

Texas A&M The Battalion

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staff photo by David Fisher

Look out Boston Marathon

The huge crowd of runners starts to thin as the leaders move out front during The Straight Shot 10k road race sponsored by the Eagle. Kyle Heffner, Number One in the crowd of

runners, went on to cross the finish line first, while Ron Menard, a building construction major, won the wheelchair division. Sunday's race was 10 kilometers, over six miles from

start to finish. Participants started out at Townshire Shopping Center in Bryan and ran down Texas Avenue, finishing at the K-Mart in College Station.

Fire burns Capitol; One killed in blaze

United Press International
AUSTIN — Fire officials said they were about 80 percent sure at one point that a "very intense" fire early Sunday was going to destroy the historic 95-year-old Texas Capitol.

"I'd say it came very close," acting fire Chief Brady Pool said. "It was getting ahead of us quicker than we were getting ahead of it."

One person died and seven were injured in the early morning blaze that did an estimated \$500,000 damage to the east wing of the massive pink granite structure.

Construction of the Capitol — the nation's largest statehouse — was completed in 1888 after the previous capitol burned in November 1881.

A preliminary investigation indicated the blaze, which was detected at 5:25 a.m., may have started from an electrical appliance, possibly a television set, in Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby's Capitol apartment.

Gov. Mark White said he would ask for safety studies of the Capitol in the wake of the fire. Except for the basement, the building does not have a sprinkler system.

"This building is 100 years old and there have been renovations made, probably without much thought given to fire precautions," he said.

The smell of smoke hung over the entire Capitol, but the Senate planned to meet as scheduled today. The two-story chamber's only apparent damage was a charred corner doorway near the demolished apartment.

"We're really operational," said Secretary of the Senate Betty King. "We can go right on."

Pool said he informed White and Hobby around 6:30 a.m. Sunday that the building might be lost.

"I told them we might lose the complex and they might want to start getting some contingency plans in case we didn't stop it," he said. But firefighters extinguished the fire about 8 a.m.

"Up until about 7:30 a.m., I wouldn't have bought no stock in it (the building)," said Pool. "I was very close. On a scale of 10, I'd say about an 8 (that it would be destroyed)."

Firefighters remained in the building overnight to make sure the flames did not rekindle.

The lieutenant governor's apartment was destroyed along with valuable old portraits, antique furniture and silver servings and exquisite chandeliers. Water smoke caused also damaged the first three floors of the four-story building.

Pool identified the dead man as

Matthew Hansen, 23, of New Caney, who was staying in the apartment along with Hobby's daughter Katherine, 18, and Mr. and Mrs. James Waterman, also of New Caney. The Watermans and Hansen, a horse trainer, were in Austin for a horseman's awards banquet.

Officer Joel Quintanilla, 56, suffered burns on his hands and face and smoke inhalation in an attempt to rescue Hansen. He was in stable condition in intensive care at an Austin hospital.

Two firemen also were in stable condition after being treated for smoke inhalation and four other firefighters were treated for minor injuries and released.

"Kate was awakened by a security guard (Mitchell) pounding on the door saying it was a fire," Hobby said. "That officer ... saved her life."

"She said the room where Mr. Hansen was staying was a sea of fire."

The fire drew 25 firefighting units and 100 firefighters to the tree-lined Capitol complex on a cold Sunday morning.

The House side or western wing of the Capitol — never before the scene of a serious fire — was undamaged as was the portrait-lined first floor rotunda and the 260-foot-tall dome.

A&M group to lobby in Texas Legislature

by Kelley Smith

Battalion Staff

Texas A&M students will be represented by their own lobbyists in the 68th Legislature — the Legislative Study Group, a committee of Student Government, will lobby on issues affecting students.

"We're not the typical lobbyists — pulling strings — but informative lobbyists," said Fred Billings, administrative director of the legislative study group. "We show information that supports us and (we) strive for professionalism."

The group will lobby on five issues: the Permanent University Fund, student tuition increases, teachers' salary increases, a student representative on the Texas A&M Board of Regents and the raising of the drinking age to 21.

The position the group will take on each issue has not been decided.

After each issue is fully researched, the group will present its information to the Student Senate and recommend which position the legislative group should take. By having the Senate vote on the position the group

will take, students' opinions will be better represented, Billings said.

"We tend to have to fight a two-way war," he said. "We have to research, lobby and make a presentation here in the student legislature and again in the Texas Legislature."

The first bill the group will present to the Student Senate is the PUF bill. This bill would make the PUF available to other universities within the Texas A&M and University of Texas systems. Use of the PUF now is limited to Texas A&M and UT.

The PUF and its importance to Texas A&M will be discussed at an open meeting in the Academic and Agency Building on Tuesday before it is presented to the Senate on Wednesday.

The group holds regular meetings on Thursday nights. Texas House Speaker Pro Tem Hugo Berlango and Tony Bonilla, national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, will attend Thursday's meeting to help teach the group to make effective presentations.

Madelon Yanta, issue coordinator for tuition, said: "They also are going to help establish contacts with legisla-

tors so we can lobby more effectively for the students at Texas A&M."

During the past two weeks, legislative study group representatives attended receptions in Austin that were sponsored by former students for legislators. The study group also researched bills and visited representatives. But only a few students actually will lobby, Billings said.

"We don't have a limit but only a set few are going to (representatives') offices," he said. "You must be really well-versed on the issues."

Mike Lawshe, director of the group, said the group started last year but got off to a slow start because of a lack of student interest and because the Legislature was not in session.

Yanta said that last semester was spent researching issues that will be important to Texas A&M and finding contacts in Austin to work with during the semester.

Lawshe said the House and Senate plan to pass resolutions commending the legislative study group for encouraging other universities to become involved with the legislative process through their student senate.



staff photo by Bill Schulz

Long, hard struggle

Though she started out with no problem, sophomore Robin Siskel from Fort Worth found it very hard to hang onto the MSC Outdoor Recreation's rope ladder at the MSC All Night Fair.

The ladder was hung like a hammock, and the trick was to cross to the other side without falling off.

Civil rights activist to speak on history

by Cheryl Burke

Battalion Reporter

In honor of Black History Month, civil rights activist Ron Wilkins will present a series of four lectures focusing on various aspects of black history. The lectures, which begin tonight, will be held each Monday in February.

The Black Awareness Forum, sponsored by MSC Black Awareness Committee, is the group's first effort to present educational programs rather than just entertainment, MSC program adviser Arlene Manthey said.

The first lecture — "Black History: Its Meaning, Scope and Challenge" — will be presented at 7 tonight in 502 Rudder.

Wilkins said: "I am going to discuss black history in its broadest conception. That will include African history, which is really just human history, and world history, from prehistoric times to the present."

Wilkins said he will stress the value of studying black history, which he said he believes is severely lacking at Texas A&M as well as across the nation.

"History is a weapon," Wilkins said. "Distorted history has helped this society and its institutions to both dehumanize black people and assign us an inferior status. Correct history study develops black self-definitions,

self-realization and pan-African consciousness."

Pan-Africanism is a movement that attempts to re-establish ties between Africa and black people around the world, Wilkins said.

Wilkins has been a member of the African American Education Commission and was chief administrative officer of the Pan-African Skills Project. He also was deputy chairman of the Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee, an organization that was active in the human rights movements of the sixties.

He now is a member of the Patrice Lumumba Pan-Africanist Organization, a New York-based organization that takes its name from the first prime minister of the Congo. Wilkins describes Lumumba as "one of Africa's greatest patriots."

The other three lectures will cover topics ranging from African liberation struggles and issues facing the black world to a discussion of Malcolm X. The series is free and open to the public.

An exhibit combining black art, culture and history will be displayed in the MSC Art Gallery through Feb. 18. The exhibit, titled "Black Is," will include photographs by Wilkins, prints of historical black figures, cultural artifacts, African publications and a collection of African stamp art.

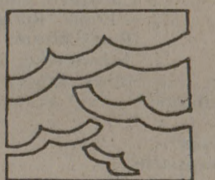
correction

Friday's Battalion incorrectly identified the director of the graduate English program here. The director is Dr. Forrest Bert.

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forecast



Partly cloudy skies today with a high of 52. Northeast winds at 5 to 10 mph. Continued partly cloudy tonight and on Tuesday with fog possible for Tuesday morning. Tonight's low will be 35, and Tuesday's high near 62.