

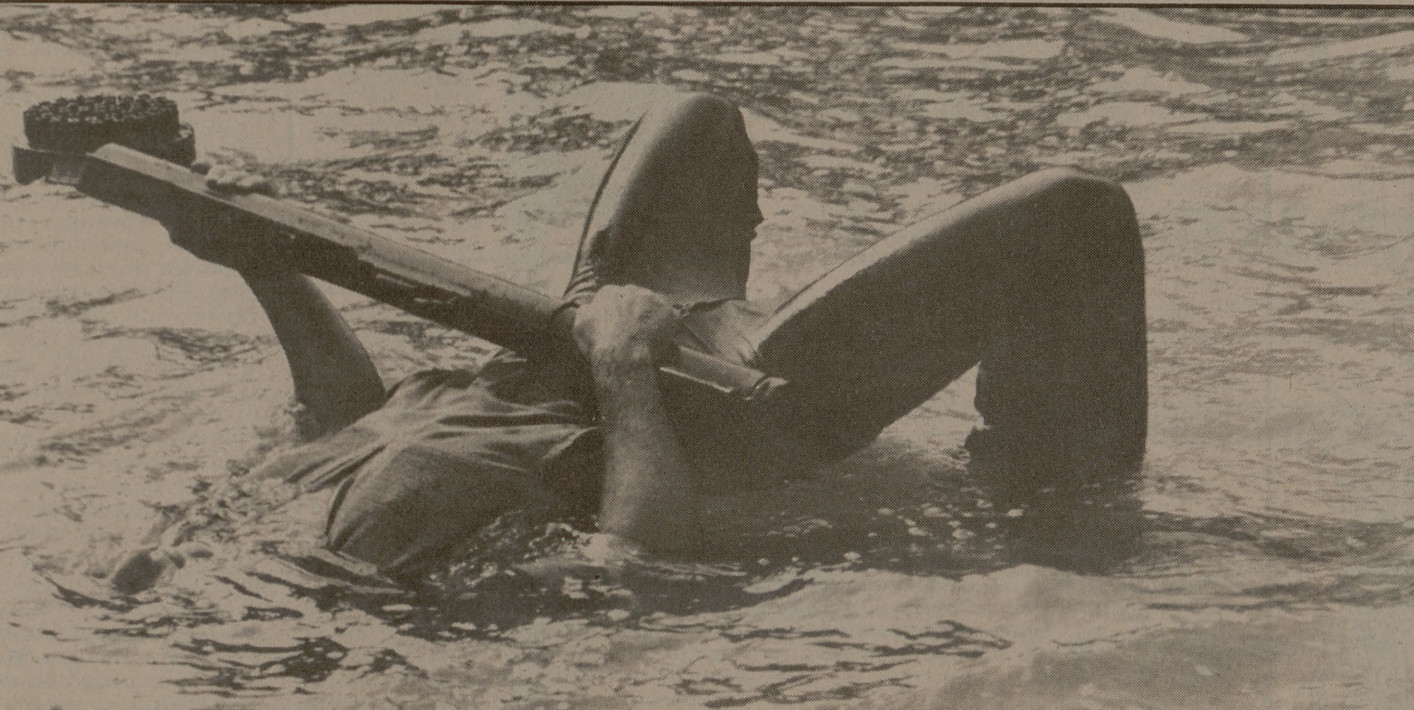
Texas A&M The Battalion

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Underwater music

photo by David Scott

MSC Town Hall's air guitar contest Wednesday produced some unusual contestants — like Brian Rupainis, who performed under the waters of Rudder Fountain. Rupainis, a sophomore accounting major from Harlingen,

appeared with his group, the Derangers, which was named best air band. In air guitar performances, people without musical instruments mime to recorded songs. The contest promoted the Nov. 4 Cheap Trick concert.

Big Event: a new tradition?

by Beverly Hamilton
The Big Event is likely to become as big a tradition as bonfire if all goes as planned. Student Government members have formulated a project called "The Big Event" — a campus-wide volunteer service project involving Texas A&M students and residents of Bryan-College Station. Vice President for Student Services Joe Nussbaum, who is heading the project, said he hopes to see at least 10,000 students turn out for the event. He is urging every student organization to become involved in the pro-

ject, which is tentatively set for Feb. 20. Students, working through their organizations, will volunteer four hours of labor to charitable organizations or individuals in the community, Nussbaum said. The student organizations can choose where they want to serve and the Student Government Student Services Committee will assist any group in finding a project to undertake. The mayors of Bryan and College Station and members of the Chambers of Commerce would like to make the project a community-wide event, Nussbaum said.

"I think it would be very fulfilling for us," he said. "We could attempt to fulfill virtually any need in the community." One idea for the event is to have large organizations work in the Bryan-College Station city parks, Nussbaum said. The Texas A&M Flying Club suggested flying youngsters at no cost on the day of the event, he said, while the Texas A&M medical students could give free blood pressure checks. Campus ministry groups could work with their affiliate churches to serve individuals, he added, and the

Texas A&M football team could work with disadvantaged youth. Nussbaum said he hopes to set a nation-wide precedent for all campuses and communities. He said he also would like to see Texas A&M awarded with the President's National Volunteerism Award. A meeting will be held to organize The Big Event at 7 p.m. Nov. 4 in 701 Rudder. Every student organization — including off-campus organizations, sororities and fraternities — should send a representative to the meeting, Nussbaum said.

3 Irish killed at U.N. post in Lebanon

United Press International
U.N. forces searched today for gunmen who ambushed a U.N. checkpoint in south Lebanon, killing three Irish soldiers, and U.S. envoy Morris Draper worked toward the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country by year's end. Draper, a U.S. deputy undersecretary of state, arrived in Beirut Wednesday and went immediately to the residence of U.S. Ambassador Robert Dillon. Embassy spokesman refused to divulge his schedule. But Lebanese sources said he would be meeting President Amin Gemayel, Prime Minister Chefik Wazzan and Foreign Minister Elie Salem in talks aimed at the withdrawal of Syrian, Palestinian and Israeli forces before the year's end. The sources said Draper would first establish a Lebanese-Israeli committee to discuss military withdrawals and also discuss Gemayel's request for more U.S. Marines to join the trilateral peace-keeping force already in Beirut. Gemayel wants to boost the peace-keeping force to 30,000 from its present size of about 3,500 troops. The Beirut force is separate from the 6,500-man U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), stationed along Israel's border. Beirut news reports described a possible phased withdrawal of some 70,000 Israeli troops simultaneously with a complete pullout of 25,000 Syrian and another 10,000 Palestinian soldiers from central and northern Lebanon. In southern Lebanon, unidentified gunmen shot to death three Irish soldiers attached to UNIFIL in an ambush near Tibnine, in the border enclave controlled by the Israeli-

backed militia of renegade Lebanese Maj. Saad Haddad. U.N. officials in Lebanon and New York said an intensive search was under way today for the unidentified attackers. Irish military officials identified the three victims as Corp. Gregory Morrow, 20, Private Peter Burke, 20, and Private Thomas Murphy, 19, all from Dublin. The attack left a fourth Irish soldier at the checkpoint in shock. The gunmen drove up to a checkpoint and two occupants of the car sprayed the outpost with automatic weapons fire, the United Nations said in a statement issued in New York. Several confrontations between Haddad's forces and UNIFIL troops have broken out since the U.N. buffer force was assigned to southern Lebanon following the Israeli Litani invasion in March 1978. The headquarters of the U.N. force in Naqoura, Lebanon, has been damaged by shells fired from Haddad's enclave along the Israeli border. The peace-keeping force, never equipped for full-scale combat, was bypassed by Israeli armor in the invasion of Lebanon last June. The soldiers, including 671 Irish, remained in place to prevent localized trouble. U.N. spokesman Joe Sills said U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar expressed "shock and sorrow" and offered his condolences to the Irish government and the families of the soldiers. Since its inception, 86 UNIFIL troops have been killed, 16 of them Irish. An Irish soldier abducted April 28, 1981, is still missing. The U.N. Security Council recently extended the peace force operation until Jan. 19, 1983.

Channel 15 goes dark for 10 hours

A mechanical failure in KAMU-TV's transmitter caused a 10-hour blackout of the station's signal Wednesday. Rod Zent, station manager at KAMU, Channel 15, said a large power cable in the station's transmitter failed, causing a complete shutdown of broadcasting from the start of Wednesday's broadcast day at 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The cable, which is about the size of a car battery's cable, was located in the oral final amplifier that amplifies the audio part of the television signal. A 10-year-old portion of the cable that connects the amplifier to its power supply gradually had deteriorated from heat and age and failed sometime before the station went on the air Wednesday morning, he said. Zent said both cable and general broadcast signals were lost because the transmitter sends Channel 15's signal to the cable company in addition to general broadcast signals. KAMU-FM radio was not affected by the breakdown because it transmits on a different transmitter. Zent said the problem is an uncommon one and is unlikely to repeat itself.

Child struggles to overcome handicap

by Beverly Hamilton
Battalion Staff
Like most children his age, Matthew Swick likes the Dukes of Hazzard and Pac-Man. But unlike most 3-year-olds, Matthew doesn't ride a Big Wheel or play hide-and-go-seek. Matthew has spina bifida, a birth defect that damages the spine and neurological system. The cause of spina bifida is unknown and the disorder has no cure. Matthew, who is poster child for the Spina Bifida Association in Bryan-College Station, has the most severe form of the defect. His spinal cord protrudes through an opening in his back, covered only by a membrane. Matthew also has hydrocephalus, a condition in which brain fluids accumulate and don't circulate properly. The condition can be controlled by "shunting" — a procedure in which tubing is placed under the skin to relieve the fluid buildup in the brain. A shunt was placed under Matthew's skin when he was two weeks old. He went to Texas Children's Hospital in Houston on Wednesday to have the tubing in his neck replaced. The new tubing will allow for growth and will not have to be replaced until Matthew is 6 or 8, Matthew's mother, Debbie Swick, said. The operation is the fifth for Matthew, she said. The first four operations were conducted before he was a year old. Matthew has feeling in both legs from his knees up but has no feeling in his feet. He walks with leg braces,



Matthew Swick

assisted by a walker, and is learning to walk with crutches. "He'll never be out of his braces," she said. "Now he's wearing thigh-high braces that unlock at the thighs. The best we can expect is braces that unlock at the knees." Matthew is visited twice a week by a physical therapist who works with him on his walker and a set of parallel bars, Mrs. Swick said. The therapist also takes Matthew to the swimming pool for water therapy. "The physical therapy gives him an opportunity to learn to swim and to participate in sports activity even though he can't run or walk," Matthew's father, Leslie Swick, said. The Swick family has been affected by Matthew's condition, he said.

"Anybody with a spina bifida child will be affected in some way — either by mental strain, financial burden or physical strain," he said. "It creates financial burdens and severe hardships — certain things insurance won't cover." Matthew and his brother Brian, 4, are close, Mrs. Swick said. "Brian doesn't fully understand the extent of the disability," he said. "But Brian growing up with him will be better because there will be someone who understands it (the defect)." Swick, who works at the Texas A&M Physical Plant, and his wife are members of the Bryan-College Station chapter of the Spina Bifida Association. The chapter is trying to create public awareness of the birth defect and contact other families whose children may be affected by spina bifida, he said. "There are a couple of families with spina bifida children who won't talk to us — which is a normal response," Swick said. "But it's always nice to know that there's someone around in the same boat with you." "The University offers us a lot of opportunities for service projects and a forum for public awareness." Law Hall and a fraternity at Texas A&M are supporting the chapter's efforts to raise money. "It made me feel good that those guys were interested enough to listen," Swick said. Anyone who wants more information about the Spina Bifida Association can reach the association at 823-0618.



staff photos by John Ryan

Matthew Swick stands with the help of leg braces.

Computers to aid science, math teaching

United Press International
Something for taxpayers to cheer about: For a pioneering project to improve science and engineering education, The National Science Foundation, a federal government agency, is doubling its bucks by teaming up with private industry. The NSF investment, as a result, is boosted by nearly \$1 million — the value of computers donated by five companies. NSF funding for the program is \$855,668. The company contributions amount to \$947,217. Education institutions, which must provide a quarter of the project cost to receive an NSF award, will plunk down another \$800,000. Fifty-eight research teams will run the experiments aimed at improving science and

engineering education at the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades and early college levels. Why all the effort? Shortcomings in American science and engineering education are the sorest topics any time educators, high-tech companies and government officials get together. Germany, Japan and the Soviets are on the way to outdistancing the United States in production of scientists and engineers. This is due to the near-collapse of science and math education in American public schools as science and math teachers opt for higher paying jobs in industry. Among projects in the NSF-Industry Cooperation Education Experiments: • Computer-based instruction for university

general biology laboratories. NSF, \$43,033; computer company, \$3,888. C.O. Patterson, Texas A&M University, is experiment director. • Computer games for teaching high school and university-level modern physics without mathematics. NSF puts in \$500; computer company, \$5,400 worth of equipment. Project to be run by Joel R. Primack at University of California, Santa Cruz. • Robotics modules for engineering technology students. NSF puts in \$500; the computer company, \$15,045 in equipment. William A. Beard of Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky., is in charge. • Using computer games to teach physical principles and engineering applications. NSF, \$38,899; computer company, \$4,990. Barbara

E. Bowman, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kans., to run the program. Computer equipment needed for the projects is being donated to grantees by Radio Shack, a Division of Tandy Corp.; Atari Institute for Educational Action-Research, a division of Atari Inc., a Warner Communications Company; the Digital Equipment Corp.; IBM Corp.; and the Apple Education Foundation. The NSF announcement said: "Each company will provide computers and related hardware and technical information about the equipment, and expert assistance so that the computers can be used to best advantage in the projects."

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forecast
Cloudy today with a good chance of afternoon thundershowers as a cold front moves through from the northwest.