


FORECAST
Thursday
 Isolated
 Thunderstorms
 High 95



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 "Well over 400,000 Americans will die prematurely this year from tobacco-induced diseases."
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Rugby rules
 The Texas A&M Rugby team offers action and excitement in extramural sports.
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 Texas A&M students need to go through their long distance company to get a call-blocking option.
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The Battalion

Vol. 90 No. 152 USPS 045360 6 Pages College Station, Texas "Serving Texas A&M since 1893" Wednesday, June 12, 1991

A&M's expert applauds choice of new Soviet ambassador

By Greg Mt. Joy
The Battalion

President Bush's appointment of Robert Strauss as ambassador to the Soviet Union was not a political move but a question of finding the right man for the job, said an international affairs expert. Dr. Ronald L. Hatchett, deputy director of Texas A&M's Mosher Institute for Defense Studies, said if the appointment had been purely political, Bush might have chosen any Democrat. "Strauss was appointed not simply because he is a Democrat, but because he is a unique Democrat," Hatchett said. "Just the advantage he brings to this position through his personal friendship with the president."

Hatchett said this relationship should significantly streamline communication between the White House and the Kremlin. "Strauss can pick up the phone at any time and say 'George, I've got a problem...'" Hatchett said. "This is something that the current ambassador just can't do." The present line of communications for the ambassador to the Soviet Union goes through the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and the Secretary of State, who decides if the ambassador speaks to the president, Hatchett said. "The likelihood of getting through this line is about zero," he said. "Strauss' appointment is a good indicator of the Bush administration's seriousness in dealing with Soviet relations. We are entering a

critical period with the Soviets, and we need the best possible avenues for communication." Hatchett also said Strauss' high profile would be a great aid to the ambassadorship. "With a Democrat of Strauss' reputation as ambassador, it is more likely any policy directed toward the Soviet Union will be perceived as bipartisan," he said. "This makes any sniping by the Democrat-controlled Congress less likely." Hatchett said any attacks on such policy would then be a result of genuine concern for the policy, not partisan political reasons. "The president would know the concern over policy is genuine because it could not be an attempt to gain political capital by criticizing Republican policy,"

he said. Also instrumental in Strauss' appointment is his reputation as a dealmaker, Hatchett said. "A good dealmaker is really what we need at this point in our relations with the Soviets," he said. "We need someone who can tell the Soviets that if they want aid they will have to take steps toward democracy and a market economy. Strauss is capable of making such deals." Hatchett also applauded the Strauss appointment as a rare choice of a political appointment rather than a career diplomat. "Career diplomats are not always a good idea," Hatchett said. "Many of these diplomats actually become advocates of their host government, and no

longer represent the wishes of the American administration." Hatchett said this problem in some ways helped lead to war in the Persian Gulf. "The ambassador to Iraq was a career diplomat," he said. "She lived most of her career in the Middle East and was out of touch with sentiments in the United States. One reason Saddam Hussein didn't know how the Bush Administration felt was because his information from our ambassador was filtered. She was not in tune with U.S. policy." Hatchett said career diplomats are needed as experts but should not be in charge of representing American policy.



RICHARD S. JAMES/The Battalion

Doggie Paddling

Mark Gothelf, of College Station, plays fetch with his dog Alexa in Research Park Tuesday afternoon. Mark said he and Alexa play in the park everyday.

U.S. trade promising

War payments aids \$10.2 billion surplus

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States posted its first quarterly trade surplus in nearly nine years during the first three months of the year, but only because of \$22.7 billion in foreign payments for the Persian Gulf War, the government said Tuesday. The Commerce Department said the rare \$10.2 billion surplus in the current account, the broadest measure of the country's trading performance, would not have occurred without the contributions from Saudi Arabia, Japan and other countries.

The government noted that the country's trade performance also was aided by an all-time high in U.S. export sales and a drop in imports stemming from the recession. The Bush administration said the trade report supported its belief that strength in exports will help the country pull out of the recession. President Bush said Tuesday that while the recession has lasted longer than he expected "a turnaround in the economy appears in the making" even though some sectors remain sluggish.

Referring to recent economic statistics, Bush said he was "bullish on the economy." He said the May unemployment report showed that more than half of all industries added to their payrolls last month, while other reports showed industrial output on the rise. "There's reason to be optimistic," Bush said in an address televised to the American Advertising Federation. "I think things are looking much more promising."

Liberal Arts proposes making minors optional

By Mack Harrison
The Battalion

Future students in Texas A&M's College of Liberal Arts might not have to choose a minor because of a new resolution approved recently by the Liberal Arts Council. The council recommended that the college no longer require minor fields of study for liberal arts students, leaving the decision to the individual departments. Students in departments that do not require minors will still have the option of choosing one. Anna Crockett, coordinator for undergraduate advising, said the college's criteria for accepting minors, however, will be different. Revised minors will require 15 to 18 credit hours, with no more than nine hours of lower-level (100 and 200) courses. No more than six hours may be used to meet other requirements, such as humanistic or social sciences.

Crockett said the college would leave other requirements for minors up to the individual departments. "If the College of Liberal Arts makes minors optional, each department has its own mechanism for determining criteria," she said. The college presently requires liberal arts students to take at least 12 credit hours in their minor, with at least six hours of upper-level (300 and 400) courses. If approved, the changes will not be incorporated into the curriculum until Fall 1992 at the earliest, for students enrolled under course catalog 115. The catalog will not be revised until January. However, the changes have not been officially approved by the College of Liberal Arts. "I'm not sure where it goes from here," Crockett said. "There is quite a bit of time to make a decision." The changes in college requirements were recommended by the Academic Standards Committee and the Curriculum Committee in a memorandum dated April 17.

A&M aids in NASA project

By Peggy O'Hare
The Battalion

Texas A&M mechanical engineering students are working on a project in conjunction with NASA to improve the space shuttle's ability to grasp objects in space. Three students are conducting the project under the supervision of Dr. Louis Everett, Dr. Robin Redfield and Dr. Michael Rabins. The project focuses on transferring control of the shuttle's robotic arm from manually controlled joysticks to computers that will be located on the space shuttle. "We're trying to develop an automated sensor that will fly on the shuttle and enable astronauts to do some very dexterous manipulations, like grappling a satellite that's flying past the shuttle at a

very low speed," said Everett, an associate professor in mechanical engineering. Astronauts now must go outside the shuttle and be strapped to its arm to retrieve a satellite, he said. However, if this project is successful, most manipulations could be handled from inside the shuttle with the mechanical arm, Everett said. Rabins, a professor of mechanical engineering, said the idea for the shuttle arm avoids many of NASA's concerns that the mechanical grapples presently being used might puncture a space suit or the walls of the shuttle. Redfield, an assistant professor of mechanical engineering, said communication with NASA is constant and the project likely will be completed in two or three years.

Redfield said great care is being taken on the project to make the operation safe for astronauts to use. "NASA is very careful about making sure systems that could endanger the life of a crew are extremely fault-tolerant," he said. "One of the problems with the arm is controlling it to move it to a position where it can do the job it needs to do." "Right now the accuracy of its control is not as good as it could be, and it's very slow," Redfield continued. "It can take astronauts a half-hour to 45 minutes to get the arm in position." Redfield said the project involves mounting a camera on the end of the arm that sends informa-

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Future engineers in DOE program give conservation tips to businesses

By Karen Praslicka
The Battalion

University engineering students have a chance to gain report-writing skills and learn how manufacturing business works through the Energy Analysis and Diagnostic Center (EADC), said the center's director Dr. Warren Heffington. Heffington, an associate professor of mechanical engineering at Texas A&M, has been director since 1986, when the program began at A&M. The EADC is funded by the Department of Energy, with only 18 universities involved nationwide. The closest EADC school to A&M is Oklahoma State University. The University City Science Center in

Philadelphia administers the EADC program for the DOE. Heffington said A&M's mechanical engineering department decided to apply to become an EADC school because the EADC would supplement the department's graduate program in energy conservation. "It's a competitive process, and not all schools that apply can become an EADC," Heffington said. The EADC has two main purposes, Heffington said. One is to provide free energy audit services for small- and medium-sized companies that could or would not pay for an audit otherwise. The other purpose is to give college students energy conservation experience.

Heffington said usually the EADC contacts a company and offers an audit, but occasionally a company will request one. Most of the audits are for Houston companies, but A&M's branch of the EADC has traveled as far as Dallas and San Antonio. During an audit, Heffington and the five EADC student employees visit the company and review its utility usage, looking for ways to save energy and money. "Typical savings are 10 or 12 percent of their utility bill," he said. It takes about a year for the company to actually realize the savings, a relatively short payback time, Heffington

said. A formal report, called an Energy Conservation Survey Report, is written for each company summarizing the EADC recommendations. The report also lists the amount the company will save by implementing the recommendations and how much the implementation will cost. Each part of the report is written by student employees. Heffington said the program is a benefit for the student employees. He said the students are able to make money and see the manufacturing business. "We've been in plants that were facing imminent shutdown," Heffington said. "We've been in plants that were brand-

new and those that look like something you would see in Charles Dickens' time." Heffington said seeing how the companies work is good experience, but students also work on their writing skills doing ECS reports. "Writing is often a problem for engineers," he said. "Engineers and engineering students are largely reputed to be deficient in writing skills, and there's a lot of truth in that." Heffington said he looks for students with a high grade-point ratio, flexible schedules and the ability to work well with others. Any company interested in a free energy audit is encouraged to call Heffington at 845-5019.