

# THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## Sex offenders not absent in A&M area

### University unaware of campus offender

By Emily Peters  
THE BATTALION

University officials said they are unaware that convicted sex offender is enrolled and living on campus.

A 19-year-old freshman in the Corps of Cadets was convicted in 1997 in Washington County of two counts of indecency with a child and one count of aggravated sexual assault against a 4-year-old girl. He was sentenced to probation,

according to an online database of sex offenders maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). The sex offender official at the Brazos County Sheriff's department said this student is a high-risk sex offender.

The student sex offender admitted to the crimes, said he is remorseful, and is "by all means not at risk for re-offense."

The DPS Website, <http://records.txdps.state.tx.us>, provides sex offenders' names and current addresses.

See **Offender** on page 4

### 130 offenders living in Brazos County

By Emily Peters  
THE BATTALION

More than 130 convicted sex offenders are living in the Brazos Valley, according to a Website maintained by the Brazos Valley Sheriff's Department.

Tanya Knapp, registered sex offender coordinator for the Brazos Valley Sheriff's Department, said sex offenders do not have to disclose their criminal history to landlords unless asked. She

said many complexes only ask about felonies, but some sex offenses are not felonies.

"A lot of mom and pop places don't ask any of those questions," she said. "But there is a legal obligation to disclose the information if it is requested."

Although Saddlewood Apartments on Wellborn Road does criminal background checks, management chose to allow a sex offender to remain in the complex after reviewing the offense

See **Brazos** on page 8

### Shak-a-thon



JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

MSC Hospitality members pass the time as they play a game of dominoes Tuesday in front of Rudder Fountain. The group joined other campus

organizations in building shack homes for Habitat for Humanity's Homeless Awareness Week.

## Coventry, Pringle face off for SBP

By Rolando Garcia  
THE BATTALION

The race for student body president usually features a crowded field of candidates peddling slick campaign literature and identical platforms, but this year the campaign will be a showdown between two candidates, Zac Coventry and Lara Pringle.

The two-horse race is unprecedented in recent memory — the last three contests required a runoff because no candidate captured a majority in the first round of voting.

Pringle, a junior finance major, is a student senator and chair of the senate's academic affairs committee. She has served on the Student Government Association executive council. Promoting traditions and building a more inclusive and welcoming campus environment will be her top priorities, Pringle said.



COVENTRY

"This is a crucial time — the University is going through some changes, and I want the opportunity to represent the student body," Pringle said.

Coventry, a senior agricultural development major, is chaplain for the Corps of Cadets. He has served as director for the Memorial Student Center Abbott Family Leadership Conference and squad leader in the Ross Volunteers. Coventry's student government experience includes the Traditions Council and Legislative Relations Committee.

"I've been incredibly blessed by this University, and I want the opportunity to give something back," Coventry said.

Yell leaders Bo Wilson and Cardo Walthall, along with Scott Goble, are the Corps nominees for the three senior yell positions. Also running are Matt Giese, Sampson Jordan and Adam Kiehne.



PRINGLE

See **SBP** on page 2

## Officials urge safety on break

By Marianne Hudson  
THE BATTALION

Spring break often calls to mind scenes of drunken debauchery, but University officials are hoping students remember that safety and fun are not mutually exclusive.

Mission Responsible, an educational program focusing on safe drinking, traveling and sex issues sponsored by the University Police Department, Student Health Services and student organizations will sponsor events to help students make healthy choices.

The week began at the Student Recreation Center on Thursday, said Cynthia Olvera, coordinator of campus

events for alcohol and drug education programs. The Student Recreation Center stayed open until 3 a.m. and students could participate in a variety of activities such as making ice cream sundaes and watching movies.

"Thursday was a way for students to have fun and become aware of the safe spring break program," Olvera said. "The rest of the week focused on providing information."

Alternative Spring Break set up a boxing ring Monday in front of Rudder Fountain, and UPD officers were on site to answer

See **Safety** on page 2

## U.S.-led coalition forces hit opposition

GARDEZ, Afghanistan (AP) — Hundreds of Taliban and al-Qaida fighters were killed in fierce fighting Tuesday as U.S.-led coalition forces pressed their offensive in the rugged mountains of eastern Afghanistan, the American commander said.

U.S. forces in the region said as many as 800 opposition fighters had been seen moving toward the battle since the American-led operation was launched on Saturday.

"We caught several hundred of

them with RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) and mortars heading toward the fight. We body slammed them today and killed hundreds of those guys," said Maj. Gen. Frank L. Hagenbeck, the commander of the operation near Gardez, 75 miles south of Kabul, the capital.

U.S.-led forces continued inching up the snow-covered mountains, meanwhile, trying to reach hideouts still believed to contain hundreds more al-Qaida and Taliban fighters. Some forces

entered at least one cave complex, uncovering weapons caches.

Allied jets flew high over Paktia province, dropping bombs as well as decoy flares to ward off heat-seeking missiles — defensive measures after two U.S. helicopters were hit Monday in incidents that left seven U.S. soldiers dead.

Front-line commander Abdul Matin Hasankhiel said hundreds of Afghan and coalition forces have ringed the mountain range and trapped the al-Qaida and Taliban fighters higher up.

"They can't escape. They're surrounded. Slowly, slowly we are pushing in," he said.

Hundreds of al-Qaida and Taliban fighters are believed to be holed up in the area, Brig. Gen. John Rosa told reporters at the Pentagon. Bombers and tactical aircraft have dropped more than 450 bombs on the area since the assault began Friday night, he said.

The blitz was concentrating on a 60-square-mile area south of the provincial capital, Gardez.



KRT CAMPUS

Palestinian rescue workers try to cut open a vehicle owned by a Hamas activist after it was hit by an Israeli tank shell that killed his wife and children. See related story on page 8.

## Brook: America's lack of support for Israel may have pushed terrorists

By Sarah Darr  
THE BATTALION

America's weak support for Israel and coddling of fanatic Islamic terrorists may have emboldened the perpetrators of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, said Dr. Yaron Brook during a lecture at Texas A&M Tuesday.

"We feared declaring one side right and one side wrong, and our failures invited such an attempt," Brook said. "They could smell our fear." Brook, the executive director of the Ayn

Rand Institute, discussed the moral and practical necessity for America to stand by its longtime ally in the Middle East as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intensifies.

Brook said one reason for the attacks may have been because Arab terrorists did not expect America to strike back since the United States has discouraged Israel from retaliating against the recent wave of Palestinian terror.

"America has not done enough in supporting Israel," Brook said.

See **Brook** on page 2

**INSIDE**

Sports Pg. 5  
**Aggs blast UTA**  
No. 13 A&M squad thumps Mavericks 15-5.

Opinion Pg. 9  
**Legalize murder?**

**WEATHER**

**TODAY**

HIGH 68° F  
LOW 50° F

**THURSDAY**

HIGH 72° F  
LOW 58° F

FORECASTS COURTESY OF [www.collegeweather.com](http://www.collegeweather.com)