

Off-campus merger

Hassle-Free, OSA combine to form Off-Campus Aggies

By LORI SHULER
Battalion Reporter
All off-campus students at Texas A&M are now officially Off-Campus Aggies. No more Off-Campus Stu-

dents Association and no more Hassle-Free. Officers of a new organization representing all off-campus students announced Friday that the merger

of OSA and Hassle Free is complete. The organization will be called "Off-Campus Aggies."

Glenna Witt, student development coordinator and OCA adviser, announced the name Friday in the Memorial Student Center as a part of Hassle-Free Week. The name was chosen from about 25 entries in the organization's name-finding contest.

Cindy Corn, a Hassle-Free member, and Janice Mrazek, secretary in the Off-Campus Center, were winners of the contest, as the name is a combination of entries submitted by the two.

Witt said the two organizations decided to work out a merger earlier in the semester because of similar purposes but different methods, and therefore, a duplication of services. "We decided on the name of Off-Campus Aggies because it's to the point — it's what we're about," Witt said.

Debbie May, OCA president, said the merger is the best thing that could happen to off-campus students because there has been an overlapping of efforts.

Cindy Corn, who represented Hassle Free on the merger commit-

tee, said she was against the merger when it first started because she didn't see how the two organizations would be able to work together.

"Now I'm excited. As time passed, I realized it was the right thing to do," Corn said. "It's great to think that two-thirds of the student body will be represented in this organization. I don't think they realize what they can do in the community or in the University."

May said one of the most important steps the organization will take next semester is to work more closely with the off-campus senators.

"This has never been done in the past and we think it will provide greater representation for off-campus students. I've talked to some of the off-campus senators and they said they would be glad to come and report at our meetings and listen to our ideas."

May also said she would like to have more activities, such as parties, and groups working on Bonfire and at the All-Nite Fair, directed solely toward off-campus students.

Scott Terry, OCA vice-president, said in order to organize these activities the group would have to

have more manpower. Consequently, OCA will be recruiting heavily for the rest of the semester and at the beginning of the fall semester.

"If a student lives off campus, he is automatically a member of OCA. We just need people who live off campus to come in and fill out an application and say they would like to help," Terry said.

Corn said getting students together will be OCA's biggest problem. She said the organization will have to work while it's young to get recognition and build up prestige.

David Gary was a member of both Hassle Free and OSA before the merger and will be active in OCA next year.

"Hassle Free has the manpower and OSA has the funding. The students are ready and willing to work together, so the organization can't help but work. If everyone continues to work as hard as they have, we shouldn't have many problems," Gary said.

Paula Sorrells, secretary of OCA, agreed with Gary and said the new constitution written by the merger committee will help work out the problems of joining the two groups.

May said OCA has applied for two cubicles in the Student Programs Office of the Memorial Student Center, and if it does not get both of them, the organization will be in a bind.

May said the group has talked about the possibilities of getting a room in the MSC, much as the Residence Hall Association.

"We really need it," she said. "I think we'll get one in a couple of years."

Budget bill still debated

United Press International
AUSTIN — The House returns today for additional debate on a \$20.4 billion appropriations bill — the state's budget for the 1980-81 biennium — with no hopes of reducing the complicated measure what Gov. Bill Clements wants.

Clements' own budget version calls for the state to spend \$20.4 billion. During three marathon sessions last week the House has approved a \$156 million, including \$106 million for teacher pay increases.

The House will continue work on the public education bill Monday and perhaps even more budget increases will be introduced. However, the additional \$106 million legislators voted to give teachers has already put them in disfavor with the governor.

Clements as late as last week vociferously stated he would not raise teachers more than the 5.1 percent salary increase all other employees will receive. The amendment would hike the salaries 10 percent each year of the 1980-81 biennium.

However, if Clements decides to slash the pay raise for teachers the House could conceivably override that veto. House Speaker Clayton has indicated at least 100 members would be willing to override the governor's veto, which is essentially correct since 69 members voted for the teacher pay raise.

But there are some legislators who feel the governor will not override a veto threat against the teacher pay raise.

However, Rep. Bill Presnal said the budget includes a 2 percent reduction in state operating costs from the 1978-79 biennium and also \$269 million less than the Legislative Budget Board's recommendation.

Computer cuts ship collisions

United Press International
HOUSTON — It's a tricky job getting 5,500 ships a year through the narrow Houston Ship Channel, but the port has a sophisticated computer system to make the task easier.

"Let's say we prevented one major collision," said Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Gary Bird. "What would it cost to clean up the pollution from a million-barrel oil spill? And you could have loss of life or blockage of the channel for an indefinite period."

"We've tried to eliminate the element of surprise in transit," he said. "The amount of casualties has not increased with the volume of traffic (which climbed more than 10 percent from 1977 to 1978.)"

Bird's job as commander of the Coast Guard's Houston Vessel Traffic Service is to alleviate the transit problems of the increasingly crowded manmade waterway to the nation's third busiest port.

The service helps ships enter and exit through the winding 36- to 40-foot-deep channel that narrows from 800 to 250 feet on its way to the port of Houston, 50 miles inland.

Bird and 30 other Coast Guard personnel rely partly on television, with windshield wiper-equipped, zoom-and-pan cameras (infrared-rigged for night use) on towers along the upper channel. They also use radar, radio and a computer.

A ship's captain contacts VTS by radio from the open sea, reports in with his ship's name, size, cargo, course, speed and destination. The

vessel then is logged into the computer. The computer notes the speed and course and, at 15-second intervals, automatically updates records with projected movements. The controllers' visual depictions of their sector television computer terminals. Manual adjustments correct ships that move faster or slower than expected.

When the computer center relies on a card and system. Each ship is given a number and the cards are advanced manually through slots on a moving board, signifying movement through the channel.

Bird's staff members, whose operation is one of several at the ports, are not controllers but traffic controllers at airports.

"It is not a mandatory system," Bird said. "Ships are not required to participate. There are regular under study that would make it mandatory, but we have 95 percent participation on a voluntary basis."

Participation is safer, Bird said. "Those we find not participating usually have electrical problems, something's wrong with their communications system, or they're new to the area and don't know what to do."

Some of the shipping guidelines, however, is purely human. For example, when ships pass narrower parts of the channel, pilots play a controlled game of chicken, aiming their bows on collision course and then veering off to ride a dividing water past each other.

"It's a situation we call a meeting," Bird said. "They're on collision course. They're trying to work their way to the edge of the channel, the cushion (another wall of water) on the other side of the ship, and tend to throw them into each other."

Bird said the maneuver is taken only by highly skilled pilots.

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An offshoot gas well blew out in the Gulf of Mexico off the southwest Louisiana coast Saturday, forcing the evacuation of 40 workers and touching off a raging fire that sent flames 100 feet in the air. No injuries were reported and there was no pollution. The \$25 million drilling rig, the Salenergy II, was destroyed by the fire, and collapsed into the Gulf atop the well. Wild-well fighting teams from the Houston-based Red Adair Co. were called to the scene. But a spokesman for McMoran Offshore Exploration Co. said it might take several weeks to control the fire. Three other rigs were located within about one mile of the burning hole, but a McMoran spokesman said they were not threatened.

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Offshore rig destroyed in explosion, fire

United Press International
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