



Public voices opinions about bonfire at meeting

By JILL BUTLER
Of The Battalion Staff

Spring break is almost here and most students and faculty are more concerned with vacation time than events taking place next fall. However, some events, such as bonfire, continue to be controversial, and more than 100 people showed up last night for an open hearing about bonfire.

Students, faculty and community members had a chance last night to voice their opinions, comments and complaints about bonfire to the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Bonfire.

The committee, comprised of four faculty members and four students, had a ninety minute open hearing last night to gather information and opinions about bonfire.

This was the eighth meeting about bonfire the committee has had, but it was the first open hearing.

Dr. Bill Stout, deputy speaker of the Faculty Senate, said the committee was asked

by the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate to examine alternatives to bonfire's present form.

"Our basic purpose here today, is to find out what you think," Stout said. "We do not want to leave any stone unturned as we explore alternatives to the bonfire."

The committee was formed to examine alternatives to bonfire in terms of academic concentration, safety, location, humanitarian considerations and environmental concerns.

"This is not a public debate," Stout said. "This is an information gathering exercise. I would urge all of you in the audience to be respectful if there is an opinion expressed other than the one you hold. We want to hear as many opinions as possible."

Russ Savage, an A&M student, said if Aggies did not build bonfire, the land would be strip-mined anyway, and all the wood would be wasted.

"The tradition is still a lot like it was when the tradition began," Savage said. "We take things that are going to be thrown away and make something great."

Savage said bonfire helps people make friends, promotes leadership skills and teaches people how to work with others.

"It would almost be a waste if we didn't build bonfire," Savage said. "We're not going to get anything out of the wood if it's thrown away."

Savage said he thinks opposers of bonfire are making something out of nothing.

The opposers of bonfire did not argue that the land would not be strip-mined, but they said this is no reason for A&M to destroy trees. Opposers said A&M is sending the world a message that it is OK to waste natural resources.

James Brown, a graduate student in wildlife and fisheries, said if A&M wants to become a more widely respected university, it must end bonfire.

"I am philosophically opposed to bonfire," Brown said. "As Texas A&M strives to become a world-class university, should it not assume greater responsibility for working toward solutions for environmental degradation through research and public education?"

Brown said bonfire trivializes world-wide environmental problems.

"What message does Aggie bonfire give a public told by educators, leaders, experts and perhaps even its own conscious that natural resources are limited and should be put to wide use?" Brown asked.

Brown said bonfire is a "gross hypocrisy" and a highly visible waste of natural resources.

Supporters of bonfire did not argue that environmental problems do not exist. They said, however, that many bonfire supporters are involved with organizations to better the community and the environment.

The supporters argued that if bonfire was cancelled, the land would be strip-mined anyway and if it wasn't strip-mined, the saved trees would never make it to the truly needy people.

Committee member, Janis Stout, faculty member of the College of Liberal Arts, asked Brown if, as a solution, students could plant three trees in the community for each tree that is cut down for bonfire.

Brown did not think this would solve

anything. "That is beside the point," Brown said. "This university is being hypocritical by blatantly publicizing the waste of natural resources."

Supporters all agreed bonfire does not have an adverse affect on grades, and cited many examples of people who worked on bonfire and maintained high grade-point ratios.

Opposers did not argue academics as a major issue.

The location of bonfire was a concern of some opposers.

Gregory Bowling, a sophomore political science major who spoke representing Canterbury House, the Episcopal Student Center, said he and other volunteers from Canterbury House guarded the student center's property bonfire night. The center shares a common boundary with the bonfire site.

There were not enough policemen to effectively keep bonfire participants from urinating on the property, he said.

See Bonfire/Page 6

Gephardt calls for aid to Soviets

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt said Tuesday the United States should offer direct aid to the Soviet Union to ensure that its reforms succeed.

"We should be investing in our own self-interest," Gephardt said. "And stability, democracy and a market economy in the Soviet Union are in America's strong self-interest."

The proposal brought immediate criticism from some quarters, with a presidential spokesman saying the Soviets don't want direct aid.

Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J., also said that the Soviets haven't requested U.S. help and that, if they did, it would be wasted without economic reform. "Unless they reform the economy, it's going down a rathole," Bradley said.

Others on Capitol Hill said that while they thought Gephardt's proposal would spark a useful debate, the idea would fall on disapproving public ears.

"If you're going to start giving foreign aid to the hated commies of 70 years' worth, you've got a real sales job to do in the United States," said Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo.

Gephardt noted an appeal by Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel, in a Feb. 21 speech to Congress, to help his country by helping the Soviet Union continue on its reformist road.

If Havel, who was imprisoned by the communists, can call for aid to the Soviets, "the least we can do is listen," Gephardt said in a speech that also contained his harshest criticism to date of Bush's policy toward Eastern Europe.

He accused Bush of "a lack of leadership in this most crucial moment," throwing billions of dollars into the military budget to defend against "communists who don't want to be communists any more" while ignoring their economic needs.

"It's as though George Bush's Pentagon budget were written by someone who hadn't read a newspaper in a year," Gephardt said, drawing applause. Indeed, most of the administration's budget was drafted last year, after the opening of the Berlin Wall but before many other developments in Eastern Europe.

At the White House, spokesman Marlin Fitzwater called the charges "general old political stuff" and added, "The Soviet Union doesn't want direct aid."

One step at a time



Photo by Eric M. Roalson

Johnny Hester, team captain of the nine member Ranger Challenge Team, crosses a rope bridge with the help of his teammates as the group prepares to take part in a national competi-

tion. Ten other colleges will compete against the A&M team April 6-8 at Ft. Riley, Ark. The timed crossing of the rope bridge is one of the five drills in the competition.

Director, students discuss food services

By PAM MOOMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

Questions about Texas A&M Food Services were raised at Tuesday's Student Senate meeting, and Dr. Don Powell, director of business services at A&M, was there to answer them.

Business services is responsible for business-like activities around campus such as the golf course, the copy centers and food services, Powell said.

"We think we're an integral part that makes this University work," he said. "We try to operate on a real-world basis as closely as we can."

Business services tries to hold prices down as much as possible, Powell said.

Most of the questions Powell answered dealt with University board plans and the University's confiscation of Aggie Bucks at the end of each semester.

Twice there has been \$30,000 left in Aggie Bucks at the semester's end that has been returned to the University, Powell said.

In order to alleviate this problem, he said, food services is accepting requests from students to refund the amount of their Aggie Bucks or extend their Aggie Bucks to the next semester.

Starting next fall, Powell said, Aggie Bucks automatically will be extended to the next semester. Deposits made in the summer will be good for both the following fall and spring semesters, he added.

Food services also will create a

new plan called Aggie Bucks 100, he said. A minimum deposit of \$100 is required, but students will buy this plan in multiple numbers, he said. They can add increments of \$50 to their initial \$100 deposit, he said.

"We're here to provide for your needs and wants," Powell said. "If we don't please you, we won't get your business."

Later, Speaker of the Senate Ty Clevenger announced that Aggie license plates can be ordered for \$30 a year. Four-fifths of this amount will go directly to scholarships, Clevenger said, and should bring in about \$200,000 annually in scholarships. Also, if the plates are ordered now, the price of the old plates will be rebated, he said.

Clevenger also presented his report on Academic Resources at

A&M. He found that while \$25 million has been appropriated for expansion of A&M library facilities, no money has been designated for the purchase of books.

Additional research by Clevenger dealt with campus computer facilities. He proposed solutions to the current situation where computer facilities are scattered around campus. While A&M has the money to buy additional computers to meet student needs, they lack facilities, he said, so he proposed construction of a large computing facility that goes along with the library expansion.

In other business, the Student Senate approved the Spring 1990 Student Body Election polling sites, which are Kleberg Building, the MSC, Blocker Building and Academic Plaza.

Jackson earns local, state Miss Black and Gold titles

By CHRIS VAUGHN
Of The Battalion Staff

Pageant winners spend years perfecting what it takes to win pageants, right? Not this time.

Karen Jackson, a novice at the pageant scene, earned the Texas Miss Black and Gold title two weeks ago in Houston after being named the Texas A&M Miss Black and Gold in January.

Jackson, a junior English education major, had never entered a pageant before. In less than two months, she has won two.

"I'm still floating," Jackson said. "When I entered the pageant here and when I went to the state level, I never, never, never expected to win. It is such an honor and privilege."

Jackson will represent Texas in the regional Miss Black and Gold pageant in Tulsa, Okla., during Easter weekend. The winner of that pageant competes in the national pageant later this year in Miami.

The Miss Black and Gold pageant is sponsored by the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, whose colors are black and gold.

Jackson credits her outgoing personality for her success in the pageants.

"I am in the Voices of Praise and being out there with them has forced me to relax in public," she said. "You can't be nervous if you're in public a lot. I've always been a people person, though."

Holding the local and state Miss Black and Gold titles doesn't begin to cover the activities that keep Jackson busy.

She is the pianist for the gospel choir Voices of Praise, resident adviser in Mosher Hall, secretary of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, assistant director in the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference, counselor with Minority Freshmen Orientation and member of the Committee on Increasing Multicultural Awareness.

All her extracurricular activities, however, don't keep her away from her academic pursuits. Jackson plans to attend law school after her graduation in August 1991 to work with the Texas Legislature in the education field.

Jackson said her plans to enter the field of education stem from her parents' lifelong commitments to education.

"My mother is a teacher, and my father is an administrator," she said. "That's what I've been around and heard for 20 years. I'm sure that's why I want to do the same thing."

For such an engaging and outgoing per-

sonality, Jackson said fear is one reason she came to A&M.

"I grew up in a small town where I knew everyone," she said. "The idea of going to school in a big city frightened me. I visited A&M, and it seemed like it was a small town because everyone was friendly. That's the main reason I came here."

Gilmer, Texas, a town of about 6,000 near Tyler, is Jackson's home.

Jackson said she has been very happy at A&M, but she would like to see more openness among students.

"We all came here with our pre-conceived notions about others, but since we're all here together, we might as well accept the differences in each other," Jackson said. "I'm very receptive to other ideas and very open-minded. It's an asset I would like to see other people at least try for."

It's just a month before the regional pageant, and Jackson said she is finally beginning to feel the pressure associated with entering pageants.

"It's still fun, but I'm just going to have to win!" she exclaimed. "I really do want to win. It seems like the more deeply involved you get, the more you want to win."



Photo by Scott D. Weaver

Jackson

Jimenez: Blacks lost in society

By ANDY KEHOE
Of The Battalion Staff

The status of a black man in the Caribbean society is equal to that of a "lost man," Blas Jimenez said.

In "A Black Man's Experiences in the Caribbean" presented last night by the MSC Jordan Institute for International Awareness, Jimenez, Class of '72, voiced his concern over the Caribbean blacks' poor standing in society.

"Being black in the Caribbean Islands is not being recognized in society," Jimenez said. "Being black is not living as a whole human being."

A black man in the Dominican Republic, he said, can not hold public office, nor can he even appear in a television commercial. He can, however, be confined to hard labor.

Another concern of Jimenez's is the absence of a Caribbean black history. It all began, he said, with the importation of blacks for sugar cane.

"The Caribbean is a very diverse area with several different languages spoken," he said. "The African slaves were forced into a foreign land and foreign language."

It was these new surroundings, said Jimenez, that lost the black's original heritage.

"During the years of slavery, we lost our culture, our religion," he said. "Every sense of our reality was taken away from us."

However diverse the population was, he believes all islanders now have two things in common.

"All of us now live in underdeveloped countries with very little industrial development," he said. "Also, all of us share the same past that shaped us as black men in the Caribbean."

According to Jimenez, islanders may be able to recreate a history by learning about their past.

"We can discover great things about our past by reading early books and poetry."

Jimenez is the regional marketing manager for a large international pharmaceutical corporation.

"Being black in the business world, I was considered to have a strike against me," he said. "But I was able to overcome it."

However bleak the blacks' status is, Jimenez said it shouldn't last long.

"Times are changing," he said. "With the recent liberation in South Africa, I'm hopeful of some changes in the Caribbean."

Polling sites close Friday

Absentee voting will end Friday.

On-campus absentee voting in the Democratic primary will be in 146 MSC. Republican primary on-campus absentee voting will be in 138 MSC.

The other three county absentee polling sites are the Brazos County Courthouse on 26th Street in Bryan, Ben Milam Elementary School on Ridgedale Street in Bryan and the College Station School District administration office on Welsh Avenue in College Station.

Any registered voter in Brazos County can vote absentee at any of the four polling sites, even if they are registered to vote in another precinct.

All four precincts will have a complete list of registered voters, so voters who have moved or lost their voter registration cards and don't know where they should vote can vote absentee.