

# State and Local

## International Week yields cultural insights

By Maria Elena Saade  
Reporter

More people participated in this year's International Week than ever before, Tina Watkins, international students adviser, said as the event wound down this weekend.

International Week concluded Saturday night with an awards ceremony naming Mexico the club of the year. Christine Stanley, president of the International Students Association from Jamaica, said Mexico was named outstanding club of the year for holding the biggest conference ever put on by any club at A&M.

The International Students Association also gave an award to the outstanding international student of the year. Gabriel Carranza, the talent show chairman from Mexico, won the award. Carranza said a person has to have a minimum 3.7 grade-point ratio to compete. The student who wins also has to have participated in many extracurricular activities, he said.

Carranza was the director of the Mexico-U.S.A. Conference at A&M last semester.

This year's events, under the theme of "We All are One," included a cultural display, food fair, fashion and talent show. All the events, except the fashion show, were judged.

Indonesia took the most prizes, to become the overall International Week winner.

Carranza presented awards for winning countries in the talent show, in which 23 countries participated.

"I give first place to everyone for all the work," Carranza said. "Judges went through the painful task of selecting first, second and third places because shows don't compare."

Indonesia won first place with a mock traditional wedding ceremony. Carranza said the ceremony was precisely coordinated.

India won second place with the "Soor Sangam Dancers," while third place went to the Philippines for a song called "Balut-Penoy."

Ram Thiagarajan, a senior biochemistry major from India, said their show was an Indian folk dance from the Indian state of Gujarat.

"It is a very complex dance,"

Thiagarajan said. "We had 20 people in it and it took a lot of synchronization."

Three countries were given honorable mention — Panama, Brazil and Puerto Rico. The Panamanian and Puerto Rican clubs presented native dances. The Brazilians competed with a song.

Cultural Display Chairman Hamed Shahkshir presented the award to the winner of the displays. Ireland took first place, Indonesia second and Malaysia won third. Honorable mentions went to Lebanon, Turkey and Mexico.

Sandra Burke and Dr. John Lally from Ireland said their display was an Irish thatched cottage with white-washed walls. They said they showed Irish beers including Guinness, wool displays and Irish family name maps. They also had demonstrations of Ireland's national sport called "hurling," which is the fastest field game in the world.

Shahkshir said this year was the

first time Ireland participated in International Week.

In addition to being able to compete for prizes, each booth had a box to collect donations for UNICEF. The displays' collections added up to \$755 this year. This is the second time UNICEF has taken part in the cultural display contest.

Competitors winning in the food fair were awarded their prizes by Bruno del Rio, Food Fair chairman from Mexico.

"On the way up here," del Rio said, "I kept thinking how we are all winners. I admire how students can get together, gather the efforts and put together International Week."

Students from each country had to make three different dishes at 300 servings each. People who attended the fair had 14 tickets apiece they could exchange for bite-sized food portions from the countries of their choice.

Del Rio said winning the food fair contest depended on taste, hospitality, appearance of the booth and

how many tickets the country got. "Judges loved every bite they had," del Rio said.

Indonesia again won a first place with its presentation of chicken sate, yellow rice and corn cake, del Rio said.

India carried second place. Thiagarajan said the club made chicken curry with decorated rice. The rice included tomatoes, parsley and eggs, Thiagarajan said.

Prem Ramamirtham, a graduate student from India, said the club also presented a tray of rice decorated with the colors of the Indian flag — orange, white and green. He said they served a sweet called gulab jansun for dessert.

France won third place with its offering of croissants, disguised fruits with salmon paste, bread of fish and quiche lorraine.

Honorable mentions in the food fair went to Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Brazil.

## Panamanian says office will stay open

HOUSTON (AP) — The consul general of the Panamanian consulate in Houston says she will keep her office open, even though the U.S. State Department no longer recognizes her as a representative of the crisis-torn nation.

Dr. Carmen Crespo is among 17 consular officers across the nation whose appointments were terminated last week at the request of Juan B. Sosa, the Panamanian ambassador to the United States under ousted President Eric Arturo Delvalle.

But Crespo, 55, said Sosa does not have the authority to terminate the consular appointments.

"To begin with, Mr. Sosa is not our ambassador in the United States," Crespo said.

Crespo, who remains loyal to Panama strongman and de facto leader Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, said a new Panamanian ambassador, Aquilino Boyd, was to arrive in Washington Sunday.

Raul St. Malo, the deputy chief of missions at the Panamanian consulate in Washington, said that Crespo is one of the consular officers who was dismissed.

"She will either have to leave the country or get some kind of permit," said St. Malo.

The United States recognizes Delvalle, who remains in hiding in Panama, and Sosa as legitimate representatives of Panama.

"Delvalle is a stupid man," Crespo said. "For many months, he was working with us, and now he has gone the other way. He is stupid, crazy and vulgar."

She said Jorge Abadia Arias, Panama's minister of foreign affairs, contacted her from Panama Friday afternoon and told her to continue operating the consulate as usual. She has not received formal notification that her appointment has been terminated, she said.

## Experts study frequency of MS cases in panhandle

AMARILLO (AP) — A chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society is surveying former Panhandle residents with the disease as the group explores why the area has twice the national average number of multiple sclerosis victims.

The national group estimates that MS, a degenerative disease of the central nervous system, strikes 50 of every 100,000 persons in the South and Southwest, said Fredricka Gens, coordinator of the Panhandle chapter.

"At 50 per 100,000, we should have about 200 cases," Gens said. "We have twice that number because we have about 400 people

with MS."

The 10-page survey, consisting of 36 questions, was sent last week to 400 people across the nation who once lived in the Texas Panhandle and registered at the local chapter as having multiple sclerosis.

The confidential survey is aimed at the people with MS who want to remain anonymous — a revelation that could cost them their jobs and medical insurance as well as damage their personal lives, said JoAnn Holt, executive director of the Panhandle chapter.

Holt told the *Amarillo Globe News* that another 200 people

may have MS in the Panhandle and not have told anyone.

The only identifying information the survey requests is a Panhandle zip code, Gens said, so officials can determine if any pattern exists from where MS victims lived in the area.

"Researchers believe now that MS is caused by a virus in the first 14 years of life, which lies dormant until a person is usually in his 20s or 30s," Gens said. "So we want to know where they lived in their first 14 years of life."

The cause and the cure of MS has stumped researchers for decades. The disease affects approximately 250,000 Americans.

## Chemical acid leak at Amoco refinery quickly controlled

TEXAS CITY (AP) — Residents received a scare Sunday when a chemical leak was reported at the Amoco refinery, bringing back memories of a similar problem at another plant last October that forced the evacuation of 3,000 people.

Sunday's leak of isobutane, however, was quickly brought under control by workers, Amoco spokesman Ray Thompson said.

"We immediately shut down the unit and isolated the line that was leaking," Thompson said. "We sounded the alarm in the refinery

and put water mist on the leak."

The leak of isobutane, which contains 5 percent or less of hydrofluoric acid, was discovered by unit personnel at about 11:30 a.m., he said.

Thompson said the plant's emergency response personnel handled the leak and did not require help from the Texas City fire or police departments. He also said that no injuries were reported.

Thompson said there was no reason to believe that any hydrofluoric acid left the refinery.

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