

THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Candidates focus on preserving unity

This is the first in a three part series that presents the positions of the student body president candidates on issues of interest to students. Part 2 will run Friday.

By Sarah Szuminski
THE BATTALION

Question 1: "What are one or two priorities or special projects you will focus on as a student body president?"

Bringing back tradition to A&M students and building a community of respect are the two main themes of student body president candidate Lara Pringle's campaign, which focuses on "Preserving the past, promoting the present and pursuing the future."

Pringle, a Student Senate committee chair and senior finance major, said it is essential to save tradition, heritage and spirit on the A&M campus, and proposes educating students in these topics to develop understanding.

"We want people to understand what's behind

it [each tradition], so they can actually feel an ownership in the traditions," she said. "We think that will bring about one spirit on the campus."

Respecting and accepting the differences of the diverse student population is the first step toward creating a welcome community for all students, Pringle said.

She hopes to increase diversity education classes and ensure that student government organizations receive diversity training that will enable them to effectively address issues of this kind.

Pringle also plans to build academic adviser evaluation forms that would allow students to assess the effectiveness of their advisers and

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PRINGLE



COVENTRY

By Sarah Szuminski
THE BATTALION

Question 2: "How will you connect student government with the students to ensure their interests are reflected properly to the University administration?"

Candidate Lara Pringle said it is imperative that students know and understand what the administration is doing, and would advocate administrators having an open-door policy toward students that would allow them to get student views and feedback.

"I think that the role of the student body president, just as much as it is to advocate the students' position to the administration, it's also to explain the administration to the students," said Pringle, a senior finance major.

She hopes to ensure students remain updated on important decisions by using the executive

council to work directly with its counterparts in the administration.

Pringle plans to put emphasis on getting student input to the administration.

"We're at such a crucial time in the University, when the students do need to have their voices heard," she said. "The new administration will have no idea what role the students have played, and that gives us the chance to totally remake and remodel that role."

Combating the communication problem between students and administration will be a matter of working toward more two-way communication, said candidate senior agricultural development major Zac Coventry. He believes it is the role of the student body president to communicate students' views to the administration.

Coventry plans to use visibility as a key tool in his push for communication through letters to the student body with neo accounts and adding a link

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Campaign materials challenged

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

All candidates must submit their campaign materials to the election commission for approval. Shannon Dubberly, a sophomore political science major running for Class of 2004 vice president, said this practice is a blatant violation of his free speech rights. Dubberly is refusing to take down flyers the election commission deemed inappropriate.

"Student government is supposed to train future leaders, but they're not preparing students to take part in real civic affairs when they're conducting a censored election process," Dubberly said.

Election commissioner Katie Sarandis, a senior recreation, parks and tourism major, said she notified Dubberly Wednesday that he had five hours to remove the flyers or

face disciplinary action. If a candidate refuses to remove unapproved campaign material, he will be fined up to \$3 per violation and possibly disqualified, Sarandis said.

Election rules adopted by the Student Senate do not include any guidelines for censoring campaign materials, leaving the election commissioner with complete discretion to determine what is appropriate. Sarandis said she informed all candidates at the outset of the campaign that she would not approve any campaign material containing curse words, sexual innuendo or trademark and copyright violations.

Sarandis said Dubberly had not discussed the issue with her. "Not one of my candidates has approached me concerning

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Persian New Year



STUART VILLANUEVA • THE BATTALION

Homayra Moghadasian, president of the Persian Students Association, shows three-year-old Farzam a traditional Persian New Year table during a celebration at the

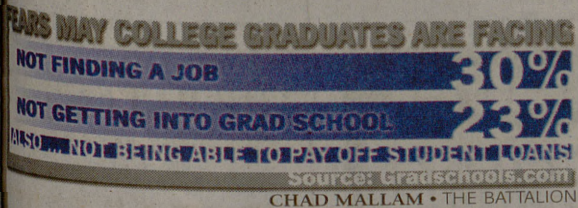
University Community Center on Wednesday night. The goldfish is a symbol of motion and activity. The Persian New Year, Nowrouz, is celebrated on the first day of spring

Job market worries May grads

By Melissa McKeon
THE BATTALION

Earning a degree is a great accomplishment, but students will graduate college this May not just with degrees but also with worries about their future, according to a recent survey by Gradschools.com.

"Not finding a job after graduation" was the biggest fear of new college graduates (30%), followed closely by



"not getting into graduate school" (23%). Other concerns include being admitted to the graduate school of choice and having to pay off student loans.

Texas A&M University Registrar Don Carter said 5,000 students have applied to graduate this spring.

With an unpredictable economy and scarce job offers, many students are choosing to attend graduate school rather than enter a static job market.

The root of many college graduate worries are directly related to the economy.

"Many of their concerns, such as finding a job, getting into the program they want and being able to afford the tuition, having to work while attending grad school and being able to afford a place to live, are tied directly to the economy," said Mark Shay, the president of Gradschools.com.

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Regents meet today Public hearing on tuition hike

By Emily Peters
THE BATTALION

Students will have one last chance to address the Board of Regents on two proposed tuition hikes at a public hearing at the Texas A&M System Board of Regents meeting at 9:30 a.m. in MSC 292.

Immediately following the hearing, the Board will vote on a \$2 per credit hour fee increase to raise faculty and staff salaries and the \$30 per credit hour Enhancement Fee that would raise tuition for the average full-time student about \$400 per semester.

The floor will be open for questions and comments from students after a briefing by Texas A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen.

In other business, the regents may offer students injured in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse reimbursements for health expenses by approving an endowment for almost \$500,000.

Regents also will hear reports on

progress of the proposed relocation of railroads on campus. Earlier this month, the Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization said the railroad will not be moved, but a series of underpasses and overpasses will likely be installed at major street crossings. An environmental assessment of the project will take contractors a year to complete before construction plans can begin. Contracting company Carter and Burgess has already received \$1.1 million for the project.

The concept of the Integrative Center for Homeland Security will be presented to the regents. If approved, the center will collaborate national efforts to develop new technology in the country's security in areas including biohazard management, emergency responses and sociopolitical issues.

Regents may also approve the concept of the Center for Information Assurance and Security, which would educate professionals on security of computer systems and other communications infrastructures.

Sci-fi descends on A&M with AggieCon

By Marianne Hudson
THE BATTALION

For the rest of the week and this weekend, Jedi Knights and legions from the Dark Side will fight one another with red and green light sabers in a galaxy far, far away—actually, on the second floor of the Memorial Student Center.

But organizers say AggieCon33, the 33rd annual science-fiction convention at Texas A&M, is not just for geeks. And the game room that will boast more than just Star Wars fans; convention-goers can expect to see Star Trek uniforms, Dungeons

and Dragons game players and cross-dressing *Rocky Horror Picture Show* fans.

AggieCon33, which will take place March 21-24 in the MSC and Rudder Tower, will consist of an array of activities to satisfy different sci-fi tastes, said Kelly Sullivan, a sophomore chemical engineering major.

Activities will include a dealer's room, a charity auction, a gaming room, an anime room, guest speakers, a masquerade ball and interactive showings of the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

See **Sci-fi** on page 6A

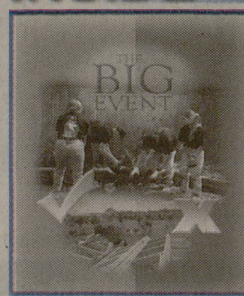
Former Singing Cadets director dies

Bob Boone, the former director of Texas A&M's Singing Cadets who sang at every commencement and Muster ceremony from 1965 to 1995, died Wednesday morning at St. Joseph Regional Rehabilitation Center in Bryan.

During a career that spanned 35 years, Boone and his Singing Cadets held 722 in-town and 777 out-of-town performances. In addition to his efforts with the Singing Cadets, Boone served as a student adviser to numerous programs in A&M's Memorial Student Center and to the "Miss Texas A&M Pageant."

Funeral services will be held Monday at Christ United Methodist Church in College Station.

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Growing population causing need for more food

WEATHER

TODAY	HIGH	LOW
	75° F	48° F
FRIDAY	HIGH	LOW
	60° F	44° F

FORECAST'S COURTESY OF www.collegeweather.com