

**FORECAST**  
Sunny with increasing clouds tonight, Highs in the 60s

**OPINION**  
Asian families set a good example for improving education.  
- Battalion Editorial Board

**LIFESTYLES**  
A&M student plans national bike tour to raise handicap awareness.

**SPORTS**  
A&M baseball player Hickey looks to season, Olympic tryouts

# The Battalion

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## Explosion survivor speaks out for patients' rights

By Becky Blum  
The Battalion

The ability of medical science to preserve life has far outdistanced its ability to preserve bodily functions, a patients' rights advocate said Wednesday night in Rudder Tower.

Dax Cowart, a licensed attorney, received painful treatments against his will after surviving a propane gas explosion in 1973. He spoke to a group of doctors and medical students at a public lecture entitled

"Pain, Suffering, and Self-Determination." Blinded and left handicapped by his injuries, Cowart said although many strides have been made in the medical field, people are still "victims of success" because physicians are keeping patients alive in a "dying condition."

Mentally competent adults should be free to refuse treatment, Cowart said. "People should have the same rights inside the hospital as they do outside of hospital walls," he said.

During the first 14 months after his accident, Cowart was forcibly treated in several

hospitals. He asked doctors not to treat him because of the pain and because he did not feel that a life without sight or the use of his hands would be worth living.

Cowart said many people assume that since a doctor has medical expertise, he or she possesses moral expertise as well.

"Simply because doctors are medical experts does not mean they are able to make value judgments in the treatment of their patients," Cowart said.

Dr. William Winslade, a lawyer and medical ethicist at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, also ad-

ressed the audience. Doctors are indoctrinated to preserve life at all costs, he said.

"Physicians want to treat patients not only to save lives, but also because of a belief in vitalism—life is valuable in itself," Winslade said.

Since Cowart's 1973 hospitalization, many of the laws governing patients' rights have improved, Winslade said. Despite doctors' argument that they will be held accountable for a patient's death, no lawsuit has ever been filed against a physician who

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ROBERT REED/The Battalion

### Brown-bagging it

Kristin Dennard (left), a senior psychology major, and Sheila Mcniel, a senior political science major enjoy lunch and a chat

near Hall on Wednesday afternoon. The weather was clear and sunny for the first day of spring classes.

## Germans intercept shipment

### Rule prohibits transportation of 'sensitive' items to Libya

BONN, Germany (AP) — A plane bound for Libya carrying American-made laser equipment for building rockets was seized last month at Frankfurt airport moments before takeoff, German officials said Wednesday.

Chief government spokesman Dieter Vogel said the cargo contained "dual use parts which could be used for nuclear technology." Dual use refers to technology that has been designed for civilian use but can also be used in arms production.

Another German official said U.S. officials had asked Germany to intervene shortly before the plane left Frankfurt for Tripoli Dec. 10.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the cargo contained "lots of parts," mostly laser equipment used in building rockets. He said the cargo was addressed to a Libyan organization known to be working on the country's rocket program.

In Washington, State Department press officer Joseph Snyder

said the administration was aware of the transaction and has been in touch with the German government. Other officials said the administration was not surprised by the German disclosure. There was no elaboration.

The German government source said a U.S. company, in apparent violation of export law, sent the goods to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where a Dutch firm served as an intermediary. The goods were then flown to Frankfurt for the last leg of the journey, the source said.

The cargo seizure came to light during the German government's regular news briefing Wednesday. Vogel was briefing reporters on a new regulation in German export law that the Cabinet had approved earlier in the day.

The new rule prohibits "sensitive" items from being transported through Germany to Libya "when the government has reason to believe these items are to be used for arms purposes," Vogel said.

## Shuttle blasts 'slimy' cargo into space

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Discovery blasted off Wednesday on the year's first space shuttle mission, carrying seven astronauts and a slimy bunch of bugs, eggs and mold into orbit for a week of gravity-free scrutiny.

"It was a beautiful launch and a great way to start 1992," NASA Administrator Richard Truly said, beaming.

The astronauts quickly powered up Spacelab, a pressurized module in the cargo bay. They floated one by one through a long tunnel from the cabin into the laboratory, and gently stored the boxes of organisms into incubators and racks.

Among the more prolific creatures aboard are roundworms, 72 million of them to be exact. Each worm can produce 280 offspring in three days.

Also along are fruit flies, stick insects, frog eggs and sperm, slime mold, fetal mouse bones, hamster kidney cells, human blood cells, yeast, wheat and oat seedlings, lentil roots, thale cress and bacteria.

"It's an exciting beginning to a great adventure ... a journey into the world of tomorrow," program scientist Ronald White said after watching Discovery vanish in a hazy sky.

## Ogden leads testimonials at Aggies for Life rally

By Reagon Clamon  
The Battalion

Eight speakers, including state Rep. Steve Ogden, discussed stopping abortion in America at the annual Aggies for Life rally in the Memorial Student Center on Wednesday — the nineteenth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

The speakers addressed a

small crowd in the MSC flagroom.

The rally, sponsored by Aggies for Life and several other groups on campus, consisted of several testimonials discouraging and promoting alternatives to abortion.

Ogden told the crowd he believes abortion is a social ill that — alongside child abuse and racism — can be attributed to the lowering of the value of human life.

"One of the reasons I became a Republican is because the Republican Party and Republican leaders were willing to stand up for the principles that the unborn human being has a right to exist,"



Ogden

said Ogden.

Ogden said his answer to the devaluing of life was to reinstate the belief that all life is made in God's image.

"Texans — whether they agree or disagree with the issue — have always admired those with the courage to stand up and draw a line in the sand for what they believe in," Ogden said.

State Senator Jim Turner, who could not attend due to a previous

engagement, sent a letter supporting the Aggies for Life movement and emphasized his stand against the legality of abortion in America.

Akua Furlow, Texas coordinator of Black Americans for Life, likened the Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion to the 1857 Dred Scott decision that declared African-Americans were property.

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## COMA commemorates MLK day

By Tanya Sasser  
The Battalion

About 150 people turned out to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a celebration sponsored by the Committee on Multicultural Awareness (COMA) in the Commons lobby Wednesday afternoon.

Voices of Praise, a 30-person gospel choir, began the program on a lively note with a song performance.

Steven Ruth, student body president, then spoke about Dr. King and his plea for nonviolent social change.

Ruth asked that blacks try to live Dr. King's dream every day by presenting themselves in a positive way and by always showing people their best.

He also expressed his delight at the large number of participants.

"I'm sure Dr. King would have tears of joy just to look out into this crowd and see such a gleeful and joyous gathering," Ruth said.

The dance ensemble Fade to Black performed a jazz dance number to close the program.

Deborah Henderson, chairman of COMA, felt that the program ran smoothly.

"I think it went very well," she said. "We had a lot of new faces this year. They were very receptive to what he [Ruth] had to say."

The Association of Former Students and by Student Affairs Housing provided refreshments at a reception in the Krueger lobby following the program.

COMA will be coordinating similar events for Black History Month in February and for Cinco de Mayo this May.



HUY NGUYEN/The Battalion

Kim Mitchell (left), Karen Clay and Angela Washington (right) listen to a speech by Student Body President Stephen Ruth.