

STATE AND LOCAL

Awareness groups expose students to different ideas

By LESLIE MALONE
Reporter

"Flouride affects more than teeth." "We want ecological consciousness." "Human rights need to be improved." "Wearing a button is not enough."

What sounded like the lobbying arena at the state capitol, was actually Political Awareness Day held Wednesday at the Memorial Student Center.

Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the Student Government Legislative Study Group, Sanctuary Advocate, Aggies Against Drunk Drivers, Safewater Foundation and the Brazos Valley Peace Action League were among the 20 groups which participated in the event.

Most of the representatives agreed that the awareness day, sponsored by Political Forum, was a good idea for Texas A&M.

Martha Bebis, representative for the Safewater Foundation, said Political Awareness Day was a positive thing for students because it exposes them to the various political beliefs they may encounter after college. Exposure now can give a student a head start, she said.

Three A&M students were on

hand to discuss Greenpeace. "Most students don't know what it's all about," Gilbert Gonzalez said. "We (Greenpeace) are mostly environmental and all that goes along with it, like nuclear proliferation, toxic waste and animal protection."

Gonzalez said that the awareness day was a chance to attract people to the group.

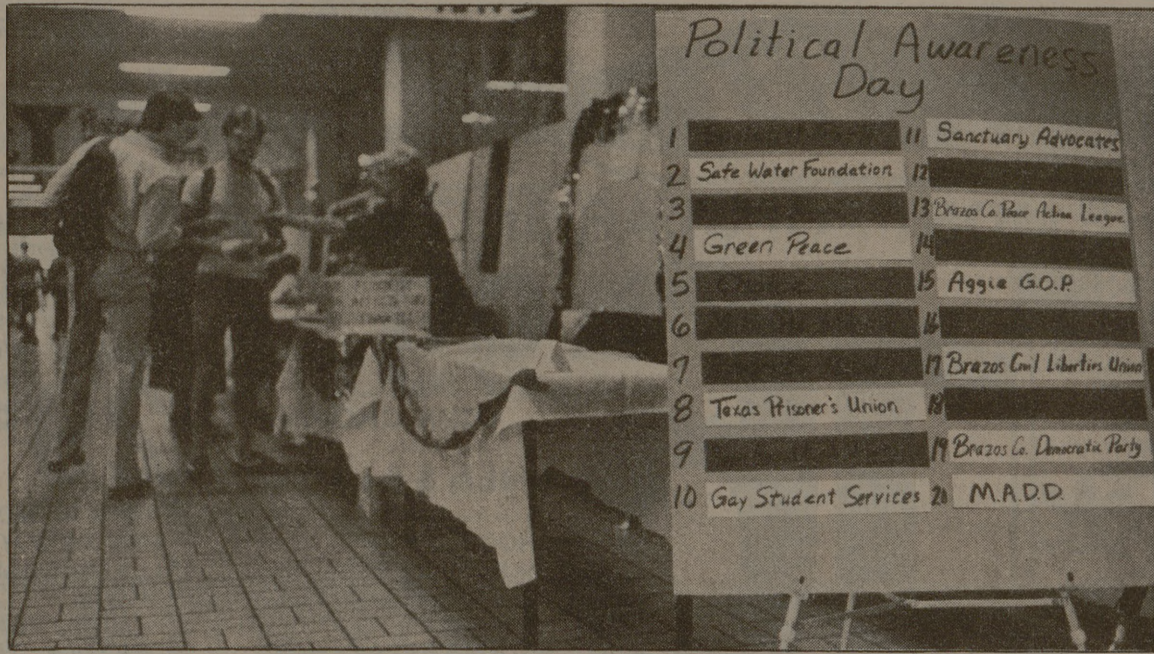
Nader Kabbani, a junior electrical engineering major from Jordan, was reading an information sheet on Greenpeace.

"I think Americans don't really know what's going on outside the United States," Kabbani said. "When I am with my friends and I start listening to the news they don't even pay attention. They only know what goes on here."

The representatives for Sanctuary Advocates, Hugh Stearns and Nita Heiman, said they thought the event was somewhat of a farce in that A&M has a Political Awareness Day when it should have a political awareness environment.

"A&M should be politically aware every day," Stearns said.

Kris Parsons, who represented the Brazos Valley Peace Association, said: "It's a wonderful opportunity



Booths were set up Wednesday as part of Political Awareness Day.

Photo by DEAN SAITO

for an organization to distribute information. I have been here the last three years and it is the high point of spring for me."

The Legislative Study Group was at the event, attempting to get students involved in issues that concern them. LSG is an student group which lobbies in Austin on issues such as the drinking age, tuition in-

creases and the Landlord Tenant Code.

The tenant code is one issue the group is concerned with and is hoping, through the awareness day, to get students involved in the issue.

John Hatch, the committee director, said students have been losing their security deposits from the

apartments that have declared bankruptcy.

"The landlords have been putting the deposits in with the whole pot," Hatch said. "The deposits do not belong to the landlord, unless there is a breach of contract. We are trying to get students to contact their representative, Richard Smith, and get involved because it concerns them."

Bill would let Texans vote in primaries

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Texas Democrats urged the Senate State Affairs Committee Wednesday to approve a bill that would let the state's voters take part in the "super Tuesday" presidential primaries.

"It's time we made our voice heard in selecting a presidential nominee," said Sen. Chet Edwards, D-Duncanville.

There were no opposing witnesses from the Republican party although two GOP members of the committee closely questioned the need for the measure.

At Edwards' request the bill was left pending in the committee with a vote on it likely next week.

A similar House bill, by Rep. Clint Hackney, D-Houston, was given a public hearing two weeks ago but is still pending without a committee vote.

Edwards' measure, which has been endorsed by the State Democratic Executive Committee, would change the state law to require both Democratic and Republican parties to hold a presidential primary the second Tuesday in March, then a second general primary election later for selection of state and local party nominees.

Anyone voting in one party's presidential primary could not change and vote in the other party's general primary election.

Texas Republicans have been holding presidential primaries for some time at the time they vote in the May party primary.

Texas Democrats in the past have chosen their delegates for national conventions, where the presidential nominee is named, through a caucus system. Under Edwards bill, 75 percent of the delegates would be named according to the popular vote in the presidential primary and 25 percent through party conventions.

Voice of America heard in homes worldwide

Associated Press

PORT ARTHUR — One blue and white van is taking Texas into the living rooms of the world, beaming a bit of Lone Star style behind the Iron Curtain.

The van is actually a recording studio on wheels belonging to the Voice of America, an international shortwave radio station operated by the U.S. government. The Voice speaks in 38 languages and broadcasts worldwide, primarily in Communist countries.

It spoke recently from the Port Arthur Civic Center.

Three VOA correspondents and one engineer are currently taking the van through Texas on a trip that will wind up in Fort Worth at the end of April. The present crew will be relieved by another crew, and the van will continue to crisscross the country.

"We're talking to the people, getting to parts of the United States that don't normally get covered," said Robert Sivak, the English language correspondent on the van.

The traveling van is a relatively new concept for the VOA. Engineer Bob Cole said the van went into operation on Jan. 18 of this year, beginning its never-ending trek in Nashville.

Built in San Antonio, the van carries complete multi-track recording and broadcast equipment. It houses a small studio, where the interviews are made and sent to the VOA's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The Voice of America was established in

1942 as part of the U.S. Office of War Information. The main broadcast signal is propelled by two million watts of power and supplemented by over 100 relay stations around the world.

Programs, everything from news to rock and roll, are offered in mainly English, Russian and Chinese languages. The VOA is charged with promoting a positive image of the United States, a duty some consider to be pure propaganda.

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