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# STATE & LOCAL

Wednesday, November 8, 1989

## Trolleys modernize transit as B-CS steps back in time

By Cindy McMillian

Of The Battalion Staff

Walking up to Carnegie Public Library in Bryan Tuesday was like stepping back in time.

About 200 people wearing white styrofoam campaign-style hats and their Sunday best gathered to welcome the Interurban Trolley System, Bryan-College Station's first form of public transportation since rail trolleys were used at the turn of the century.

Today's trolleys are actually buses that run on rubber wheels instead of rails, but they look like the real thing.

Dixieland music played over speakers while crowd members munched on popcorn and waited for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to begin. Flags were draped over the back platform of one trolley, where local officials stood to give speeches as if they were on a nineteenth-century campaign tour by train.

Bryan Mayor Marvin Tate was the first to greet the crowd, hailing the new system as a "milestone" for the community.

"We're making history here today," he said.

Chris Kling, president-elect for 1990 of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, said the system should facilitate business and commerce in the area. The trolleys will provide a link between homes and jobs, connect shoppers and businesses and attract visitors, he said.

The chief administrator of the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Dale Marisco, called the system "user-friendly and cost-friendly." His agency, in cooperation with the Texas Highway Department, created the Brazos Transit System to run the trolleys, which was paid for with state and federal funds.

After the formalities, onlookers climbed aboard the trolley run to the College Station Convention & Visitors Bureau and a closer look at the trolleys.

Dark green on the outside with wooden-etched windows, the trolleys have an old-fashioned appearance. Slatted wood and wrought-iron benches about 30 passengers inside.

The traveling anachronism drew puzzled looks, then smiles and waves, from pedestrians it passed way through downtown Bryan and along East Street.

Another reception took place at the Convention Visitors Bureau, with College Station Mayor Ringer speaking.

Ringer said he has received several requests for public transportation from citizens and is glad it's being provided. The trolleys will allow people to transportation new employment opportunities, he said, and will help alleviate traffic and parking problems.

Outgoing B-CS Chamber President David Stoberger said the system has been in the works for 15 years, and now in practice, will "bring us to a level of competitiveness."

The four trolleys and one 47-passenger trolley bus were scheduled to begin regular service at 6 a.m. today. A trolley or bus will visit each of the 300 stops, marked by a sign with the scheduled time of departure, once an hour.

Trolleys run on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Rides usually cost 50 cents for adults, 25 cents for children ages 6 to 12 and nothing for children under 6, but fares are free for the month of November to promote the system.

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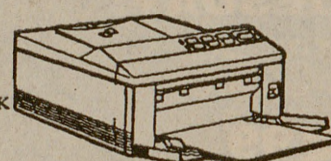
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## Speaker from Cousteau Society outlines environmental dangers

By Todd Connelley

Of The Battalion Staff

Imagine an iceberg the size of Rhode Island breaking off from the massive ice-continent that is called Antarctica. Imagine a society so desperate for fuel that they reduce what once was a rich forest into a vast, barren wasteland. Imagine 11 million gallons of crude oil spilling into a sea of tranquility. Stop imagining.

Environmental problems of the world was the topic of a presentation given by Peter Burtchell of the Cousteau Society Tuesday night in Rudder Theater. Burtchell's lecture and moving slide presentation concluded the daylong Environmental Symposium presented by MSC Great Issues.

"One of our main concerns is that people today aren't aware of what is happening to this beautiful planet,"

Burtchell told a crowd of about 75. He outlined three basic threats to the planet.

The stress of so many people impacting upon a limiting resource can seriously disrupt an ecosystem, he said.

"One-third of the earth's population lives within forty miles of the coast, this puts an amazing amount of stress on the beaches," he explained.

The continuing destruction of high diversity ecosystems like the Amazon Rain Forests contributes 25 percent to the world's carbon dioxide buildup.

"The natives will burn off a section of the rain forest, use the highly nutritious soil until it's depleted, and then move on," Burtchell said.

"The final problem facing our planet is the amount of waste being

introduced to the environment, exceeding the biosphere's capacity to dispose of it," he said. "In terms — pollution."

Burtchell cited the huge oil spill off Prince William Sound as an example.

"We (Cousteau Society) there just three months earlier a documentary on whales, he said. "When we returned to survey damage, it was unreal. Beaches simply didn't exist anymore, there were no signs of life."

But Burtchell did not condemn the gas company responsible for the March 24th disaster.

"Exxon made a very valuable contribution," he said. "They spent one billion dollars and retrieved 2.3 billion gallons of oil. The problem was it was too much, too late."

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