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THE BATTALION

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Thursday, February 20, 1997

SCONA conference kicks off today

The theme of the three-day conference is social fragmentation in America.

MARISSA ALANIS
THE BATTALION

International delegates will discuss social divisions in American society and their implications for the future at the 42nd annual Student Conference on National Affairs at Texas A&M. Twenty-seven universities from eight different countries will be represented at

the three-day conference, which begins today and runs through Saturday.

The focus of the conference is 'Social Fragmentation: The Future of America?' and the effects of the fragmentation in Americans' daily lives.

Herb Currie, staff adviser for SCONA, said the purpose of each conference is to bring college students together to examine a topic of current national interest.

"We selected this one (theme) because social fragmentation is on everyone's mind right now," Currie said, "and it is probably one of the top issues in the country."

Scheduled speakers are James Pinkerton, lecturer at the Graduate School of Po-

litical Management at George Washington University; Roger Wilkins, professor of history and American culture at George Mason University; and Maxine Waters, a U.S. Representative from California.

All speaker presentations are open to the public.

Amy Longfield, SCONA chair and a senior wildlife and fisheries sciences and political science major, said Waters' speech, 'Race & Fragmentation: What is the Solution?' is just one issue relevant to A&M students.

Longfield used Monday's article in The Battalion on interracial dating as an example of Waters' topic. She said the issue has great interest to students.

"These issues just don't affect the whole world," Longfield said. "They affect us here. We may be in our little microcosm here (A&M), but they're still important."

Subtopics on social fragmentation will be discussed at the conference during round table meetings held by the delegates. The discussions allow attendants to deliberate and exchange views on the issues. Each table will be headed by a discussion leader who will facilitate the meeting.

Social aspects within the college campus, the workplace, churches, schools and politics are some of the subtopics delegates will analyze. Reports on solutions to these problems will be presented at the closing

banquet Saturday.

Currie said the tables will discuss how national institutions affect the fragmentation now.

"For instance, in the schools — how well are they doing?" Currie said. "The justice system — what effect does the justice system have on that (social fragmentation)?"

Longfield said the round table topics are relevant to everyone, even if they do not realize it.

"Everyday we go through life making decisions based on what we perceive to be the norm, but that norm is being shattered," Longfield said.

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► 1997 National Collegiate Handball Tournament

A&M hosts '97 competition

BY JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER
THE BATTALION

Competition starts today in the 1997 National Collegiate Handball Tournament at the Student Recreation Center.

This is Texas A&M's first year to host the handball tournament, which runs through Sunday.

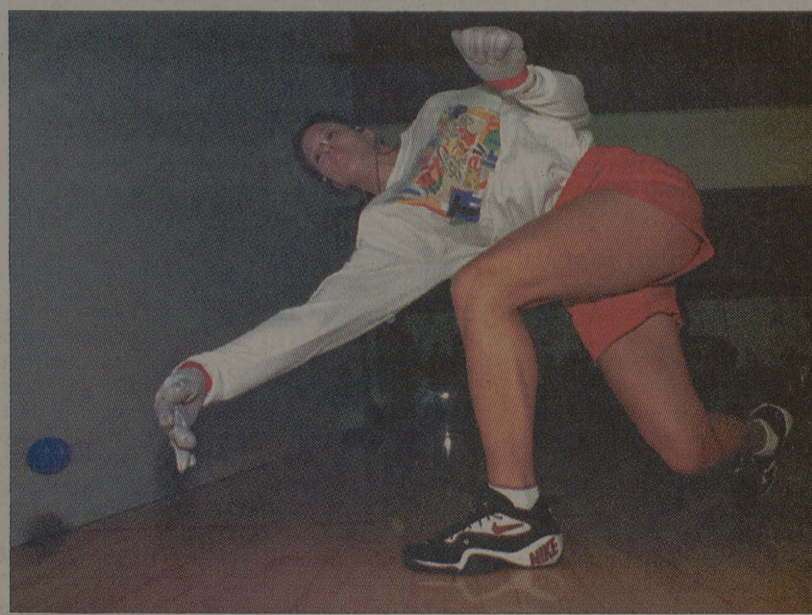
One-hundred ninety-four college students from Ireland, Canada, the United States and several other countries will compete for singles and doubles play titles in men's and women's divisions.

Lance Lowy, Texas A&M Handball Coach, said the tournament will be a great experience for the A&M Handball Team.

"Our team will be competitive," Lowy said, "and I expect us to finish in the top three."

He said there are 40 A&M competitors in the tournament. The top six team members' accumulated points will count toward their final score in the team competition.

See HANDBALL, Page 6



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Priscilla Kojin, a member of the A&M Handball Team and a senior marketing major, practices for the tournament.

A&M's research expenditures ranks among nation's best

► The National Science Foundation ranked the University sixth.

BY BENJAMIN CHENG
THE BATTALION

Research expenditures at Texas A&M ranked among the top ten in the nation for the 1995 fiscal year in a report by the National Science Foundation.

The rankings placed A&M sixth nationwide with \$362.54 million spent on research for the 1995 fiscal year. A&M's ranking dropped from last year, when it placed fifth with \$355.6 million in expenditures. The rankings for the 1996 fiscal year will be published in October.

Nancy Sawtelle, director of communications for the Office of the Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, said the foundation arranges rankings by measuring the expenditures of research institutions.

"This is the standardized test for evaluating research programs," Sawtelle said.

Greg Foxworth, director of the Office of Sponsored

Total Research and Development expenditures at universities and colleges fiscal year 1995 (in millions)

1. Johns Hopkins	\$788.69
2. University of Michigan	\$443.07
3. University of Wisconsin — Madison	\$403.54
4. University of Washington	\$389.16
5. Massachusetts Institute of Technology	\$370.80
6. Texas A&M University	\$362.54
7. University of California — San Diego	\$357.33
8. Cornell University	\$343.79
9. University of Minnesota	\$336.52
10. Pennsylvania State University	\$330.88

Source: National Science Foundation

Projects, said the rankings are used by research institutions, academics, industry and government.

"It's the only number people use interchangeably everywhere," he said.

See RESEARCH, Page 6



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Higher Learning

Amy Hamilton and Sandra Lafferty, first-year veterinary medicine students, study the nervous and vascular systems of a horse leg in a gross anatomy class Wednesday.

Academy introduces modern firefighting

BY GRAHAM HARVEY
THE BATTALION

Firefighting will be emphasized tonight as Brazos County citizens and Bryan firefighters kick off the fourth annual Bryan Department's Citizen's Fire Academy. The 10-week course will meet Thursday nights and on two Saturday mornings at the Bryan Municipal Building.

Joe Brown, Public Information Officer for the City of Bryan, said the academy will cover the basics of modern firefighting.

"Along with classroom instruction, students also receive 'hands-on' training, including the chance to fight an actual fire at the Texas A&M Fire Training School," Brown said.

Bryan Fire Chief Jim Bland said the purpose of the academy is to educate the participants.

"During the academy, they'll learn about our EMS operations, fire investigation, fire prevention and the many other services our department provides," Bland said.

Students also will ride with firefighters on actual calls.

The academy, which was initiated as a department project in 1994, offers

two sessions a year. One session was held for the first two years, but when popularity increased, two sessions were needed for 1996.

Bland said the session beginning tonight, open to Brazos County residents 18 years old and older, is the first of two sessions held this year.

The classes attract a diverse mix of participants. Texas A&M students, elderly and minority citizens, spouses of firefighters and graduates of the three local citizens' police academies are among the participants in the class, Bland said.

Since the academy began, about six A&M students have attended the fire fighting school, he said.

Graduates of the Citizen's Fire Academy receive a certificate of knowledge and membership in the academy's alumni association, which promotes fire prevention education and fund raising programs throughout Brazos County.

Bland emphasized that, contrary to popular belief, the academy is not actual firefighter training.

"Our goal is to give our students a feel of what it takes to be a firefighter as well as educate them about what our department does on a daily basis," Bland said.

State senator arrested in prostitution sting

► Sen. Drew Nixon was charged with a Class B misdemeanor.

AUSTIN (AP) — State Sen. Drew Nixon spent the night in jail after his arrest in front of a small church for soliciting an undercover police officer for sex, Austin police said Wednesday.

Nixon, R-Carthage, was arrested Tuesday night in a prostitution sting.

The East Texas lawmaker was charged with a Class B misdemeanor that carries a maximum punishment of up to 180 days in jail and a \$2,000 fine. He posted a personal bond Wednesday and is scheduled to appear in Travis County District Court on March 19.

Nixon, 37, has served in the state Senate since 1995. He declined to comment in a brief interview outside police headquarters. A spokesman, John Doner, later said the senator had no plans to resign.

Fellow Republican Gov. George W. Bush, said he was troubled by the incident.

"I think Sen. Nixon deserves his day in court, but if what I heard is true, my heart goes out to his family," Bush said.

"I'm very troubled — troubled because he's got a place of public trust and this is going to send a mixed signal that is one I don't respect or appreciate," Bush said.

In an affidavit, undercover officer Chris-

tine Shelton said Nixon offered her \$35 to perform oral sex.

Shelton also said Nixon had a 9-mm handgun in his car at the time of his arrest.

Municipal Judge Kenneth Vitucci rejected an attempt to charge Nixon with illegal possession of a firearm. Police spokesman Mike Burgess said the department was still investigating.

Nixon did not attend Wednesday's Senate session and was not in his Capitol office.

It is the second time Nixon's name has been linked to prostitution.

According to Dallas police records, Nixon had three prostitutes in his car when he was stopped by officers in East Dallas in 1993.

At the time, Nixon denied knowing the women were prostitutes. Police said all three were known prostitutes. Nixon pleaded no contest to a related weapons charge after a handgun was found in his car.

Bush said he had not talked to Nixon and Nixon had not approached the governor's office. The governor said he would advise the lawmaker "to get help."

Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock, who presides over the Senate, said he had talked with Nixon Wednesday.

"He is entitled to his day in court. ... I pray for him. He is my friend. My thoughts and prayers are with him at this time and with his family," Bullock said.

Bill White, executive director of the Texas Democratic Party, called for Nixon's resig-

nation from the Senate.

"We expect our public servants to conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the public's trust," White said. "Drew Nixon ought to resign and let the people of East Texas choose a senator worthy of their trust."

Aides in Nixon's Austin office said the senator planned to issue a statement Wednesday. But as of late afternoon, nothing had been released.

Nixon's capitol office was closed after 5 p.m.

THE BATTALION INSIDETODAY

HALF-PERCENTER: Shot putter Mike Lowrance came to A&M for an education not the ambiance.

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