

# Texas Common Cause plans 'Lobby Day' in Austin Feb. 21

By JUDIE PORTER  
Battalion Reporter

Special interest groups come in sizes, shapes and causes. Those lobbying in Austin during the 66th Texas Legislature include and gas companies, realtor associations, women's groups and any other group that is pushing for a cause or trying to kill someone else's, said Theo Brown, Texas director for Common Cause, a national citizens' lobby.

Brown was in town Thursday to meet with local members and to promote a "Lobby Day" Feb. 21 for Texas Common Cause members to lobby legislators in Austin.

"We have made a fairly significant contribution to effectively opening up the Texas government, but I feel that more needs to be done," Brown said.

**Under the financial disclosure law, for instance, any citizen of Bryan-College Station could see the campaign contributions or personal finances of Sen. Bill Moore of Bryan by checking with the secretary of state's office in Austin.**

He said, "How successful we'll be in Austin, I don't know."

Texas Common Cause currently

has six priorities for the 66th session:

— Reapportionment reform, which calls for a citizen's committee to draw district lines instead of legislators. This would help end gerrymandering in Texas.

— Initiative, which would give citizens the right to pass laws through petitioning. However, strict rules would be necessary to protect the initiative process from well-financed special interest groups.

— Property tax administration reform, which would consolidate appraisal districts. Common Cause wants one office per county without any overlapping districts.

— Sunset Texas Law, which was created by Common Cause in 1977. If it goes into effect, the law will require state agencies to go out of existence every 12 years unless re-created by the Legislature.

— Strengthening the Public Utilities Commission by creating a public council to represent the people and

— Extending the time limit on utility rate decisions to increase public input.

Brown said that in 1973, Common Cause pushed for open meetings in the House and Senate committees and for open records. The group also supported extension of the ERA ratification period, and worked for financial disclosure of public officials.

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law, for instance, any citizen of Bryan/College Station could see the campaign contributions or personal finances of Sen. Bill Moore of Bryan by checking with the secretary of state's office in Austin.

Common Cause is a public interest citizen's lobbying group, Brown said. It is non-governmental, funded by contributions and membership dues.

"We try to make the process of government more accountable and efficient," Brown said.

"We try by supplying information about bills and issues currently in the Legislature to our members and urging them to write or call their Congressmen."

The Texas Common Cause started in 1972 and now has about 6,000 paying members around the state. The Austin office has one full-time lobbyist, Sheila Cheaney, who attends the Congressional sessions; an overall director, Theo Brown, who works on fund-raising and visits the local Common Cause groups; a part-time office manager and other volunteers; and a board of directors that chooses issues to support.

Bryan/College Station has a local Common Cause group of about 85 members, said Mrs. Mildred Lowy, network and telephone coordinator for the local group.

"We started with about 150 members right after Watergate, because there was a lot of activity to open up the government," Lowy said.

"We don't have any meetings of our own because everyone is already involved on other organizations. We get our information from the printed page."

The "printed page" is a newsletter sent by Texas Common Cause to inform its readers. It explains what issues Common Cause supports and gives its proposals for bills.

"We don't have a well-organized group here," Brown said. "I have been to just about every city in the state to try to re-establish local help and gain volunteers to interview senators and staff our office in Austin."

## 37 Aggies to compete in games tournament

Texas A&M University students will join representatives of 30 other schools at the Association of College Unions International Games Tournament Feb. 15-17.

The event will be at North Texas State University and will include competitions in billiards, frisbee, bowling, foosball, chess, backgammon, bridge and table tennis. Thirty-seven Aggies will attend.

Roger V. Messersmith, vice chairman of the Memorial Student Center's Recreation Committee, says Texas A&M usually does well in the tournament.

"Year before last we got what is called the traveling trophy, which is given to the school that accumulates the most points," he said. Elimination tournaments were held at Texas A&M during the fall and early spring to select students to compete.

## A&M geologist to lead meet

# Supplies of uranium sought

In the next five years, American demand for uranium to fuel atomic energy plants will surpass current supplies, says a Texas A&M University geologist.

This means one of three things: mining supplies, importing them from new deposits and new ways to get them out of the ground, researcher Wen Huang.

Since the latter seems most practical and least controversial, both industry and government are anxious to see what research centers are developing.

Texas uranium deposits, discovered in 1954, provide a multimillion

dollar surface-mining industry in Karnes, Live Oak and Gonzales counties, but such methods will not provide enough to keep existing nuclear equipment going in the next few years, says Huang.

Huang has been asked to chair the Texas Gulf Coast Plains' first American Association of Petroleum Geologists conference on uranium discovery and production, scheduled April 1 at the Houston Convention Center.

The meeting, which will include more than a dozen speakers from government, industry and universities, will focus on topics from

ing plans and problems to environmental and regulatory concerns.

Huang has been conducting studies at Texas A&M into in-situ leaching as a means of extracting Texas coastal plains uranium from deposits of lignite and sandstone, in which the uranium is intertwined unpredictably.

Perfection of such methods, he predicts, could make Texas the nation's second leading producer of uranium ore in just a few years. In that case, a third of all uranium ore would originate in Texas.

Huang, who already holds two patents for recovery of aluminum from coal ash, says Texas A&M's recognition nationwide has increased since a University of Nevada-sponsored uranium mining conference in Reno last November, when Huang and graduate student Ken Pickett presented research findings.

Another thing that has contributed to Texas A&M's leadership has been development of ways to analyze uranium in lignite concentrations in order to tell miners if top layers of coal contain the radioactive material as well as pinpointing other pockets.

Before Huang was asked by AAPG to head the Houston meeting, scientists from Japan, West Germany, Israel and Taiwan has requested permission to come to College Station for training.

## House applauds minister for non-Texas-size prayers

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Few speakers receive attention of all 150 members in Texas House of Representatives. Fewer are applauded.

The Rev. Gerald Mann has won attention of lawmakers with his humorous but pointed prayers at the opening of the daily legislative sessions, and Thursday was applauded by laughing House members.

"Our Father, help us remember that the only difference between a sinner and a saint is that one has been caught and the other hasn't," Mann prayed.

House members smiled, then chuckled, then light applause broke as Mann, pastor of University Baptist Church, stepped from the podium.

It was not the first time his invocations have brought smiles to the faces of legislators.

His prayer at the opening of the session was, "Lord, deliver us from evil, ourselves, and longed prayers."

A week ago he opened the Senate session with this prayer: "Lord, deliver us from people who never make mistakes, and also deliver us from people who make the same mistake twice."

Last month his invocation for a House session was, "Our Father, may we find the strength to stand for our principles today, by remembering that only a mediocre person is always at his best."

Although the House and Senate each pick a chaplain for the session, both houses this year chose Mann.

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