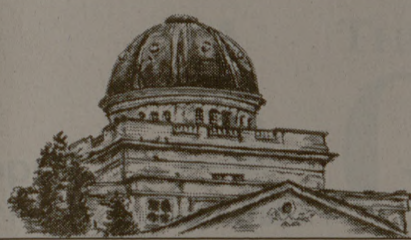


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THE BATTALION

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Friday, January 31, 1997

WarCon to offer live action Convention caters to variety of gaming interests

By SHIKONYA CURETON
THE BATTALION

WarCon '97, a gaming convention sponsored by MSC Nova, is attacking Texas A&M this weekend. The name WarCon was established 24 years ago, when the convention involved only war games. Clay Hanna, committee chair for Nova and a junior business major, said the convention has moved from its original focus of strategic board games. "WarCon now has other games, such as Dungeons and Dragons and Star Wars, which is a card game," he said. "And we also have guests to come speak at the convention and to sell games at discount prices." As the gaming industry has evolved, WarCon has begun to offer enough variety for anybody who likes playing games to participate, he said. "Anybody that wants to learn to play, we

teach them," Hanna said. If someone is looking for more involved games at WarCon, live-action events might suit their tastes. One such event is a murder mystery in a game setting, with the emphasis on interaction. Hanna said participants are given a plot, characters and character roles to play out. He described it as a theatrical interactive experience. Another live action event, called "Amber Real World Event" is based on Roger Zelazny's "Chronicles of Amber," a series of science fiction fantasy books. Hanna said the live-action event takes a scenario from a book and allows the players to act it out and solve a mystery. "People familiar with the books would be really interested in playing," Hanna said. "But we also show you how to play." The Amber Real World Event is unique in that it does not use game pieces — it is based on a mystery of murders.

Don Searing, a mechanical engineering graduate student, said the game begins with murder and ends with the player's goal of solving a mystery. "The Amber Real World Event is like another universe with its people being immortal," Searing said. "The players travel through shadows (other universes) like detectives solving a mystery. It's like the [television] show Sliders." Searing said the WarCon convention is a place for students to go and have fun while learning about different computer and card games. Students can also meet others who share their interests. WarCon also offers 24-hour Anime, or Japanese animation, which is free to anyone who would like to see it. Games and other products will be on sale at a discount price in the Dealer's Room. Future plans for WarCon include the addition of a historical Civil War reenactment and a medieval art display. Students can register to attend WarCon '97 by stopping by the MSC Nova office at 203 MSC. Cost is \$20 for the entire weekend (Friday-Sunday) and \$12 for one day.



Dave House, THE BATTALION

High Hopes | Nattavut Duangsunnaen (left) and Alexander Gil (right), both senior aerospace engineering majors, sand down a preliminary plane model for their senior project. The plane will undergo a stability study in a wind tunnel before a real model is constructed out of lighter material.

Aggie Band marches on with parades, events

By REBECCA TORRELLAS
THE BATTALION

When football season comes to a close, fans may not get to see the Aggie Band's duties beyond forming at the North end of Kyle Field. In the spring, charity events, basketball games, parades, marches and exhibitions fill the band's calendar. Clay Starr, an saxophone player and a sophomore environmental design major, said although the spring is eventful, performing at the football games is his favorite part of be-

ing in the Aggie Band. "Nothing compares to marching on Kyle Field," Starr said. Matthew Hudson, a saxophone player and a senior engineering technology major, said the spring semester is not as difficult as the fall because there are fewer practices and performances. "You have more time to do homework and free time on the weekends," Hudson said. The band practices twice a month and before special events during the spring. In the fall, practice totals up to 15 hours a week. On Feb. 8, the Artillery band

will march in a Mardi Gras parade in Galveston. The Infantry band will go to the Lakewood Yacht Club in Galveston for "Blessing of the Fleet," where the band performs for former students to bless their new yachts. The entire band performs in several parades during the spring, including the "Battle Of The Flowers" parade in San Antonio during Fiesta Week. Starr said participating in the parade is rewarding, despite the seven-mile walk. "It is really long and arduous, but there are a lot of Aggies there," Starr said. "It's really fun."

Board of Regents chairman to retire

By JOANNE WHITTEMORE
THE BATTALION

The Board of Regents at Texas A&M will soon bid farewell to its chairman, Mary West. West was appointed six years ago by Gov. Ann Richards. She was elected chairman of the Board of Regents in 1994 and was re-elected in 1995. West said her position as chairman incorporates many different duties. "Have you ever heard of a chief cook and bottle washer?" she said. "That's what a chairman does." West said acting as chairman is more time-consuming than most people realize. "A lot of people think being a Regent is a piece of cake," she said. "But when you really look at it, there's a lot more to it." She said there were phone calls to answer, trips to other campuses to make, meetings to attend and mail to read and answer. West said she received quite a bit of mail,

and answering letters takes a lot of time. "The volume of mail was staggering," she said. "It would be difficult for you to believe if you saw it." While West was chairman, a new policy manual and ethics policy were written for the employees and faculty of the University. She worked closely with the chancellor and visited other schools in the A&M System. Alison Brisco, a member of the Board of Regents whose term will also expire this year, said West worked well with the other Regents, other schools and the students. "She is a very inclusive chairman and was able to strike a balance between A&M and the smaller campuses," she said. "She wanted to make the Board available and open to students and take away the mystery of what we do."

Brisco and West were the third and fourth women appointed to the Board of Regents of A&M since its beginning. Brisco said West has been a strong, positive image. "I think, symbolically, it's been very important as our System looks toward the future to have a bright, caring woman sitting at the head of the Board of Regents," she said. West said if not for the assistance from her loved ones, her job would have been much more difficult.



West

See CHAIRMAN, Page 8

Senate addresses need for change

By ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Student Senate called for meetings on Feb. 6 and Feb. 9 to draft a bill that would strengthen the Student Government Association. The Senate invited students and the executive and judicial branches to attend and give their input. Speaker Chris Reed, a senior finance major, and other executive members of the Senate said during open session on Wednesday night that the SGA needed changes in all of its branches. "Student government has no real enacting power in ourselves," Reed said. "We as a Senate... have nothing to make them (the administration) implement our ideas." Reed said restructuring the Student Senate, the executive branch and the judicial branch could increase the effectiveness of the SGA. Reed suggested changes in the Senate include eliminating residency senators and redundancy representation to make the Senate more responsive to their constituencies. This change could cut the number of Senate seats in half. "By cutting the Senate in half, we solve many problems," Reed said. He said the reduced number of senatorial seats would force candidates to campaign on a platform. The possible changes in the executive branch could include having an elected student vice-president with a more defined role and increasing the power of the student body president, Reed said. Changes in the judicial branch, Reed said, could include making the judicial branch more active and changing the method of membership selection. Reed said a possible fourth change in SGA would bring the Student Services Fee Allocation Committee closer to the policy area of student government. This could be accomplished by establishing designated Senate spots on the committee.

When a department approaches the committee for additional funding, the committee may deny their request if the department has not enacted some of the Senate's proposals. "We don't reward them for not doing what we ask," Reed said. The Senate members who announced the purpose of the upcoming meetings said none of the changes are definite, and input from all students and student groups are wanted in the development of the bill. Tracey McAllister, executive director of organizational assessment and a senior marketing major, said that although she commends Reed for his efforts on trying to improve the SGA, his suggestions shocked her because not all of them had been discussed with the executive branch before the meeting. "The Senate cannot mandate the job of the executive branch because of checks and balances," she said. At the meeting, McAllister said she and Student Body President Carl Baggett created her position to improve the Student Government. "I'm so mad. We had foresight," McAllister said. "We saw that student government needed change... You have ignored my position. All the work Carl and I have done has gone down the drain. I'm really disappointed." Reed said his suggestions were not a solid proposal, just his ideas. He asked for all students to come and give suggestions at the meetings in February. Reed said the meetings are open to anyone with any kind of interest in Student Government, from yell leader runoff elections to a general improvement in the SGA. At the Feb. 6 meeting, the drafting of the legislation will begin. A forum will be held at the Feb. 9 meeting. The Senate will introduce the bill at its Feb. 12 meeting. The time and place of the meetings has not been set.



► Miss Black & Gold

Fraternity to sponsor scholarship pageant

By BENJAMIN CHENG
THE BATTALION

Ten Texas A&M students will represent African-American women as they display their talents in the 1997 Miss Black & Gold Scholarship Pageant Feb. 1 in Rudder Theatre at 7 p.m. The pageant is hosted nationwide by each chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. The winner, runner-up and third-place contestant will receive scholarships of \$1,000, \$500 and \$300, respectively. The 10 contestants were chosen through an application and interview process. Marcus Gardner, vice president of Alpha Phi Alpha and a senior civil engineering major, said the winner should be a good student and a role model for the community. "She's a reflection of our fraternity and of African-American women as a whole," Gardner said. The pageant will include a question-and-answer session, a talent show and modeling. A panel of five judges will determine the winner. The contestants will model casual, business and formal attire. Although other chapters will include swimsuit contests in their pageants, the A&M chapter will not. Gardner said they did not want to risk eliminating prospective contestants who might be wary of modeling swimsuits. "Females look at the swimsuit contest and they're kind of scared and timid to show their bodies," Gardner said. Gardner said he hopes the pageant demonstrates that African-American women can be intellectuals, not just housewives, and are capable of things some may deem them incapable of. The contestants range from engineering majors to liberal arts majors and include a member of the Corps of Cadets. "We'd rather have brains than beauty," Gardner said. Contestant Virginia Smith, a freshman

biology major, entered the pageant to help pay for her education. Her father must help put four of his children through college. "It's a lot of strain on my father," Smith said. "I'm always looking for money for school." Smith hopes to alter some perceptions of African-American women through her participation. "Sometimes people see us as always being loud and bold," she said. "We can be, and are, an intellectual group." Contestant Christina Minor, a sophomore political science major, wants to show an active person can also interact with A&M society. "We are scholars that take time to be part of the community," Minor said. For the talent show, Minor will read her poem "My African King." Minor said she hopes the pageant will present a side of African-American women people sometimes ignore. "The pageant portrays us as strong African-American women full of grace and eloquence," she said. The winner of the pageant will represent A&M at the state pageant in Fort Worth on Feb. 22. The national pageant will be held in New Orleans, La., this summer.

"She's a reflection of our fraternity and of African-American women as a whole."

Marcus Gardner
Vice president, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity

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STAR WARS: The first installment of the trilogy is being re-released today. Aggiefife, Page 3

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