

Friday, February 22, 1991

The Battalion

## Conference draws international crowd

By Twila Waddy  
The Battalion

Japanese and Russian students are attending the Conference on Student Government Associations for the first time this weekend at Texas A&M.

Delegates from Canada, Greece and the United States also will attend the conference.

"We are expecting between 350 and 380 delegates," Randal Weeks, COSGA director, says. "We have one school from Japan coming, one from Russia, three from Canada and one from Greece."

The conference begins Saturday and continues through Tuesday. In the past, schools from Switzerland and England have participated in the conference, he says.

The Russian students are from Kazan State University, A&M's sister university in the Soviet Union. Kazan is Bryan-College Station's sister city.

The Japanese students attending COSGA are from A&M's campus in Koriyama.

Activities include workshops and round table discussions.

"The workshops this year range from public relations to recycling on campuses, to racism because some universities still have racial problems," Weeks says.

Round table discussions, covering selected topics, are like workshops except they are more one on one, Weeks says.

Both workshops and discussions will deal with topics that relate to communication and leadership roles.

"We basically will be discussing leadership positions, problems dealing with the administration and faculty, motivational skills, better group communication, and public relations between student government and the campus," he says.

Dr. Richard Baldauf, director for the Office of Environmental Education at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, is among the speakers.

"Baldauf will be speaking on environmental issues, alerting people to the type of issues that are around now and what can be done about them," Weeks says.

Other speakers include Capt. Keith E. Carmichael, a military adviser at the Space Station Project Office at NASA. He will talk about leadership experience in college and taking that experience into the career field.

"We are excited about the speakers this year," he says. "They are good speakers."

Although the conference does not have a theme this year, the emphasis is on leadership, motivation and self-improvement.



FREDRICK D. JOE/The Battalion

### In between the raindrops

An unknown Aggie speeds to class Thursday in an effort to stay dry. Saturday will be partly cloudy with highs in the mid-60s.

## Man convicted of poisoning Treaty Oak appeals conviction, becomes eligible for parole

AUSTIN (AP) — The man convicted of poisoning the centuries-old Treaty Oak soon will be considered for parole from his nine-year prison sentence, a state parole official says.

Paul Stedman Cullen, 46, of Elroy, was convicted last May of pouring the powerful herbicide Velpar around the base of the landmark tree, where legend says Stephen F. Austin signed a treaty with the Indians in the 1820s.

The poisoning, which occurred in March 1989, left about three-fourths of the tree dead. The dead portion of the live oak tree will be cut off next month, city officials say.

Authorities never were able to determine a motive but theorized the poisoning may have been in connection with some sort of ritual.

Cullen is eligible for parole because he received credit for the 10 months he spent in jail awaiting trial and because he has earned good-

time credit while in prison, officials say.

If Cullen is paroled, he would be transferred to a federal prison to serve a one-year sentence for lying on a federal form when he bought a rifle in Austin in 1988, officials said.

Spokesman Dan Guerra of the Pardons and Paroles Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, said that with the credit for time in jail, Cullen has served almost 20 months of the sentence. The good-time credit he was given totaled about 28 additional months, meaning he now has credit for serving four of the nine years.

He needed to serve or earn credit for one-fourth of the nine-year sentence before being eligible for parole.

"Everybody's got to make their own judgment," Giedraitis said. "Justice was served as far as I am concerned."

## Democrats unveil bill to reform insurance

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Ann Richards, seeking to make good on a major campaign promise, Thursday joined Democratic lawmakers in unveiling a bill they said would make sweeping reforms in the way insurance companies do business in Texas.

"When it comes to insurance, Texans do not believe that they are in good hands," Richards said.

The legislation, if adopted, would stabilize rates, prevent fraud, reduce insolvencies in the industry and protect consumers, the governor and lawmakers said.

"If there is one message that comes through loud and clear wherever I go in Texas, it is the concern that Texans feel about insurance," Richards said.

Richards contended that some Texans spend as much as 20 percent of their incomes on insurance. "They spend more on insurance than anything but food and housing," she said.

Industry officials quickly disputed the governor's estimate of how much of the average Texan's budget goes to insurance.

"A recent nationwide study ... found that the combined premiums for all types of insurance — life, health, auto, disability, renters and homeowners — account for 5.2 percent of a household's budget," Rick Gentry, vice president of the Insurance Information Institute, said.

"Households spend less on insurance in general than they do for transportation, clothing, retirement, housing or food," he said.

## A&M receives funding to construct satellite uplink

By Julie Hedderman  
The Battalion

A satellite uplink being constructed at Texas A&M will enable professors to lecture all over the world.

A&M is one of six land-grant universities that received partial funding from the federal Public Television Facilities Program to construct the \$319,000 uplink.

Dr. Rodney Zent, director of Educational Broadcast Services, says A&M received \$75,000 in federal

funds and that the Texas A&M University System is providing the rest.

The uplink is part of the Agricultural Satellite Network called AG-SAT.

A&M presently is able to receive signals from a satellite, but is unable to transmit them. The transmitter is in the construction phases and will be completed by June, Zent says.

"The uplink will transmit agricultural information to other land-grant universities or to people in the field," he says.

The College of Agriculture and

Life Sciences presently is using the satellite receiver as part of an agricultural course being sent from Iowa State University.

Students are able to ask questions by sending faxes to the professor.

Zent says this is the first semester an A&M professor has used the satellite to teach a class.

By using AG-SAT, A&M can offer teacher training courses or recruit math and science students, he says.

Zent says A&M will connect AG-

SAT to the Interactive Services Network.

This will enable a professor from one of A&M's branches to use the network to speak to the University. The message then can be transmitted via satellite to anywhere in the world.

This method of communication will limit travel and individual satellite linkup costs, he says.

Zent says AG-SAT will not be limited to the College of Agriculture, which provided part of the funding.

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