

# The Battalion



**WEATHER**

FORECAST for WEDNESDAY:  
Partly cloudy and mild.

HIGH:61

LOW:45

## Senate approves plan to expand A&M system

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

Amid Aggie jokes, the Senate approved two bills Monday that would merge five South Texas universities with the Texas A&M University and University of Texas systems.

A bill to make Texas A&I University at Kingsville, Corpus Christi State University and Laredo State University part of the A&M system led to the Aggie jokes.

Sen. J.E. "Buster" Brown, R-Lake Jackson, said he is an A&I graduate, and asked if the merger means "that I'm going to be an Aggie?"

Sen. Chet Brooks, D-Pasadena, said some felt the A&I-A&M merger is "really a move for economic austerity, because you only have to change one letter." But he said some UT students are a "little worried that you might change the wrong letter."

"Would you kind of help them get the right letter changed?" Brooks said.

Co-sponsor Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, said he thought the merger would be in the best interest of all future students at A&I.

"I assure you everybody's a winner under this bill," Truan, also a former A&I student, said.

A&M's Board of Regents voted in November to merge with the three member University System of South Texas. Earlier in November, UT's Board approved a similar merger with Pan American.

There was no discussion on Brownsville Sen. Hector Uribe's proposal to merge Pan American's institutions at Edinburg and Brownsville with the statewide UT system.

Both bills were sent to the House on voice votes.

Also Monday, a Senate panel approved establishing a law school at

Texas A&I University and making Corpus Christi State University a four-year institution.

The bills would help offset the lack of professional and doctoral programs available in South Texas, Truan said.

"In South Texas we've lost a great number of young people... because they have wanted to go elsewhere to continue their education," Truan said. "We'd like to help them stay home."

The Senate Education Committee approved setting up a law school at A&I by 9-1, and the proposal to make CCSU a four-year university beginning in 1994 passed the committee, 10-0.

Both measures will be sent to the full Senate.



**Fan-tastic**

Shigeko Johnson, a member of the Sakura Folk Dance Group, performs a traditional Japanese dance. The dance was sponsored by the International Student Association.

Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

## Bush returns from China, comes to Tower's defense

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush returned home Monday night from a five-day Asian voyage that he pronounced a "productive and rewarding" journey and moved to take personal command of the struggle to win confirmation for John Tower as defense secretary.

In a prepared statement he read at the foot of the ramp to Air Force One, Bush said his trip to Japan, China and South Korea demonstrated that the United States "is and will remain a Pacific power."

"It's great to be home," Bush said in the chilly darkness at Andrews Air Force Base in suburban Maryland. "God bless the United States of America."

Vice President Dan Quayle was on hand to welcome the new president back from his first overseas voyage.

In his brief statement, the president said he had held "thoughtful and candid conversations" with world leaders, including the several he met with in Japan, where he attended the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. From there he went to China for two days, followed by a five-hour stopover in Seoul.

"I return tonight pleased with the progress made toward lasting and mutually beneficial relationships," Bush said.

He said work remains to be done toward encouraging the growth of democracy, working for human rights and strengthening international alliances.

Bush made no direct reference to the Tower nomination in his airport statement.

But in comments to reporters just before his plane touched down, he said, "No one has challenged his qualifications to head the Pentagon."

"I don't have any predictions nor do I plan to waver one iota and I don't intend to," he said.

Tower has been plagued by allegations of drinking and womanizing, as well as possible conflicts of interest stemming from the hundreds of thousands of dollars he received as a defense industry consultant in recent years.

Asked whether Tower's weekend vow of alcohol abstinence would help his chances, Bush laughed and said, "I don't know."

Aides said the president intended to spare no effort in a bid to prevail in the first high-stakes political struggle of his administration.

## SMU class offers student-athletes new perspective

DALLAS (AP) — Student-athletes at Southern Methodist University are now required to enroll in a new course about college sports that includes a look at the recruiting scandal that cost the school two football seasons.

"Current Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics" provides athletes with a perspective on sports they probably wouldn't get in the locker room, said Cynthia Patterson, course instructor and assistant athletic director for compliance and academic affairs.

The course includes a discussion of the recruiting scandal that resulted in the NCAA imposing its "death penalty" on SMU, costing the school its 1987 football season. The school decided against playing football in 1988.

"One of the reasons the course exists is directly tied to that recent past," Patterson said.

Athletic Director Doug Single says the course is "an attempt to deal with potential problems ahead of time, as opposed to trying to put out fires after the fact."

Patterson said, "We wanted to talk about athletics in a broader context than nuts and bolts, about how intercollegiate athletics is part of a larger culture."

When the class gathered last week in a gymnasium at the campus recreation center, Patterson and 26 students began a discussion about educational disadvantages many black students face.

A white student said he thought the required Scholastic Aptitude Test score of 700 for athletes was not too high.

"Yes it is," retorted freshman football player Charles Moore. "For you, it's not. But when you've never seen an SAT in your life, it's not going to be easy. Especially when you have to take it five days before you go to college."

Moore said the class has taught him to take his studies seriously.

"When I came here, I concentrated on getting easy courses and majoring in eligibility," he said. "But some of the statistics we've read about graduation rates have shocked me."

## A&M baseball team claims No. 1 spot in national poll

By Jerry Bolz

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR



Photo by Jay Janner

A&M second baseman Terry Taylor watches a pitch during batting practice Monday at Olsen Field.

The Texas Aggie baseball team earned its first-ever No. 1 national ranking Monday.

The 13-0 Aggies edged out the University of Florida in the ESPN/Collegiate Baseball weekly poll, jumping from No. 6 last week to the top spot. In the Baseball America poll, A&M is No. 2 behind Mississippi State (2-0).

The only other Texas team ranked in the top 25 of either poll is the University of Texas, which is No. 4 in the ESPN/Collegiate Baseball poll and No. 13 in the Baseball America poll.

A&M senior pitcher Scott Centala said he feels the team has the best nine starting players in the country.

"I don't feel like we're overrated at all," Centala said. "I think we deserve it — every bit of it."

Coach Mark Johnson played down the No. 1 ranking.

"We're not as hung up about it as a lot of others are," he said. "We're not making X's on our gloves for wins or anything."

The Aggies will face the first testing of their top ranking today in a doubleheader in Beaumont against Lamar University.

Centala, who is used mostly as a relief pitcher, will start the first game. He said the Aggies should handle the Cardinals with no problem if they maintain concentration during the games.

Johnson said he doesn't know exactly what to expect from Lamar's ace starter Joey Alexander (2-0), who has a 1.20 earned-run average. A&M is averaging more than nine runs per game and has a team batting average of .361.

Freshman Sean Lawrence will start the second game for the Aggies against Lamar's Linc Mikkelsen (0-2). Lawrence gave up three runs in three innings in his only appearance.

## Trade embargo makes Texas ostrich breeding profitable proposition

By Juliette Rizzo

STAFF WRITER

The goose that laid the golden egg may no longer be a myth in the Southwest.

Because the South African trade embargo has blocked the importation of ostrich products from the country, the value of female breeding ostriches and their chicks has increased in the U.S.

Hot, arid states where the winters are mild and the environmental surroundings are similar to Africa, now have the potential to become sites for profitable ostrich breeding industries.

Scarcity of hides since the embargo has caused the price of ostrich hides to increase, thus making the breeding of ostriches in Texas a reality. Some West Texas farmers and ranchers, accustomed to raising cattle, have been prompted to envision their land as grounds where the ostriches can breed and roam.

Dr. James Jensen, who directs the care of exotic animals, including ostriches, in Texas A&M's veterinary teaching hospital said dealing with the embargo hasn't been simple because the United States imports 20,000 hides per year.

Ostriches are used for boots and leather goods and their feathers are used in the fashion industry. The feathers are more than just a fashion plume, Jensen said.

"The feathers are used in dusters," he said, "and with the new space-age technology, the natural fibers are the best for cleaning electrical equipment and dusting microchips."

The United States has found a way around the trade embargo by importing tanned hides from Botswana, which gets its untanned hides from South Africa. However, the prices of the Botswanan hides are high.

Because South Africa wants to keep its corner of the market, Jensen said, the United States must learn how to breed quality birds.

"There are probably more ostriches in Texas than in other east

African countries where ostriches roam in the wild," Jensen said. "Because Texas is the largest ostrich populated area outside of Africa, we need to learn how to breed properly and produce quality products."

Texas is home to 2,000-3,000 ostriches. The birds lay eggs almost year-round in Texas' warm climate. With proper breeding, the ostrich population could easily double or triple in Texas, he said.

To produce quality birds and products, ostriches must be bred and cultivated selectively, Jensen said.

"In the United States, ostriches have been inbred indiscriminately and their feather selection is substandard," he said. "We need to learn the process of producing quality birds so we can compete in the world market."

Interest in properly breeding the ostriches drew veterinarians, breeders and ostrich owners from around the world and the United States to a recent two-day conference at A&M sponsored by the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Jensen explained how the ostrich breeding industry has a positive financial outlook for the future if proper breeding is mastered.

"Ostrich reproduction rates are higher than those of other animals," he said. "Hardly any other livestock in North America can pay for itself in one year."

A female worth \$1,000 at one time is now valued at \$30,000 if it can be bred.

Jensen dismissed the myth that ostriches stick their heads in the sand, which would be difficult to do in Texas' hard clay soil.

The conference, the first devoted to the management, housing and treatment of ostriches, was successful, Jensen said, and will be held again next year.

With greater knowledge of how to successfully breed the ostriches, Jensen said, "someday we will be able to face the situation of converting ostrich breeding to a true agribusiness" in the United States.