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College Station, Texas

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Blaze destroys building

A fire at 313 College Main Sunday night destroyed the building which formerly housed the Plasma Center.

Harry Davis, College Station fire marshal, classified the fire as a suspicious fire, which means arson may be the cause. He said the fire department is holding the case until all evidence is gathered.

No estimates have been made yet on the damage. No injuries were reported.

The building, located on College Main between Church Street and Cross Street, was being remodeled into a game room. Porter said no one was in the building at the time of the fire, but said someone could have been in the building earlier in the evening.

The fire was reported at 11:20 p.m. and five fire trucks, one rescue vehicle and an ambulance were called to the scene.

Joey Porter, deputy fire marshal, said it took College Station firemen almost an hour to control the fire and a few more hours to put it out. Firemen fought flames which reached nearly 25 feet in height, he said.

The old brown building, which has a masonry block frame, burned quickly, Porter said, because it had wood paneling inside. He also said the age of the building made it difficult to put the fire out.

"It was difficult to put out because it's an old building and has more than one ceiling inside," Porter said.



staff photo by Jorge Casari

A blaze at 313 College Main Sunday night destroyed the building which formerly housed the Plasma Center. No injuries were reported in the blaze.

Houston tents house jobless

United Press International
HOUSTON — A makeshift tent city under a bridge near the San Jacinto River east of Houston is the home to about 150 unemployed, homeless people who say they are lucky to have even that much shelter.

"This is better than being out on the road worrying about where you are going to lay your head," said Michael Hammac, 21, who moved to Tent City USA last week with his wife, two young children, sister, stepbrother and brother-in-law.

Weekend rains swept the area, soaking beds, clothes and food, but when it cleared, the residents spread out their belongings in the sunshine to dry over the leaky tents and old cars that serve as their homes.

The settlement looks as though it sprang from the pages of John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath," and is reminiscent of the "Hoovervilles" of The Depression.

The community's "mayor" J.D. Dunn, 37, a former construction worker from Liberty, Texas, said as many as 300 people have lived in the settlement at one time. A similar colony is located in Beaumont, where several hundred people live.

"They come in every day," Dunn said.

But, he said, residents of nearby affluent Houston have not forgotten the less fortunate. Fancy, expensive cars drive down a rocky, dirt road to the colony each day to drop off food, clothing and household goods. Local churches, informed of the economic hardships of the residents, began

donating food and helping them find employment.

Fresh milk and meat must be brought in daily because there is no refrigeration. Among the donated gifts are live geese and chickens; one resident is fattening a turkey in a cage for a Thanksgiving celebration.

Some campers say the gifts have provoked greed, but not all the residents accept charity so readily.

"A lot of people have had to swallow a lot of pride," said Herb Shondel, 46, a former data entry supervisor from St. Paul, Minn., who is in charge of dispensing food. "But then they get hungry enough and start looking at their kids. Then they take their share."

A school bus stops daily near the bridge to pick up children who live in the encampment and take them to nearby Sheldon schools.

Critics of the area say residents are there more for the attention than out of economic need. But, people like Dunn or unemployed truckdriver Floyd Gibbons do not plan to stay in Tent City USA forever.

"I never thought anything like this would happen," said Gibbons, 50, nursing a bad ankle and recovering from a heart attack and stroke last August. "Within the next three to four weeks, I'll be out of here one way or another." "The idea is to get out," said Bill Williams, who with his wife and infant baby have lived for eight months in the tent commune. "It's a losing battle, mister. That's all I can say."

Regents take no action on proposal

Oil firms want to lease University land

by Denise Richter
Battalion Staff

If local oilmen have their way, cows grazing at the Texas A&M dairy farm soon will have more to look at than cars on the highway. Those cows could be sharing their peaceful pastures with drilling rigs if the Brazos Valley oil boom hits the University campus.

At least three oil companies have expressed an interest in leasing land owned by the Texas A&M System, W.C. Freeman, executive vice chancellor for administration, said at the regents' meeting Sunday.

Emil Ogden, head of Chaparral Minerals, said the campus may lie on the Bryan Woodbine field, which was named after the Woodbine, an oil-rich geological formation.

The 60 wells in the Bryan Woodbine field are producing an estimated 20,000 barrels of

oil a day. More than 3 million barrels, valued at \$96 million, had been produced through Sept. 30.

"This is probably the largest oil field discovery in Texas in the last 15 years," Ogden said. Freeman said Lyons Petroleum Inc. and Getty Oil Co. also have expressed interest in leasing the land.

The three areas that the companies are interested in are the north part of the dairy farm; the Hensel Park area, adjacent to the Bryan city limits; and the area behind the College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Six months ago we wouldn't have given you a nickel for (the land)," Ogden said. "But there's no geology to define the field. We define as we drill."

The question of leasing University land was brought before the committee for mineral

leases as a discussion item — no action was taken. And H.R. "Bum" Bright of Dallas, regents chairman, cautioned the oil company representatives against expecting quick action.

"The minerals committee needs to familiarize itself with what's going on out there," Bright said. "They probably will want to try to develop information ... and decide what would be the most advantageous way to handle it."

"The University's basic function to provide education for the youngsters of the state. We will act deliberately and what we hope will be effectively from the University's standpoint."

A \$1.65 million facelift for the Academic Building was discussed by members of the planning and building committee.

Two years ago, the cost of renovating the

Academic Building was estimated at \$1 million.

"The extent of the repairs needed was not fully known," said H.C. "Dulie" Bell of Austin, committee chairman. "We found conditions much worse than anyone expected."

"It's a grand old building. It must be preserved and maintained as an A&M landmark."

But Architect Chartier Newton of Austin said that preserving and maintaining the structure will take much time and work.

The building is structurally sound, but the building's masonry is deteriorating, Newton said. Some of the building's masonry is cracked; when it rains, water seeps into the masonry, which accelerates the rate of deterioration, he said. Cast stone on the building also is coming apart and falling off, and the roof and

dome have been damaged.

Planned renovation includes repairing the masonry, replacing cast stone, re-roofing the building and repairing the skylight at the top of the building. An access ramp will be constructed on both sides of the front entrance and the entrance doors will be replaced by replicas of the doors originally used on the Academic Building.

During the meeting of the committee for academic campuses, a request was made for a revolving account in the Department of Industrial Engineering. This account would help finance regular maintenance, a computer operator-programmer, supplies and major repairs not covered by service contracts for hardware and software.

But the request sparked a discussion of Sys-
See REGENTS page 6

Bartering for books

by Angel Stokes
Battalion Reporter

An eye for an eye.

A tooth for a tooth.

An arm and a leg for a book?

If you need textbooks for next semester and want to save your limbs

— Johnny Flores wants you to join the Textbook Exchange Service.

The Textbook Exchange Service is a system for bartering books designed

by Flores, a mechanical engineering major from San Antonio. The system uses a computer to compile a list of

students wanting to buy, sell or trade textbooks with other students.

"It's like an exclusive subscription for books," Flores said. The sophomore entrepreneur said a student can list eight books that he has or needs by class and course number for \$1. His name can then be matched directly to another student whose needs correspond.

The forms will be available beginning Nov. 29 until Dec. 1, for business majors in the Memorial Student Center and the Academic and Agency

Building. Flores said the system will be limited to business majors as a test market to work out the bugs in the system.

Flores said he had the idea after reading an article in The Battalion about Barter Systems Inc. in Houston. Bartering should work for textbooks if big industry can use the barter system efficiently, he said.

"The hardest part has been finding a sponsor," Flores said. The Society for Entrepreneurship and New Ventures will sponsor the Textbook Exchange Service, he said.

Freshman falls out window

A Texas A&M freshman is in satisfactory condition in the intensive care unit at St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan after falling from a third floor dorm window Saturday night.

William Bryan Bell, a freshman electrical engineering major from Richardson, is under observation at the hospital but apparently suffered no injuries after falling out his Moore Hall window Saturday night.

"He's fine," said Greg Creeser, Bell's roommate. "He's just sore."

"There's no concussion, no broken bones," he said.

Creeser, a freshman petroleum engineering major from Austin, said when he left the room, Bell was lying on his bed. When he came back into the room, Bell wasn't there.

"The only place he could've gone was out the window," Creeser said.

Creeser said Bell had been drinking and apparently leaned out the window, passed out and fell.

A tree below the window probably blocked Bell's fall, he said.

Creeser said Bell has a sore shoulder and sore feet but otherwise feels fine.

Spokesmen at St. Joseph Hospital say Bell probably will be released sometime today.

inside

Classified.....	12
Local.....	3
National.....	10
Opinions.....	2
Sports.....	13
State.....	6
What's up.....	11

forecast

Today's Forecast: Cloudy skies today with cool temperatures. High in the mid 70s, with tonight's low in the lower 60s.

Conductor short knocks out lights

An electrical short caused a power failure on campus Saturday, the University Physical Plant director says.

"We lost one of the major buss runs in the power plant," Director Joe J. Estill said.

Estill said the buss — or conductor that serves as a common connection

for several circuits — shorted out because of wear and tear on the system.

The entire campus suffered a power blackout at about 11 a.m. Saturday. Power was restored to the Memorial Student Center and Kyle Field by about 1 p.m., but other parts of the campus were without power until about 10 p.m., he said.



staff photo by John Ryan

Santa Claus is coming to town

Santa Claus ushered in the season Sunday afternoon when he came to town for the Holiday Parade in Bryan. Santa will be

checking his list between now and Christmas to find out who's naughty and who's nice, so be careful!