

Texas A&M The Battalion

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Photo by David Elmer

Jeff Dyess, a junior political science major, expresses his feelings about apartheid by painting the words 'divest now' on a shack built by Aggies

Against Apartheid, whose members look on. The shack represents the poor quality of housing in South Africa.

Group gains permit to build new shanty

By Deborah L. West
Staff Writer

Fifteen people built a new anti-apartheid shanty near the Academic and Harrington buildings Sunday afternoon, said David Luckenbach, vice president for Students Against Apartheid.

Luckenbach said the shanty's poor quality is representative of housing for black people in South Africa. He said it is meant to symbolize what he calls the "abhorrent" system of apartheid, or racial segregation, in that country.

Bob Wiatt, director of security and University Police, said Sunday that Students Against Apartheid's University permit allows them to display the shanty on campus for 10 days out of every 30.

He said the permit was granted through normal channels last week, and that the shanty's construction was approved by the Student Activities, University Police and Grounds Maintenance offices.

Wiatt said he sees no problem with construction of the shanty, and

he said he hopes it stays up for at least the 10 days that were initially approved.

"Bothabusters," an anonymous group that takes its name from South African President Pieter W. Botha, built a shanty Feb. 22 without a permit.

Grounds Maintenance crews tore it down the same day.

Luckenbach said that he was part of the anonymous Bothabusters group and that several SAA members also participated in the construction of the first shanty.

"We are trying to find a way to keep the shanty here all the time," Luckenbach said. "This is the first time at Texas A&M that anyone has made a shack as a forum for opinion and free speech. The rule limiting the display time usually applies to speakers and people selling things, so we may be able to get around it."

The building material was found in different dumps and apartment trash dumpsters Sunday morning, Luckenbach said.

"The shanty cost us about \$15 to make," he said. "The paint and nails

are the most expensive part of the shanty."

The Battalion received several letters last week complaining that an apartheid shack on campus is an eyesore.

"I understand the anti-apartheid groups disapproval of the racially biased South African government," wrote John West, a freshman mechanical engineering major. "And they certainly have the right to express their opinions; however, I don't believe blemishing our campus is the acceptable way of doing this."

Luckenbach said the shack should not offend anyone.

"It is not on sacred grass; the Corps doesn't run here; it won't impede traffic, and it is not in the groundskeepers' way," he said.

The highly traveled location of the shack will expose students to the apartheid system, Luckenbach said.

"People at Texas A&M are not apathetic; they are just unaware of world issues," he said. "Anyone who sees the shack will learn about apartheid and will be able to form individual opinions."

U.S. Navy escapes fire from Gulf

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — American helicopters on a reconnaissance flight escaped Sunday after drawing heavy machine gun fire from an oil platform and several boats in the central Persian Gulf, U.S. officials said.

Iran was believed to be behind the attack. No casualties were reported.

The attack came about 25 hours after a U.S. warship, on patrol farther north, fired at what were believed to be Iranian speedboats moving toward one of the Navy's offshore supply barges.

The two encounters shattered one of the longest periods of quiet in the gulf since the gulf's so-called "tanker war" began four years ago. But the two warring nations continued Sunday to trade savage missile attacks on each other's cities. The Iraqi News Agency said Iraq fired five long-range rockets into Tehran and jet fighters bombed 10 Iranian cities in retaliation for Iran's "criminal attacks on Iraqi civilian areas."

The Navy did not say who fired on the U.S. helicopters on Sunday, but there appeared no doubt it was Iran, which controls many of the oil platforms in the central gulf and uses some as supply and staging bases for the armed boats that patrol the waters and attack neutral shipping.

U.S. officials declined to identify the oil platform involved other than to say it was "in the central gulf."

AIDS' financial burden 'hot potato' at hearing

By Tracy Staton
Senior Staff Writer

AUSTIN — The financial burden of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) was a "hot potato" Thursday at a public hearing in Austin about the disease. None of the witnesses — who included insurance representatives, health care experts, state social workers and AIDS victims — wanted to accept responsibility for the immense financial problems posed by AIDS.

The hearing was the fifth of eight attempts by the Texas State Legislative Task Force on AIDS to gather information from citizens and officials in cities around the state. Austin's public forum in the Senate Chamber addressed the impact of AIDS on Central Texas.

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and Speaker of the House Gib Lewis appointed the task force to study the economic and social effects of AIDS. The committee will recommend an "action plan" to the state legislature during the 1989 session.

Witnesses at Thursday's hearing offered opinions on a wide spectrum of issues, but economic concerns formed the core of much of the testimony.

Michael Peckinpaugh, who is infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) but has not contracted AIDS, told the task force that the "red tape" required to apply for financial assistance is both frustrating and nonsensical.

"I find that when I have to rely on health care agencies that there are many prerequisites," Peckinpaugh said. "If I apply here in Austin for

the Medical Assistance Program, it's not as simple as that. You have to apply with Social Security and just about every other imaginable agency to get back to the Medical Assistance Program."

"I find that there are a lot of complicated criteria. Everyone has advice about what to do next. I find that a lot of this advice is totally incongruous with the last set of information I had from the last agency."

Part of this problem is that HIV patients are at the back of the line for agency funds for health care, he said.

"Many of the health care agencies don't recognize HIV infection as a debilitating illness," he said. "You have to be diagnosed with certain opportunistic infection to be diagnosed with AIDS and to receive certain care."

But the average health care costs for HIV patients are still high, he said. Since last May, his medical expenses were about \$10,000. And although he has insurance, he may not be able to continue paying his premiums.

When Peckinpaugh approached the Medical Assistance Program in Austin about paying his insurance premiums instead of directly paying his medical expenses, the agency refused because it was not allowed under its program, he said.

"Paying my premium and the deductible would come to a total of about \$1,900 a year," Peckinpaugh said. "But yet, over the last two months, right out of the city coffers they spent \$1,700 just for one of my prescriptions. It's really frustrating

that for one prescription, they could pay for almost a year's worth of health care."

Peckinpaugh is one of few HIV and AIDS patients to have health insurance. And those who do have insurance may be in danger of losing their coverage.

Testimony from insurance experts revealed that 60 percent to 90 percent of health insurance coverage is group insurance. Many of these group insurance plans are financed by the insured's employer. So when an AIDS patient is dismissed from a job or is no longer able to work, he loses his insurance as well.

And Will Davis, an Austin lawyer representing a portion of the Texas Insurance Industry, said that if an HIV or AIDS patient approached a private insurance company, he probably would not be able to get health insurance.

"The insurance industry is in a business, pure and simple," Davis said. "And because we are a business, we can't insure people who are sick at the time they apply for insurance."

The Texas Board of Insurance recently allowed the insurance industry to make "normal tests" of prospective clients, and to reject any applicant who is infected with a disease such as AIDS, Davis said.

Other insurance representatives stressed that AIDS is only one of several chronic disorders like heart disease that make a person uninsurable. A state-supported insurance

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Board of Regents decides to delay plans for garages

By Richard Williams
Senior Staff Writer

A desire to protect the remaining campus "green space" led the Texas A&M Board of Regents Planning and Building Committee to put plans to build two parking garages on campus on hold.

During its Sunday meeting the committee heard a proposal to build a \$6.5 million parking garage on Parking Annex 60, the visitors' lot close to Rudder Tower, and an \$11 million garage on the Texas A&M golf course.

The golf course site caused the most discussion because it violates a Board policy of not approving new buildings on the east side of the Systems Administration Building, where the polo field and golf course are located.

Regent Douglas R. DeCluitt said this policy was adopted to protect the green space this area provides.

The regents approved the development of a master plan for the A&M campus that would address future building and parking construction. The approval of a master plan study also caused the Board to delay the approval of the Rudder Tower garage.

The proposed Rudder Tower garage would have been a 1,000-car, three-story structure that would have allowed three more levels to be added later.

If approved at a later date the

Rudder Tower garage could house the MSC Bookstore and the A&M Development Foundation offices, Peel said.

Both garages are still being examined and could be approved at a later date.

Robert Smith, vice president of fiscal affairs and operations, said additional parking spaces are needed in the Commons area to attract students to the four residence halls being built in the Commons.

In other business Board committees:

- approved initiation of a project to build campus corner markers on the corners of Texas Avenue and University Drive and Texas Avenue and Jersey. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$348,400.

- approved an appropriation of \$125,000 for a detailed design of the Commons dining facility addition and renovation.

- approved raising the uniform rental fee for non-contract junior and senior cadets from \$200 for an academic year to \$250.

- approved licensing agreements that would allow three companies to use technology developed by A&M system employees in company products.

Items approved in committee are still subject to the approval of the Board before taking effect.

Students clean up B—CS community during Big Event

By Kathleen Reilly
Reporter

Saturday morning the mayor of College Station, the mayor pro tem of Bryan and 3,000 participants kicked off Texas A&M's Big Event.

Student organizations including members of the Corps of Cadets and Greeks worked between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. picking up trash, painting and cleaning schools and churches in Bryan-College Station.

Groups assigned to clean Texas Avenue received garbage bags and support from the mayors and members of Brazos Beautiful.

Diane Mills of Brazos Beautiful, an anti-litter organization, helped organize the cleanup of Texas Avenue and thanked those who helped.

"I just want to thank you all for your help," she said. "Gig 'em! Go get that trash."

John Rogers, president of Brazos Beautiful, also rallied for the students.

"I'm glad to see you are concerned with the appearance of our community and want to thank you for your efforts," he said. "I hope you will pick up trash, not only today, but any time you have a chance."

Larry Ringer, mayor of College Station, joined in the cleanup efforts.

"If the community for the rest of the year can do a fraction of what you do today, we'll be doing great."

— Hank McQuaid, mayor pro tem of Bryan

He brought along his custom-made trash-picker, which was complete with a toy gun to shoot snakes and a rear-view mirror.

Hank McQuaid, the mayor pro tem of Bryan, also praised the efforts of the participants in the event.

"If the community for the rest of the year can do a fraction of what you do today, we'll be doing great," he said. McQuaid was filling in for Bryan Mayor Marvin Tate, who was out of town.

Helen Wortham, a senior biology major from Dallas, said some students have participated in the Big Event since they first came to Texas A&M.

"There is a lot here for our access in Bryan-College Station," Wortham said. "The cities do so much for us, such as give us discounts with our student I.D.s. We just want to help them out now."

Carla Everett, a senior civil engineering major from DeKalb, agreed. "We have a good time because we do it all together," Everett said.

Members of Corps Squadron 14 spent the morning picking up trash

between Church's Fried Chicken and Krenek Tap Lane.

Connie O'Connor, a senior history major from Dallas, said the 36 members of the squadron were used to getting up early, so giving up time on Saturday morning wasn't a problem for them.

Corps members of Regiment Company D-1 and Brigade Company I-1 cleared 15 acres of lumber, brush and stones at Pooh's Park.

Some members dismantled the old skating rink, while others cleaned and painted walls that were damaged by water.

Paul Rodriguez, a freshman aerospace engineering major from Friendswood, said The Big Event is a good project, but he was ready to finish it and prepare for his outfit's softball game that afternoon.

In Bryan, Kappa Alpha Theta, the Aggie Men's Club and Corps Brigade Companies B-2 and D-2 spent the day playing with children at the Boys' Club of Brazos County.

About 100 boys played games and had lunch with the students.

Dunta Ray, 9, said he likes basket-

ball and really enjoyed playing it with the volunteers.

"I also liked the hot dogs we got for lunch," he said.

David Fields, 10, said it was a lot of fun, except when he played "chicken" with the men.

"I was up really high and almost fell off his shoulders," he said. "It was scary."

Fields said he liked lunch so much he went back for seconds of everything.

Susan Skaggs, a member of Kappa Alpha Theta, said she thought the boys enjoyed having the men around more than the women, but she still had fun.

Mitch White, service chairman of Aggie Men's Club, said about 50 fraternity members were there.

"The guys really have a good time out here," he said. "They really like the kids."

Frank Muller, commanding officer of B-2, said 35 to 40 members participated.

"Our outfit works with Youth Fun Day and this is a lot like that," he said. "It's laid back and the guys have fun."

Another Corps outfit worked at the First Baptist on Welsh. David Scott, executive officer of A-Battery, an outfit of the Aggie Band, said about 50 members were helping mow, edge and weed the lawn, wash windows and paint the parking lot.



Photo by Roy D. Parsons

Freshmen from Company P-2 pick up trash along South Texas Avenue as part of The Big Event Saturday afternoon. About 3,000 people participated in the event, which is an opportunity for A&M groups to give something back to the community.