



### SCONA applications due today

Today is the last day for students to apply to be delegates to the SCONA 24. Students may apply in Room 221 of the Memorial Student Center. The topic this year for the national students' conference is "America's Economic Environment: Business, Bucks and Blunders." Interviews for delegate selection will be next week.

## STATE

### Computers aid tax collection

State Comptroller Bob Bullock said Wednesday his office had collected almost \$750,000 in back taxes with a computerized system. He denies paychecks to anyone owing the state money. The program identified 26,341 delinquencies that owed taxes and collected \$729,663 in revenue from delinquencies.

### Bill to relieve beaten spouses

Sen. Jack Ogg, D-Houston, Wednesday introduced a bill for relief and protection for persons who are beaten, battered or abused by their spouses. Ogg said because of an increase in domestic violence the state needed to expand treatment and rehabilitation services for those abused. "Thousands of spouses in this state regularly beaten and in many situations killed by persons with whom they are living," Ogg said.

### No end in sight for Texaco strike

A strike by 600 employees at Texaco's Eagle Point refinery is into its second day Thursday with the union's president warning the end may be far away. The 600 workers walked off the job Wednesday and set up picket lines after negotiations on a new contract broke down. Herb Ross, president of Local 638 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union said, the company has adopted an "anti-strike" position since its reorganization last month, and was trying to "destroy a good working agreement that had been without any problems since 1969."

## NATION

### Testimony heard in Marvin suit

Michele Triola Marvin, seeking \$1 million from actor Lee Marvin in joint property for the six years they lived together, admitted Thursday the actor was "kind" and "generous" but said he sometimes mistreated her. In cross examination Thursday, Mrs. Marvin's attorneys established that Marvin's business manager had set up credit card accounts for her. Mrs. Marvin testified earlier she became pregnant by the actor three times but he persuaded her not to have children and she was left sterile by an abortion.

## WORLD

### Fuel explosions blamed on IRA

Bombs blamed on the Irish Republican Army Thursday blew storage tank filled with 7 million cubic feet of gasoline in East London. The blast ripped through a Texaco tank holding 100,000 gallons of aviation fuel. Another fire broke out in a block of offices in London's Strand district less than a block from Trafalgar Square and the Charing Cross railway station. A Scotland Yard spokesman said there was no reason to believe the office block blaze was related to the suspected IRA bombs.

### Ford at 'trilateral summit'

Former President Gerald Ford flew to the winter resort of Aspen Thursday for a possible "trilateral summit" with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of Iran. The president has still not said when he will leave Egypt, but a California newspaper reported Wednesday he and his wife will fly to Palm Springs, Calif., either Friday or Saturday.

### Red Chinese extend invitation

Chinese Culture Minister Huang Chen has invited entertainers from Taiwan to come to Peking to help celebrate the Communist government's 30th anniversary Oct. 1. Huang extended the invitation Wednesday despite Taiwan's certain rejection of it, the New China News Agency said. He also invited Taiwanese entertainers to make films on the mainland, the agency said. China last year invited Nationalist Chinese athletes to participate in the Asian Games as part of the Chinese delegation. Taiwan turned down all offers as a propaganda ploy.

## WEATHER

Cloudy and mild with a continued chance of rain. High today 70 and a low of 50. Winds will be southerly at 10-15 mph with a 30% chance of rain.

## THE BATTALION

### LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

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## Vote on the grass possibly useless

The Memorial Student Center grass. No count was taken, but it's probably been the point of more letters to the editor than any issue (other than "Good Ags").

The Texas A&M grass issue has even been immortalized by Houston Post columnist Lynn Ashby.

Now a sign up in the main hall of the Memorial Student Center tells students to contact their Student Government senators because the Senate is planning a vote on whether to "memorialize" the grass surrounding the student center.

Last year the issue was rekindled after a number of visitors to campus were rudely informed they should not be walking on the grass. (The council directs a number of campus organizations on campus and makes recommendations to the University about the building.)

The MSC Council was asked by the Student Senate to memorialize the grass. The council found in records that the grass had never been dedicated, and ruled last year that walking on the grass "would not be discouraged" and would be "left up to the discretion of the individual." In other words, no signs would be put up telling people not to walk on it.

The issue is emotional. Last semester one student staked out the grass as a reading spot and a crowd of angry students gathered and threatened him for not moving.

One "side" says the building is dedicated to Aggies who have died in war, so the grounds should be revered. The other "side" sees the grass as a living area that should be used and recognizes no tradition.

Now the student government is trying to come out with its own ruling suggesting a hedge and sign to enforce it.

The point — since it seems to be the subject of so much controversy — should be decided, but not by having various student organizations asserting their own control over the "tradition."

That will solve nothing.

But is there a solution at all? Probably not for all Aggies now.

Traditions can't be legislated. Such an attempt would be ignored. The sanctity of the grass would have to be enforced. And genuine traditions don't need enforcement.

But Texas A&M students — especially in the student senate — see some of the school's time-honored customs crumbling. And they are fighting to hang on to this one.

The student senate can't win by changing rules — only by changing minds.

Let students decide themselves, and those who wish to respect the grass do so. — K.T.

## Presidential hopefuls

# Winter of decisions

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK

WASHINGTON — Events of the next 90 days may determine whether there be any meaningful competition for the 1980 presidential nominations.

Although it is a full year before the Iowa precinct caucuses that have been the first test of the last few campaigns, the basic decisions that will determine the 1980 field in both parties probably will be made by Easter.

At this moment, there is no sure evidence that any Democrat who would be given a chance of success is going to challenge Jimmy Carter. (What that means is that Teddy Kennedy continues to insist he is not going to run in 1980.)

And, while both Rep. Phillip Crane of Illinois and former CIA director George Bush of Texas are announced or potential candidates, Ronald Reagan is the consensus choice of the political community at this time as the most likely Republican nominee.

There are circumstances that could change the situation and bring more candidates into the field.

Continued high inflation, a sharp increase in unemployment, an oil crisis, final collapse of Mideast peace efforts, an outbreak of big power hostilities in Indochina are all among the possible events that could make politicians believe that 1980 would be a good year to go for the big prize.

But presidential campaigns do not begin the day before the candidate's public announcement. Carter began planning his campaign a full three years before the last election; Reagan never dismantled the 1976 organization that almost captured the GOP nomination.

"How it was done" books like the "Making Of The President" series and

"Marathon" make it clear that the nine months between mid-April and the first delegate selection processes would be a short time to organize and finance a respectable effort to win the presidential nomination of either party.

The federal campaign finance laws also push potential candidates toward "go-no go" decisions. Before 1976, a presidential hopeful could avoid public commitment

## Commentary

while his friends began to raise money and build an organization. Now, candidates must publicly consent to the most preliminary fund raising and the law requires same detailed financial reporting it would if they were formal candidates.

That does not mean everyone who decides to run in the next three months will announce it in the spring. With their organizations already in place and the sources of funds identified if not tapped, neither Carter nor Reagan have to make formal declarations until later in the year.

Some potential challengers like Democrat Kennedy or Republicans Howard Baker or Bob Dole will be able to use their positions as elected officials carry out the first steps of organization and fence-mending without requiring formal campaign committees or fund-raising efforts. Only the candidates without the advantages of incumbency, national recognition or proven votewinning ability will have to announce early.

But it is a good bet that most of the candidates who will be in the running next winter will have made their decisions during the cold months of 1979.

## Korea is test for new Chinese diplomacy

By ROBERT CRABBE

PEKING — American humorist Dr. Seuss once wrote a poem about two stubborn creatures called Zax who met in a vacant field and stood face-to-face for 59 years.

Neither Zax would get out of the other's way.

As time went by, the area built up and one day the Zax found themselves standing in a busy intersection.

Something like that happened to North and South Korea Dec. 16 when President Carter announced the United States was going into full diplomatic relations with China and would actively help build up the Chinese economy.

The whole structure of alliances that supported the two Koreas in their 33-year confrontation, including the 1950-53 Korean war, is starting to come unglued.

In the Korean war era, China and the Soviet Union were the unflinching backers of North Korea, whose President Kim Il Sung, 66, seeks to unite Korea under communist rule.

The United States supported South Korea. In the early years of the Korean confrontation it gave both military and economic backing but today the American role is mostly one of military support.

Japan since 1970 has taken over as South Korea's major source of economic aid and foreign investment.

China and the Soviet Union long ago ceased to be allies, and in fact have been bitter enemies since around 1960. Now the growing military might of the Soviets is forcing the United States and Japan into increasing cooperation to check the expansion of Russian influence in the world.

Neither the North Korean government in Pyongyang nor the anti-communist South Korean regime headed by President Park Chung Hee had much to say about the surprise news that China and the United States were burying the hatchet.

Both know they now are in a tricky new era. For the South Koreans, it was a shock to see the United States cut its ties with the anticommunist government of Taiwan, in the wake of the fall of American-backed South Vietnam.

Although the Carter administration still insists that the American defense commitment to South Korea is intact, the Park government is on notice that about 30,000 American ground troops will be out of Korea by the end of 1983. Air force units will remain.

The North Koreans, too, must be wondering about the solidity of their support from China.

North Korea started life in 1945 as a Soviet satellite. But in recent years Kim's relations with Peking have been far more friendly than with Moscow. The Chinese are extremely anxious to keep it that way. Possible loss of their special position in North Korea is one of the big risks they have taken in moving closer to the United States.

The fact is that Korea is as big a contradiction as Taiwan in the new Chinese-American relationship. The United States can expect no help from Peking in its goal of having the two Koreas settle down peacefully as a divided country for the indefinite future. China will support the North Korean line.

Chinese Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping in a meeting with members of the Senate Armed Services Committee Jan. 9 said China would welcome a buildup of U.S. naval forces in the Far East and expansion of Japanese defense strength. But he made it plain that while the Chinese wanted an American military presence in East Asia, this did not apply to Korea.

Teng told the group headed by Senator Sam Nunn, D-Ga., that the United States should get its troops out of South Korea, and enter into direct bilateral negotiations with the North Korean government.

By Dick West

## The sound of broken crash diets returns

WASHINGTON — That strange noise you hear may be the sound of crash dieting.

And the next sound you hear may be that of broken New Year's resolutions to lose weight.

Both are familiar sounds to operators of weight control programs and exercise salons. The basic scenario goes like that:

Joe Glutton, who is not exactly a pillar of moderation to begin with, pulls all the stops during the Thanksgiving-Christmas-New Year's festivities.

## Humor

Then, come Jan. 1, he adopts a stiff upper chin and resolves to take some of it off.

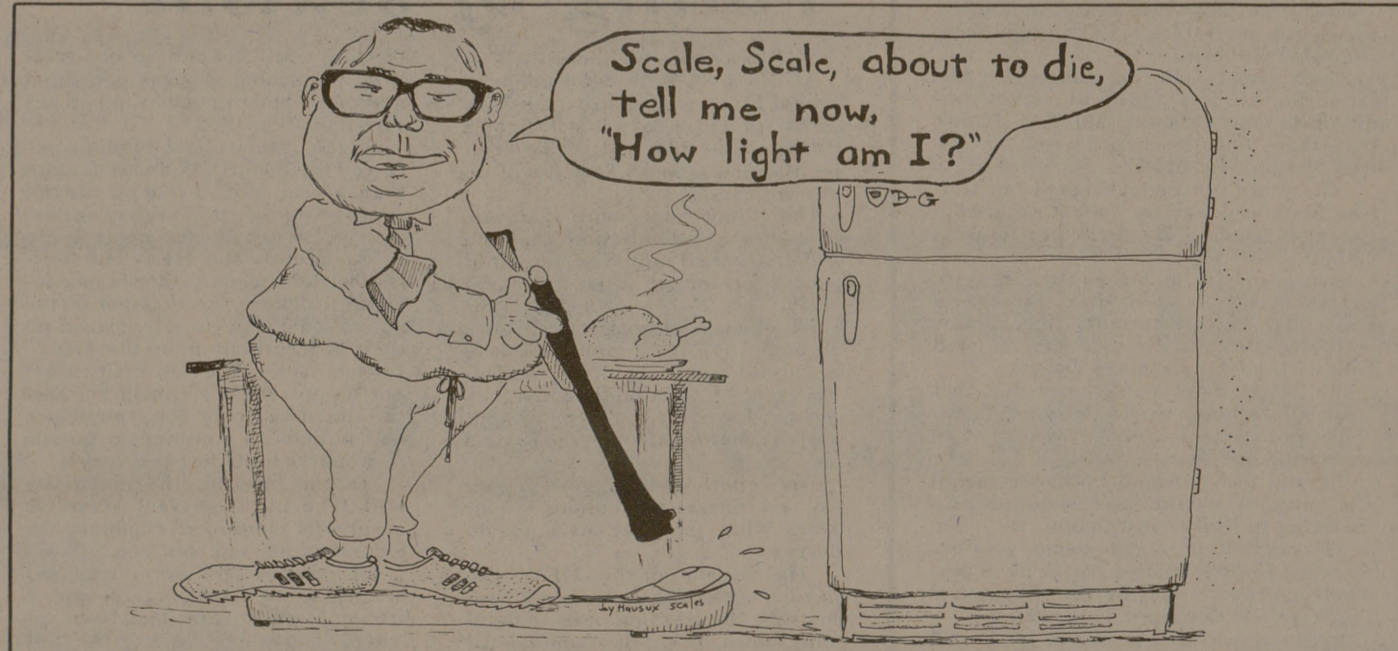
Then, come Jan. 30, he encounters an éclair in a weak moment and . . . well, you can guess the rest.

This year, a spot check of reducing academies in this area suggests the struggle is more intense than ever.

"Oh, yes. Definitely," said Hilda Frishman of the Diet Workshop. "There has been a heavy influx this month. Losing weight is probably No. 1 on the list of New Year's resolutions."

"I subscribe to most of the women's magazines and every single one of them had a diet in the January issue."

Do most post-holiday dieters have the, ah, guts to stick to the regimen, or will their will power dissolve before the Christmas fat does?



Mrs. Frishman allowed that many try to go it alone likely will yield to temptation prematurely. But those dedicated enough to take up group dieting generally are "truly motivated," she said.

Ruth Weston, an official of Weight Loss Centers, said absenteeism in her programs picked up sharply in the week before Thanksgiving. But during the first week of January, 80 percent of the dropouts re-

turned. And 80 percent of them had taken on poundage, she said.

She likewise described New Year's resolution dieters as "very well motivated." All during the holidays, she said, she heard the same thing over and over — "I can't wait to get back on my diet." Apart from the need to shuck the suet of seasonal excesses, January is an ideal time to go on a diet, according to Mrs. Weston.

"When the winter coat comes off in April, the body will be acceptable," she pointed out.

Janet Hall, manager of one of the Barbara Ellen exercise parlors, also reported a "notable increase" in patronage since the new year began. She deals primarily with holiday over-doers who chose a more vigorous route to body acceptability. And "some are very sincere," she added.