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Japanese cannot 'bear' to wait

Lan Lan mum about being a mom

United Press International
TOKYO — A lady has a right to her secrets, and Lan Lan the giant panda isn't talking.
Her snoopy keepers at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo are on tenterhooks trying to guess whether Lan Lan is about to produce the first giant panda cub ever born outside China.
But the trouble with a pregnant panda is she looks just like a panda who isn't: both are enormous black-and-white cuddly bears, but the panda mom bears no trace of a bulge in her tummy.
All the panda's keepers know for sure is 9-year-old Lan Lan mated

twice with her 7-year-old male companion, Kan Kan, in the second half of May.
If pregnancy ensued, the gestation period will end sometime between Oct. 4 and Oct. 14. Until then the keepers will have to sit and wait.
They already have set up a battery of television cameras to record the potential event. An 11-person team of zoo employees has Lan Lan under round-the-clock watch. But all she does is sit there, pat her tummy and smile.
She did that last year, too, and zoo workers convinced themselves

their panda was pregnant. All of Japan waited with bated breath for the blessed event. But the gestation period came and went, and the keepers finally had to admit they were wrong.
The giant pandas, whose natural habitat is in western China, were a gift from Peking when China and Japan granted each other diplomatic recognition in 1972.
No giant panda has ever been born in a zoo outside of China, although zookeepers in Washington, Moscow and Tokyo have been trying for years.
A panda cub at birth is about the

size of a mouse, so 224-pound Lan Lan wouldn't have much to hide.
According to books on panda lore the Chinese sent over with the two animals, pregnant pandas sometimes display enlarged teats and eat a lot in the late stages of the game.
Lan Lan did that last year, but it was a false alarm.
This year her teats are enlarged again, and Lan Lan is eating her head off. But besides pregnancy the Japanese think this might mean Lan Lan is menstruating, or having an off-schedule period of heat in the autumn. Pandas' usual mating season is in May.

MSC 'elitist' theory disputed

By Harvey Laas
Battalion Reporter

Small size and their selection process have contributed to give three Memorial Student Center committees - SCONA, Town Hall and OPAS - an "elitist" image to some students.
All three organizations conduct personal interviews of applicants. In addition, Town Hall and the Opera and Performing Arts Society (OPAS) require a written application.

Students interested in any of the organizations may sign up in the Student Programs Office, room 216 of the MSC. The deadline is 5 p.m. today. Interviews will be conducted next week.

The nature of the interviews and applications do not give credence to this reputation, say the leaders of the three committees. They also need the selection process to serve as a means to find those willing to work for the organizations. OPAS chairman Patrice Jones said OPAS does not ask what kind of car students drive or for financial statements.

The written applications for OPAS and Town Hall are not complicated. Both center around past honors, the students' reasons for seeking membership and talents students may have which would help the organization. The chairmen of all three committees said the personal interviews focus on the same areas.

Student Conference on National Affairs (SCONA) chairman, Daryl Taraba, said a 10-minute interview is not the most effective means of selecting members, but believed it is the best possible due to time limitations.
Taraba said the function of SCONA is to bring student leaders from different universities together

to discuss a topic of national importance, and provide speakers to discuss the issue.

Taraba said the size of the committee will be about 100 members. He said about 70 of them will be old members. So far about new students have signed up for interviews.

Taraba said SCONA is financed entirely by donations from individuals, foundations and corporations. This year's topic will be "The Economic Environment - Bucks and Bureaucracy."

Patrice Jones, chairman of OPAS, said the purpose of OPAS is to promote performing arts at Texas A&M University by bringing in entertainers such as ballet and symphony. OPAS has 36 returning members and will accept 25 to 30 new members. Thirty-four students signed for OPAS interviews Thursday.


Town Hall chairman Brooks Herring said Town Hall's function is to bring top entertainment to A&M. Town Hall was responsible for the Dave Mason concert and upcoming Jerry Reed concert.

The leaders of the three committees said the selection process serves as a means to find those willing to work for the organizations. OPAS chairman Patrice Jones said OPAS does not ask what kind of car students drive or for financial statements.

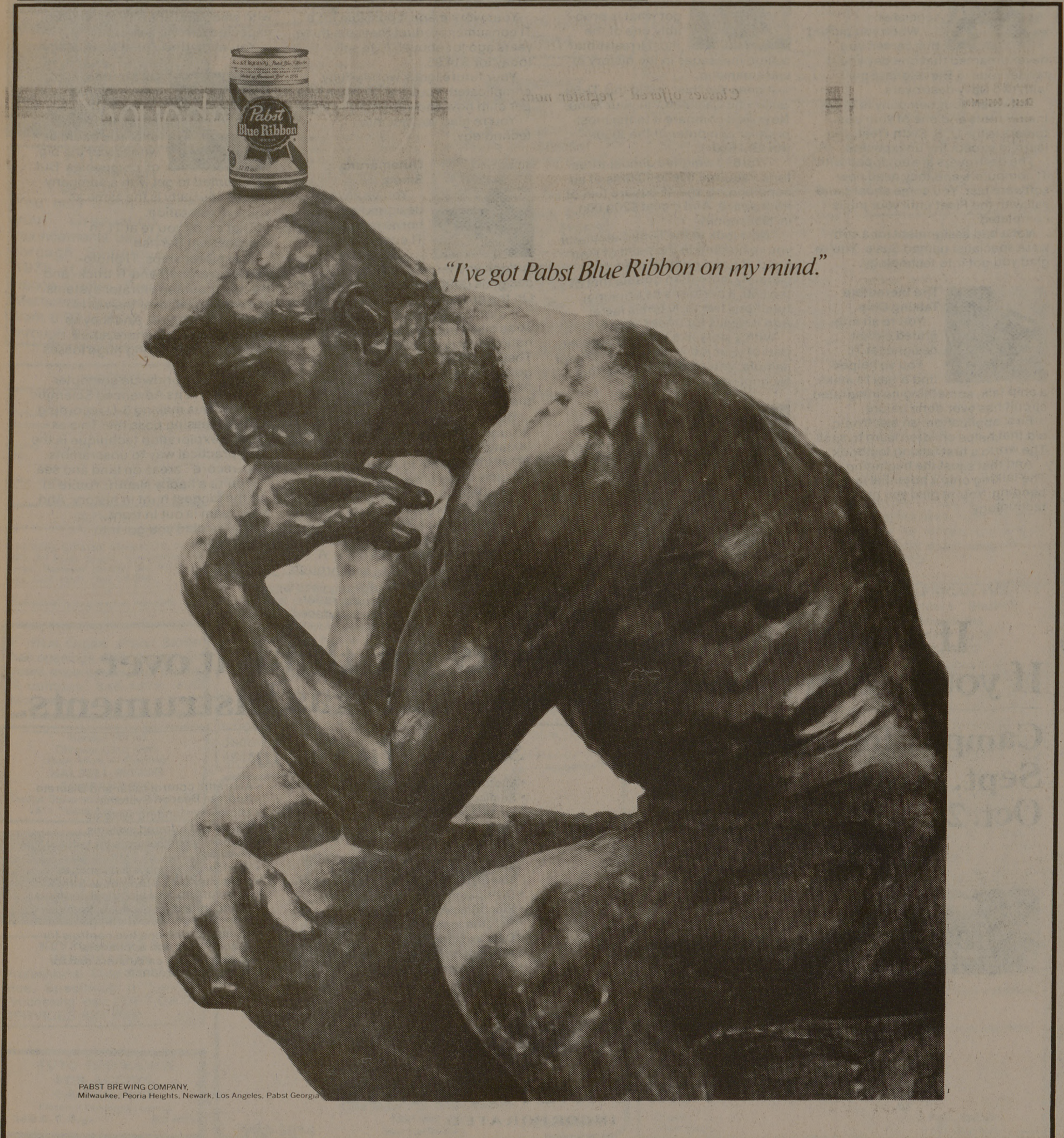
Town Hall limits its membership to 65. Herring said about 100 students interview in the fall. Town Hall accepts freshman and transfer students. He said about 100 students apply in the spring through junior applications.

Students interested in any of the organizations may sign up in the Student Programs Office, room 216 of the MSC. The deadline is 5 p.m. today. Interviews will be conducted next week.

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