

Firemen burning to learn

Firefighting school begins

by Rusty Roberts

Battalion Reporter
More than 2,500 Texas municipal firefighters, instructors and sales representatives are on the Texas A&M campus this week to sharpen their firefighting knowledge, a training school specialist said Monday.

Lewis Williams, associate training specialist for the Texas A&M Fire Protection School, said the school is designed to encourage training and better fire protection techniques for Texas firefighters.

The firemen will attend classroom and field training this week. The students attend six hours of instruction a day and a night class Monday. They then must take a final examination Friday. Williams said the examination covers theory from the classroom and practical application from field training.

He said basic field training

includes how to properly hold a fire hose, prevent smoke inhalation and forcibly enter a structure without causing damages. The more advanced classes, he said, deal with electrical and structural fires and the chemicals used to prevent them.

The program is one of the best in the nation with visitors coming from all over the United States and abroad to observe the teaching methods and the efficiency with which the program is run, Williams said. Volunteer instructors are coming from all over the nation to teach the newest firefighting techniques.

"We charge each firefighter a registration fee of \$175," Williams said. "That covers the school's expenses for things like hoses, chemicals and fuel as well as renting classrooms on campus. But it probably would be triple that amount if we didn't have sales representatives donating some of the more expensive demonstration equipment."

More than 1,500 of the students, instructors and sales representatives are being housed for the week in Hobby, Neeley, McFadden, Haas and Clements halls while the remaining 1,000

are staying in local hotels. Food and lodging are not included in the registration fee.

The Fire Protection Training Division at Texas A&M conducts the firefighting school. It is one of 16 separate training divisions of the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

The fire protection division is sponsoring three firefighting programs: municipal firefighting this week, industrial firefighting next week and a special program for Spanish-speaking firefighters the week beginning Aug. 5.



Double dive

photo by Kelly Krauskopf

Andy Dutton, 15, shows off his double dive at the Wofford Cain pool. Dutton is visiting College Station

from State College, Pa. With July's high temperatures, the pool is one of the popular places on campus.

Profs double as policemen

by Eric Evan Lee

Battalion Reporter
A group of Texas A&M professors, who also serve as College Station reserve policemen, will soon put their academic expertise to work in the police department.

Tim Coppinger, the officer in charge of the College Station police reserve unit, said the professors are helping with driver safety, physical fitness programs in the department, and the crime prevention unit.

Jackson Wagner, a professor in the College of Medicine, is working on a physical fitness program to help police officers improve their physical conditioning to cope with the job.

Wagner said the program would be introduced gradually over a one-year period.

Coppinger said he joined the reserves to learn more about law enforcement and municipal law and to get a different perspective on the community. He said most officers of the reserve joined to be involved in the community.

The cost of joining the reserves is about \$500. The weapon is the most expensive item, David Bergen of the Student Activities Office said. The city pays about \$1,000 to train each officer and put him on the street, he said.

The reserves learn a lot of the basics in a 70-hour training course, Bergen said, but most of

their education will come from on-the-job training.

The officers, he said, will

work in all phases of the police department, including jailing, patrolling, and writing reports.



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Hilton, Sheraton plan local hotels

by Robert McGlohn

Battalion Staff
Sunbelt Hotels of Houston announced the details of a Hilton hotel and the Sheraton hotel in College Station. For a year, Sunbelt has been beating them to the punch on a fixed-price plan for a hotel — the Sheraton Conference Center."

The Hilton press conference has been postponed until it can be given on the site of the hotel with a bulldozer ready to invest. Diane Olson, public relations director of Sunbelt, said Monday. The recent publicity about hotels in the Bryan-College Station area caused the postponement, Olson said.

Sunbelt, a hotel ownership and management company, first proposed building a Hilton on the Texas A&M campus last year. That proposal was killed when the Texas attorney general ruled that the long-term lease Sunbelt wanted was tantamount to selling University land, which Texas law forbids.

Hilton has not said where its hotel will be built, but it is expected to be within a few hundred yards of the Sheraton Conference Center, which is to be located at 925 East University Drive.

Construction on the Sheraton hotel will begin in September, Monica O'Conner of Vance-Matthew Inc., a Beaumont public relations firm, said Monday. The hotel will be a six-story building with 300 guest rooms and six meeting rooms. In addition, the hotel will be connected to a one-story conference center with convention facilities and a ballroom that will seat 600.

The hotel lobby and bar will be located in a clear-span atrium connecting the hotel with the conference center. Also included in plans for the hotel are parking for 453 cars, a restaurant and a swimming pool. O'Conner said the hotel will be built primarily to serve the large conference market generated by Texas A&M.

John Richards, scheduling and services manager for the University Center, said the University Center alone handles 150 conferences each year, bringing 40,000 to 45,000 people to College Station annually for an average stay of 2.76 days. Those conferences — which don't include conferences held in other buildings, such as the Academic and Agency Building or Zachry Engineering Center — bring in about \$7 million a year in outside revenue, Richards said.

Betty Young, general manager of the Ramada Inn in College Station, said that even the large number of conventions

Texas A&M attracts will not be enough to support a Ramada Inn, a Hilton, a Sheraton and all the motels in College Station.

"Somebody's going to go bankrupt," Young said. "I just can't see them coming in. I don't understand it."

The Ramada Inn, originally built in 1963, expanded with a 17-floor tower in 1983. Young said a nine-floor tower was originally planned, but that 17 floors were built in anticipation of future business.

However, the top five floors of the tower have yet to be completed, Young said, because there isn't enough demand for the rooms. She said the top floors probably will be converted to apartments or business suites.

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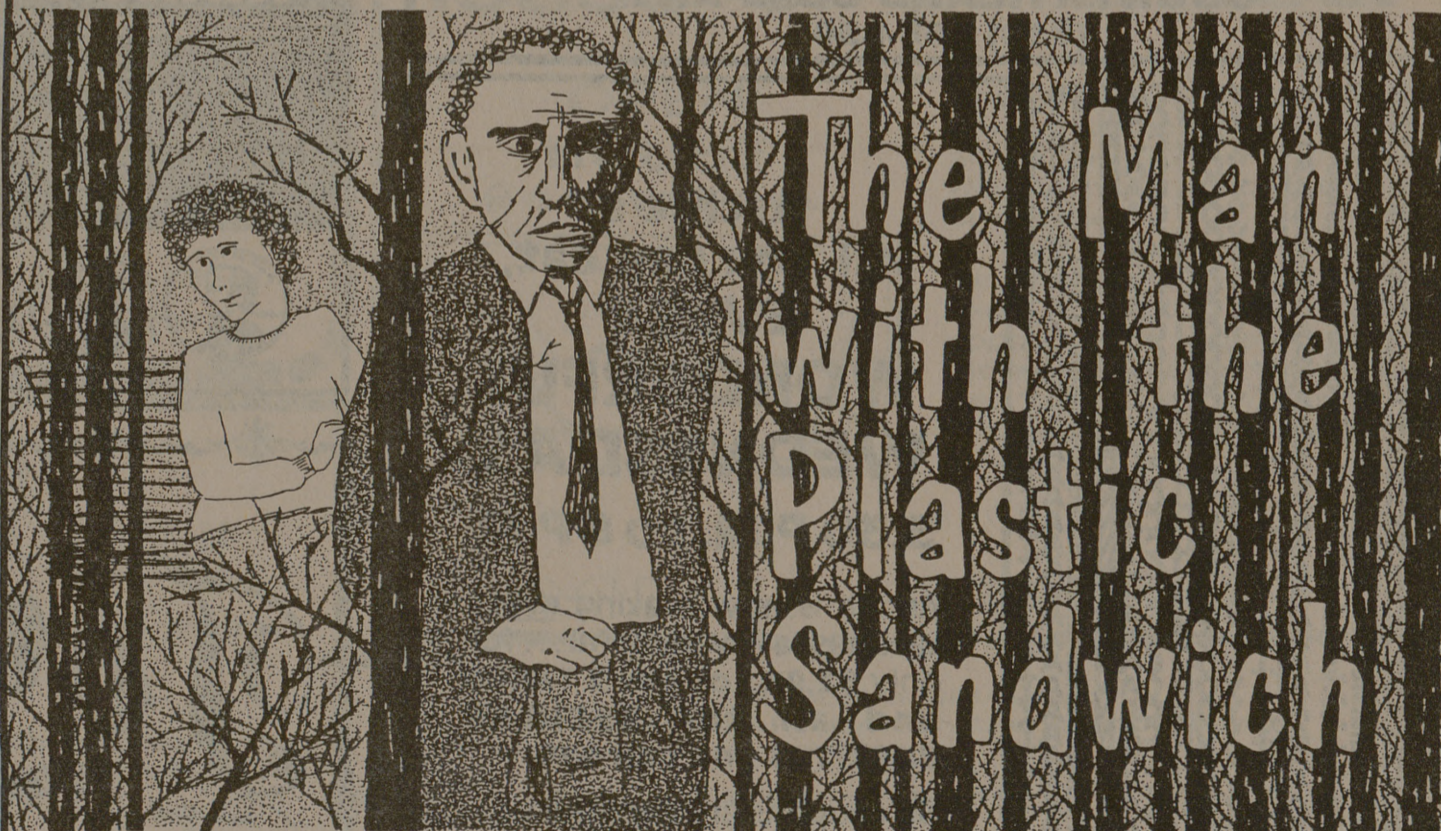
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