

## Campus News Briefs

### Civil engineers build bridge, place at contest

The Texas A&M University student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers qualified for a national competition by constructing a 20 foot long bridge that holds up to 2,500 pounds.

This bridge was one of 13 entered into the regional competition held at the University of Texas at Arlington and won third place overall.

The bridge was built by the nine-member team and was judged on aesthetics, deflection and speed of construction.

The team had the fastest building time of three minutes and 28 seconds and came in second place in the aesthetics category.

The civil engineers built the bridge over seven months and tested the bridge in the University's lab a week before the regional competition with concrete bags.

### Program to help bilingual special education

Texas A&M has developed a new graduate program in bilingual special education to help teachers better accommodate the disabled Hispanic population with limited English proficiency.

The two-year program consists of 45 credit hours, which includes a year of required coursework and a year-long internship in the classroom.

Dr. Salvador Ochoa, coordinator of the program and assistant professor of educational psychology, said about one million children in the country require both bilingual and special education.

"There are very few teachers who are trained to work with children who have limited proficiency in English, as well as handicapped," Ochoa said. "Texas A&M has developed the second program in the state for this critical area."

He said, one out of every five children in Texas has limited proficiency in English.

### Dedication of A&M Beef Center Saturday

Texas A&M University's new Beef Center will be dedicated Saturday, Nov. 13, as the first completed phase of the new Animal Science Teaching, Research and Extension Complex.

Dr. Bill Turner, professor of animal science and planning coordinator for the new complex, said the new facility should make Texas A&M

unique among land-grant universities because it is the only complex he is aware of with classrooms, laboratories, animal support facilities and a potential for extensive student interaction with all major agricultural animals so close to campus.

"It will be an all-purpose, interactive facility run not only for the students but by them, and giving them the best opportunity to achieve and integrate everything they learn," Turner said.

The dedication ceremony will be held at 10 a.m.

Scheduled speakers include Texas A&M Interim President E. Dean Gage and Mary Nan West, a member of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

### Gage to review study on stress in universities

Texas A&M University Interim President E. Dean Gage was one of four higher education chief executive officers invited to review the findings of a study on research and education stresses in the nation's universities.

The meeting, hosted by the National Science Board and the Council of the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable, focused on the findings of a project entitled "Stresses on Research and Education at Colleges and Universities." The campus-based project was jointly conducted by the National Science Board and the Roundtable.

Gage said his selection to the panel reviewing the findings was based in part on the fact that Texas A&M is a "top ten university" in both enrollment and its annual expenditures in sponsored research.

### Vet students to sponsor rabies vaccinations

Texas A&M veterinary students will sponsor a rabies vaccination clinic to help increase the awareness of getting pets vaccinated to prevent pets from contracting the deadly rabies virus.

The A&M students work in conjunction with the Brazos Animal Shelter and the Brazos Valley Veterinary Medical Association to sponsor this event, which targets low-income neighborhoods in Bryan.

The clinic is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bryan Central Fire Department.

Pet owners will pay a fee of \$12 per pet, which includes a rabies vaccination and a Brazos county license tag.

General pet care information will be available free of charge.

# A&M students helping at-risk teens

By Jennifer Kiley

THE BATTALION

Texas A&M students are working as mentors to help middle school students who are at risk for alcohol or substance abuse, poor school performance, anti-social behavior or poor achievement.

Dr. Randas Menon is a co-principle investigator for Project BELONG, Building Essential Life Options through New Goals, a program that allows A&M students to work with at-risk teenagers.

Menon said the program has met with some success in helping local youth.

"We are most successful when the adolescent wants to be helped and when the parents are involved," he said.

"One of the successes we have had is a 14-year-old girl who was thrown out of her

home," Menon said. "We worked with the agencies to get her located with another family, and legal guardianship was arranged."

The long-term effects of the one-year-old program have not been measured. Menon said it would take at least two to three years before any evaluations could be made.

Mentors for Project BELONG are trained during a 10-week program. During the training period, mentors learn about tutoring, mediation and conflict resolution.

After the training program, each student mentor is paired with an adolescent most of the whom are 11- to 15-years-old. Mentors work with the teenagers for 10 hours a week for 24 weeks.

"The mentors sit with the adolescents and identify a concrete goal, such as improving interpersonal skills, staying out of trouble or improving work and study habits," Menon said.

The program includes activities aimed toward getting adolescents interested in school.

"We brought them to the A&M campus and showed them the labs, we took a group to NASA in Houston, we had a Career Day, and we took a group to the SMU game this week-end with tickets donated by the Athletic Department," Menon said.

"The idea is to show the adolescents what is available down the road if they are willing to work for it."

Texas A&M student Lisa DaVila completed students the 24-week program. She said the program proved successful for the student that she worked with.

"Some of the kids were not cooperative at all," she said. "I was one of the lucky ones. Mine was very cooperative. She took advantage of the program and really got a lot out of it."

# Study group conducts research on education

By Kim McGuire

THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M University Legislative Study Group is conducting research on issues affecting higher education in order to prepare for the next meeting of the Texas Legislature.

The Legislature won't meet until January 1995, but Karla Staha, LSG chairman, said the organization will keep busy during the "off year" doing research.

"We'll be conducting massive research in many areas that will be affecting the students of Texas A&M," Staha said. "After the research is done, we'll take a stance on it and will represent the views of Texas A&M at the next Legislature."

LSG consists of four subcommittees that conduct research in their respective fields.

The Budget, Financial Aid and Tuition subcommittee is researching areas such as budget and expenditures, tuition and fees, and financial aid.

Holly Womack, subcommittee chairman, said they have concentrated their research efforts on financial aid.

"We've been working with the Legislative Coordinating Board to obtain information about how much is allocated to programs like grants, loans and scholarships," Womack said. "We're very concerned about the status of Pell grants and the possibility of tuition increases."

The Student Regent Subcommittee finds support for creating a student regent position on A&M's Board of Regents and develops a plan of how a student regent could be selected.

Becky Silloway, student regent subcommittee chairman, said LSG

supports the idea behind the student regent plan and plans to voice its support during the next legislative session.

"This idea has been around for the past 30 years and each year it gets a little closer to being passed," Silloway said. "Last year, it passed the Senate and died on the floor of the House."

Staha said the subcommittee is focusing its research on developing qualifications a student regent candidates would need to meet.

"Around 44 states have student regents," Staha said. "We've been looking at what works for them and are trying to determine what the qualifications should be."

Staha said LSG will take trips to Austin to meet with legislators to establish relations before the next legislative session begins.

"Our members are expected to meet with their legislators whenever they can to let them know

what LSG is working on," Staha said. "One of our goals is to increase awareness about LSG and what we're doing."

She said LSG works closely with the Student Senate and must have their approval on all the legislation they advocate.

"That's why we encourage students to talk to their student senators," Staha said. "We encourage them to voice their opinions about the issues we are confronting. They are things affecting us at state and national levels."

Staha said another of LSG's goals is to network with other organizations similar to LSG to assist in research.

"Some of the systems' branches like West Texas State and Galveston are currently setting up LSGs," Staha said. "We want to get them involved because legislation going through the Legislature affects them, too."

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## Sex issues in health textbook cause 'pro-family' debate

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — "Pro-family" advocates predicted a court challenge Thursday if the State Board of Education adopts health textbooks that they said contain objectionable references to sex, homosexuality and contraceptives.

But gay and lesbian supporters said the textbooks should present homosexuality in a sensitive non-judgmental way.

Jonathan Bell, a representative of Out Youth Austin, said gay and lesbian students often feel isolated and fearful at school.

"Schools need to be a safe place for all students," he said, and a proper discussion of homosexuality in a textbook could help that.

But earlier Jeff Fisher, executive director of the American Family Association of Texas, said, "Parents don't send their children to school to debate homosexual adoption or create a 'safe sex' ad campaign, yet that is exactly what these textbooks call for."

Anne Newman, executive director of the Texas Council for Family Values, added, "Students may not be able to locate Europe on a map, but they will be able to locate erogenous zones and sources of condoms and contraception."

Fisher said he anticipates a court challenge if the books are adopted and that he would expect

lawmakers to "have something to say about it" in their 1995 session when they revise the education code.

Fisher and Newman spoke at a news conference before an Education Board hearing on \$103 million in textbooks in various subjects, including health, up for adoption for use beginning next school year or later.

Most would have to be put into classrooms later because board members expect to have only up to \$10 million for new books in the 1994-95 year.

The Education Board was scheduled to take a tentative vote Thursday on the books and final action Friday.

"I do expect that the board will ask for some modifications" in the health textbooks, said board chairwoman Carolyn Crawford of Beaumont. She didn't detail what those changes might be.

Education Commissioner Lionel "Skip" Meno has recommended that the board give grade 7 science books top funding priority. They cost \$9.4 million, while the health books would cost \$7.5 million. Other subjects include pre-calculus, analytic geometry, business law and supplementary readers.

Many of the textbook contents that Newman and Fisher objected to were in the teacher's editions, although some were in student books.