

Intern learns inside politics in Austin

By MARK HERRON
Battalion Reporter

Brian Roop is an Aggie who has learned a few things about the state Legislature in Texas. But most of his knowledge didn't come from lectures in Political Science 207. He's an intern for the state Legislature.

"The first thing a representative has to learn is there are certain people in the capital you need to get in good with," he said. "If they like you, it might mean a few more favorable votes when you submit a bill to their committee."

"I didn't hear things like that in a political science class," he said.

Roop went to Austin when the legislature session began in January.

After graduation from Texas A&M University in August with a degree in wildlife and fisheries science, Roop said, "I wanted to go to graduate school and the Agricultural Development program looked pretty good to me."

"It's a 36-hour program, and you make up your own degree plan," he said. "You can lean toward any field of agriculture you want."

Roop said he decided to specialize in agricultural economics because of his interest in banking and finance.

"The Agricultural Development program includes an internship which you earn 10 hours of credit," he said.

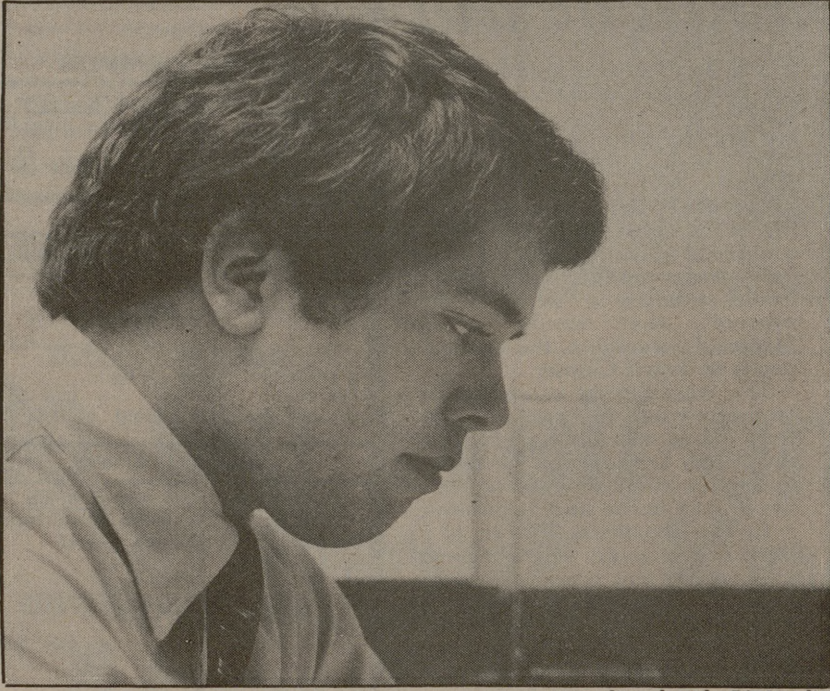
When his adviser, John Holcomb, a professor in the agricultural education department, told him of an internship with the state Legislature, "I was intrigued," Roop said.

"I knew it would be a good opportunity to make some contacts because all the big agricultural companies lobby in Austin," he said.

Roop said he was given the internship after only three people applied for the position. In an interview Saturday, Roop said he is enjoying his work in the capital, and he has changed his mind about Texas politics.

A San Antonio native, Roop works with Rep. Forrest Green, the chairman of the Agricultural and Livestock Committee.

"I feel like I'm an integral part of what's going on," he said.



Battalion photo by Liz Newlin

Brian Roop, a Texas A&M University graduate, is working on his master's degree by interning with the Texas Legislature in Austin. Roop is working for Rep. Forrest Green, the chairman of the Agricultural and Livestock Committee.

Roop said his main function is to write an analysis of each bill the committee is to hear.

"It might be a 15-page bill and I have to condense it to one page," he said.

There are 50 bills to be heard in the Agriculture and Livestock Committee alone, Roop said, and most of the committee members are on other committees as well.

"The committee members depend a lot on my analysis because there's no way they would have time to read each bill in its complete form."

Roop said he also records the minutes of each committee meeting so the public can review action on the bills.

Another time-consuming task, Roop said, is doing research for committee members who want to

find out more about a bill before they vote.

Roop said he spends almost two hours a day talking on the phone, or writing letters to Green's constituents, informing them of the progress of certain bills.

"I usually write the letters and Mr. Green signs them," he said.

Roop is paid \$500 a month, which covers his living expenses and leaves a little to spare, he said.

"About \$300 comes from a special legislative fund for interns and Elanco (an agricultural chemical company) pays the rest."

Roop said Elanco receives no political favors for sponsoring the internship.

Roop said he had always thought Texas politicians were a bunch of corrupt, stuffed shirts. "But almost all of the representatives and politicians are very responsible to their position."

Roop said their concern for the state often outweighs their desire to please their constituents.

"There are a few representatives that are not so responsible, though," Roop said.

"Some of them don't make it to committee meetings, or might not show up for a vote on the House floor and that's bad because taxpayers are paying their salaries," he said.

Roop said he rather not name the representatives, but said there are a few "left wingers that are always causing trouble."

"They'll get weeded out sooner or later," Roop said. "Their constituents are not as dumb as they think."

Before going to Austin, "I had a dim view of lobbyists," he said. "I always thought lobbyists were crooks who took you out to dinner and tried to coerce you into doing something."

Roop said he has not seen any "underhanded dealings" between lobbyists and politicians. "They can't afford to," he said. "If word gets around that a lobbyist is doing something crooked, he'll lose his effectiveness."

"Lobbyists are sources of information, and they just try influence action that will help the people they represent."

Lobbyists are not the only ones who come to testify before legislative committees, Roop said.

"Farmers and ranchers come in all the time to discuss bills," he said.

"They're given just as much consideration as the lieutenant governor of Minnesota, who came in the other day."

Green's committee meets once a week and sometimes hears tes-

timony for 12 hours at a time. "People who say, 'we're not being heard in Austin, aren't trying very hard.'"

Roop said he would have never thought about entering politics, but now he might consider it.

"This internship has given me a chance to meet people like the gov-

ernor and lieutenant governor — people I might never have gotten to meet," he said.

Roop said one politician he particularly likes is House Speaker Bill Clayton.

"He's just a hard working country boy."

"Tuesday night is called 'speaker's

night' at the Broken Spoke (country and western club in Austin). Roop said. "Mr. Clayton is here every week. He loves to shake leg."

When the legislative session over in May, Roop will come back to Texas A&M to complete work on his master's degree.

Nautilus, 1st atomic sub, being retired from Navy

United Press International
GROTON, Conn. — The USS Nautilus ended its fabled 25-year career as the world's first atomic submarine Monday, sailing out of its home port for the last time as a commissioned Navy vessel.

The Nautilus, which far surpassed the science-fiction adventures of the deep sea craft for which it was named, wasn't showing the flag when it steamed from the U.S. Navy submarine base at 2:02 p.m. — just two minutes behind schedule.

The Nautilus headed for Mare Island Naval Station near San Francisco, where it will be decommissioned after its arrival in late May.

The Nautilus has been used as a training and test ship since it last took part in 6th Fleet exercises in the Mediterranean Sea two years ago.

marine Memorial Association is trying to have the Nautilus declared a national monument and be berthed in Groton permanently. The group has gotten the support of state and local officials.

The 3,200-ton Nautilus, named after the fictional submarine in Jules Verne's 19th-century classic "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," was the first to cross the Arctic under the polar ice cap.

She was launched from the Electric Boat shipyard in Groton Jan. 1952.

CIA report shows increased terrorism

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The CIA reported Tuesday that international terrorism increased last year, especially against Americans living in Iran.

"Officials and businessmen — especially individuals who are symbols of Western power and wealth — are still the primary targets," the report said.

Western Europe suffered the most terrorist incidents in 1978 — 1,130 out of 3,043 reported throughout the world, the CIA said. Latin America — especially Central America — was second with 808 incidents, followed by the Middle East and North Africa.

The report noted terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens and property increased in 1978 over the preceding year.

"Most of this increase was due to the deteriorating security situation in Iran," said the CIA, pointing to what it called scores of firebombings and threats against Americans and U.S. facilities there. Most Americans have since been evacuated from Iran.

The Italian Red Brigades generated international publicity by kidnapping and murdering Aldo Moro, the report said, but terrorist attacks generally were centered on bombings, arson, sniping and threats.

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