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THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Corps member arrested for child porn

By Brandie Liffick
THE BATTALION

A Texas A&M Corps of Cadets member was arrested Monday as part of a nationwide crack down on child pornography that left 89 people incarcerated.

Senior psychology major Stephen Michael Johnston was arrested on charges of conspiracy to transport or distribute child pornography on the Internet. Johnston was one of eight from the Houston area taken into custody as part of an undercover FBI sting called "Operation Candyman."

Bob Wiatt, director of the University Police Department, said Johnston's personal computer was confiscated by the UPD and sent to the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force offices in Houston on Dec. 10, 2001.

"Based on the information the FBI obtained from his personal computer's hard drive, a sealed indictment was issued Friday for Johnston," Wiatt said.

Johnston was asked Monday to report to UPD offices, where he then surrendered to the police, Wiatt said. He was later transported to FBI offices in Houston.

Mark Bales, 23, of Palestine,Texas allegedly operated a Website that provided access to child pornography and child erotica. FBI officials said Bales ran the site for two months, starting on Dec. 6, 2000.

Johnston and six other men arrested in Texas allegedly subscribed to the site.

Eighty-one additional arrests were made Monday in related child pornography cases in 20 states across the nation.

If convicted, Johnston could face five to 15 years in prison and fines of up to $250,000.

Wiatt said it is also possible that Johnston could be charged with possession of obscene material.

"To those who seek to exploit and prey upon our children by producing, distributing and exchanging child pornography via the Internet, be warned. Our investigation will continue," Michael Shelby, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, told the Associated Press. "We will be diligent in our efforts to protect our children."

The FBI said it expects to arrest at least 50 others nationwide by the end of the week in conjunction with the operation.

Minority Fall applications rise

By Christina Hoffman
THE BATTALION

More students than ever before, including a record number of minority applicants, want to attend Texas A&M this fall.

As of March 11, a total of 19,689 high school and transfer students had applied for admission as freshman, with increases in all categories including black and Hispanic populations.

The number of applicants increased by almost 1,000 compared to average numbers during the same time period in past years, said Frank Ashley, director of admissions.

Black applicants totaled 954, with a 13 percent increase from past averages. Hispanic applicants total 2,330, a 3 percent increase, Ashley said.

Ashley said he thinks minority students do not feel welcome at A&M.

"The increase (in applications) is incredible. We thought the negative publicity would bring them down," Ashley said.

Officials with the Office of Admissions cannot make any concrete connections for the record increase, but an increase in the amount of recruiting for prospective students to A&M may have contributed. This year the admissions office had a full staff of recruiters who worked extremely hard, Ashley said.

See **Applicants** on page 2

Applicants for Fall 2002 as of March 11

- 19,689 students have applied
- Black applicants increased by 13 %
- Hispanic applicants increased by 3 % from 2001

Source: Office of Admissions

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Spring training

JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Randy Ramirez watches as members of the A&M football team take the field for the opening day of spring training. The Aggies will hold 14 additional training workshops open to the public before Maroon and White Game on April 6. **See related story on Pg. 7.**

Faculty Senate redefines authority of review panel

By Amy Dosch
THE BATTALION

The Faculty Senate revealed changes Monday as part of its review of the role of the Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure (CAFRT), a committee that serves as the last line of defense for fired faculty members.

CAFRT, an all-faculty hearing panel, reviews the dismissal of all faculty members who request a hearing with them and determines if the dismissal was for just cause. The Faculty Senate is beginning a process that will clarifiy the limits and authority of the CAFRT.

Questions about the CAFRT's role surfaced after University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen charged that the panel overstepped its bounds in a December report that concluded tenured professor Dr. Mary Zey, accused of plagiarism, was unjustly fired.

The panel, in three days of hearings over the case, found that Zey was not guilty of scientific misconduct and therefore should not have been fired. Though Bowen later accepted the report, he initially said the committee had not done its job by retrying facts in the case instead of simply deciding whether her dismissal was fair.

According to University rules, the CAFRT's only function is to judge the fairness of a faculty member's dismissal.

Most recently, senators amended the CAFRT's rules allowing the panel to handle more than one case at a time and giving the committee 60 days to hear a case once it has been requested and 15 calendar days to report on its findings.

Senators are pursuing further

See **Faculty** on page 10

Northgate parking charges reduced

By Sarah Szuminski
THE BATTALION

Students and customers previously frustrated with parking fees in the Northgate area will find little to complain about since a vote was made to decrease parking rates effective earlier this month.

All on-street meter parking is now free after 5 p.m., and the Promenade lot behind Northgate charges $.25 per hour from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. and $.50 per hour after 5 p.m., down from $1.50 per hour prior to March 8, said Northgate businessman Costa Dallis.

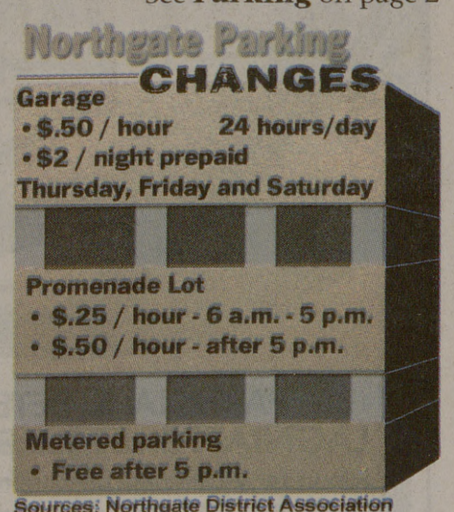
Prepaid parking is available in the Northgate Parking Garage on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights for $2.

The Northgate District Association and the City of College Station decided to lower fees to ease customer complaints and increase business activity, Dallis said.

"It is a great thing for the city and the merchants," he said. "We want students to know that we appreciate them. It is a very positive change."

There were many complaints about garage parking on weekends because traffic backed up at night when customers paid tickets, Dallis said. Under the new prepaying system, a $2 ticket can be purchased on entrance to the garage, providing a more efficient exit.

See **Parking** on page 2



Sources: Northgate District Association and City of College Station

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Survey to expose health needs

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M is part of a team that is sending Brazos Valley residents a health survey to bring governmental grants to underfunded areas of medicine in the region.

The Brazos Valley Partnership is conducting a health survey for the seven surrounding counties of the Brazos Valley as part of a collaboration with St. Joseph Hospital, the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, College Station Health Center, county governments and local health agencies.

The 70-question, 26-page survey, which will be mailed to 3,000 Brazos County households after they agree to participate by phone, includes questions about functional health, specific health conditions, if a person drinks, smokes and exercises, insurance information and demographics of the participant, said Dr. James Burdine, director of the Community Health Development Program at the school of Rural Public Health.

"We want to collect information from residents from the seven counties and make sure they are aware of the influence the survey will have on their health," he said.

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments is the coordinating body for this effort, bringing together the resources of more than a dozen organizations.

A similar survey was conducted in the San Angelo Valley last year that prompted health officials to write grants in general areas such as dental care and mental health for low income families in rural aras, Burdine said.

It is very likely that the rural counties of the Brazos Valley will show the same results, Burdine said.

"The real value comes from organizations and the

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Ho leads Aggie Women into NCAA finals

AggieLife Pg. 3
Porgy and Bess
Opas brings the famous folk opera to Texas A&M

WEATHER

TODAY
60%
HIGH 82° F
LOW 65° F

WEDNESDAY
HIGH 65° F
LOW 52° F

FORECASTS COURTESY OF www.collegeweather.com