits

By SCOTT PERKINS

Local representatives of the concrete industry are planning to protest a reduction of load limits on county roads.

The representatives are upset at the passing of an ordinance which reduced the total allowable weight of truck and cement from 64,000 pounds to 48,000 pounds. The commissioners said the county roads and bridges couldn't hold the heavier weight.

The Brazos County Commissioners voted 3-1 Monday to over-rule a state law which had allowed the higher weight limit on state roads. The law also gave city and county governments the option of setting the limits on local roads. The action was on the agenda for the meeting, but none of the industry representatives were present.

"I wasn't aware of it (the vote)," said Chester Jones, manager of Brazos Valley Concrete. "Obviously, we're going to fight it."

B. D. Moore, manager of Bryco, Inc., said, "We didn't even know this was coming up. We feel we're close enough to our county commissioners to be able to talk to them about this."

Both Bryan and College Station have not altered the higher weight limit on city streets.

None of the representatives contacted

were sure if the lower weight limit would raise overall prices.

Mel Caldwell, of Brazos Valley Concrete, pointed out the increased number of trips the trucks would have to make with the smaller loads.

"Our price per yard of concrete is based on the mileage involved delivering it," he said. "If we have to cut down our loads, the overall cost may go up."

"This does not affect any of our commercial accounts," Moore said. He added that the problem would be with the rural resident pouring a foundation for a house or barn.

"We feel we're kind of being singled out," Moore said. He added that he felt trucks hauling oil rigs, lumber, and sand and gravel were also as heavy as the cement trucks.

"We know there have been one or two bridges damaged by our trucks," Moore said, "but we felt we had properly repaired them." He said the truck companies are liable for any damage they cause the roads.

"We are going to try to meet with the commissioners in the near future," Moore said. "We'd like to know their problems."

Moore said the meeting would be during one of the commissioners' regularly scheduled hearings.