

# MSC goes international

## Members of the International Students Association filled the halls of the MSC with crafts, clothing and food of their native lands

By Kate McElroy

**Battalion Staff**  
The Memorial Student Center looks like a bustling marketplace in an Arabian fairytale.

The noises — dischords of horns, sitars and drums — seem authentic, as if a band of musicians from the East are parading through the lobby. Actually, the sounds come from those large portable cassette tape recorders inner-city children are infamous for wearing as earrings.

The signposts at the major corners/intersections in the MSC pointed to Latin America in the direction of the hotel main desk, and to Europe around the hamburger side of the main cafeteria.

People dressed in uniforms with polished shoes and Texas accents conversed with others dressed in long elegant robes, with turbans on their heads and heavy accents.

But all have something in common — Texas A&M University.

Friday is the last day of International Student Week. Sponsored by the International Student Association, the week was

designed to allow foreign students — initiated in Aggie culture enough to drink longnecks and wear Izods and cowboy boots — to present their national culture at Texas A&M.

Many of the countries, represented at booths lining the MSC, suffer from a culture gap. Americans often have a distorted image of international students, but the booths serve as public relations campaigns by presenting the good points of other countries.

"Most ideas about Vietnam are war and destruction," says Vy Trinh, who was born and reared in Vietnam. "We show them (the students) differently."

He picks up a book of beautiful stamps which are like miniature Oriental paintings. "Some of these stamps are more than a hundred years old," he points out.

Vy, who is a senior in mechanical engineering, says he is now a naturalized U.S. citizen, having come here five years ago. But he looks at the booth and says, "I'm very proud to be an American, and I'm very proud

to be Vietnamese."

The El Salvador booth features "zemita," which Rose Marie Boillat said is a typical bread from her country. The booth is decorated with fancy



clothing, art and instruments of that country, which recently received American military advisors to help solve its severe internal problems.

"Most people think it (El Salvador) isn't developed," she says. "When they see this booth, they see the many hand-crafts, arts." Her slides show a



peaceful El Salvador, where the sun sets over wooded mountains, where people hold street festivals. There are no signs of strife.

By the El Salvador booth is one of the loveliest displays. The Honduras booth has no MSC chairs or tables in it. Instead, it is draped in fishnets. Pine needles carpet the tile, intricately carved wooden chairs hold artifacts and pottery, while gentle guitar music accompanies the travel slides.

On the other hand, the Iranian booth is stark. It features some native clothing, but is mostly decorated with political pamphlets. It will take more than pretty slides and peppy music to change Iran's tainted image.

Above, ierre Faras, a sophomore accounting major from Lebanon, plays a game of backgammon with Rick Ranzau, a senior marketing major from San Jose, Calif. Above right, Nimit Stapol, a freshman chemical engineering major, talks about Thailand, his home country. Below right, graduate economics student Ruby Pandey of India answers a question asked by Jane Khouw, a freshman general studies major from Dallas. Below left, a group of students from India share artwork along with some information about their country's population.

Along with maintaining the booths, the I.S.A. is selling t-shirts to celebrate the week (\$7.50 in U.S. money, please), and tonight it will host a Food Fair, featuring food from the 85

countries represented in the organization. After the fair, which is in the MSC, the I.S.A.

will sponsor a fashion and talent show in Rudder Auditorium.



All photos by Janet Golub

Above, Rubina Jahan, a sophomore business major from Bangladesh, puts last minute touches on a display of clothing from her native country. Below, Nabil Hussein, left, a freshman electrical engineering major, and John Rad, a junior civil engineering major, both from Palestine, check out some of the items in their booth.

