

STATE & LOCAL

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Fall semester drum majors announced by Aggie Band director Col. Ray Toler

By SELINA GONZALEZ
Of The Battalion Staff

The Pulse of Aggieland will march to the beat of different drum majors in the fall.

Col. Ray Toler, director of the Aggie Band, recently announced the appointment of the band's three new drum majors.

Junior Russell Griffin with A Company, a marketing major from Plano, is the band's new head drum major.

B Company's Richard Wariner, a junior business administration major from Houston, is the band's infantry drum major.

Junior Chris Alexander with A Battery, a mechanical engineering major from Bryan, is the artillery drum major.

"This (drum major) is probably the single most desired position in the Aggie Band," Toler said.

Selection was based on band members' leadership, musical and

conducting abilities.

Griffin, who was a drum major in high school, said he felt privileged to be selected.

"I am honored that I was selected for such a high position," he said. "I

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have always wanted to be head drum major."

The selection of drum majors is a six-week process consisting of two trout periods.

First, all junior band members who were interested in becoming a drum major learned the basic me-

chanics and responsibilities of being a drum major.

This year 19 band members went through the first tryout period, which consisted of a mini-drill on the band field. At the first tryout, the candidates performed without the band.

Next, the selection committee narrowed the number of candidates to nine. These candidates had four weeks to revise and prepare for the final two-day competition.

"On the first day of the competition, each candidate conducts a number of songs to see how the band reacts to you and to see how musically inclined the band can react to your direction," Griffin said. "It is important to clearly communicate the directions to the band."

On the second day, candidates performed drills on the field with all band members except seniors.

Drum majors' responsibilities consist of preparing drills and explaining them to the band.

Griffin said if he could change

one aspect of the Aggie Band, it would be the band-Corps of Cadets relations.

"There seems to be some kind of conflict between the band and the other Corps members," Griffin said.

He said the conflict exists on both sides; and he attributes this to the fact that at times, band members have to engage in activities that differ from those of other Corps members.

The best aspect of the Aggie Band is the amount of emotion the performance instills in some members of the audience, he said.

Griffin said he is looking forward to working with Wariner and Alexander.

"They are the ideal people, and their opinions will be of great value," he said.

Griffin, Wariner and Alexander will begin working together as drum majors at Final Review.

Man remains jailed for sexual assault of child Arrest tied to slaying

ODESSA (AP) — A man who remained jailed Sunday in a girl's sexual assault charge also was a suspect in the slaying of a child who authorities in this West Texas city declined to identify.

Donald Wayne Bleckler's arrest Saturday was related to a continuing investigation into 8-year-old Gloria Castillo's strangulation death, according to Ector County District Attorney Gary Garrison.

Bleckler, 31, of Stamford was held in Ector County jail in lieu of \$250,000 bond set by Precinct 1 Peace Justice R.G. Hungerford on a charge of aggravated sexual assault of a child.

Hungerford said late Saturday he did not know any details of the latest investigation involving Bleckler. Garrison had refused to comment when asked to describe the link between Bleckler's arrest and the investigation into the child's death.

The district attorney said details of the alleged sexual assault will be given to an Ector County grand jury scheduled to meet May 7.

The grand jury also will receive information from the investigation into the death of the Cavazos Elementary Student, said Garrison.

Law officers initially reported the student had been abducted, but Garrison said that report was unfounded.

"Because of newly discovered information in the case of Gloria Castillo, I do not believe that Ector County parents have any reason to be frightened that there is an unknown child abductor loose in our community," Garrison said Friday in a prepared statement.

"That apparently is not the situation in the Castillo case," he said, adding that the death was not the result of a satanic or other type of ritual.

Cleanup continues in areas hit by floods, storms

Associated Press

As cleanup efforts continued in several areas hit by flooding and storms, residents in Parker County's Horseshoe Bend community were complaining they had no warning the Brazos River was about to invade their homes.

"They're supposed to notify us," resident Pam Spikes said. "The river came up Monday and they said it's nothing to worry about. ... Nobody notified anyone about this."

In 1981, the community's fire trucks sounded sirens to warn residents in this town west of Fort Worth of floodwaters about to descend on the area. Last year, before what some residents call a minor flood, the sirens, flashing lights and loudspeakers from the trucks again urged residents to move to high ground.

"There is no warning system (here) as to sirens," said Parker County Fire Marshall Mike Paschal. "There is no audible warning system for all the community. There was a

flood like this in 1981 and the people here know if the ground is heavily saturated, (the river) is going to rise."

He said Horseshoe Bend residents are warned by telephone, door-to-door notification or some other method.

Mike Bukala, spokesman for the Brazos River Authority, which owns and operates Possum Kingdom Lake and dam, said normal warning procedures were followed when the decision was made to begin releasing waters from the lake Thursday. The Brazos River feeds into the lake.

"When we have to drop a gate, we have to start calling people downstream and let them know the water is coming," Bukala said.

Parker County Fire Department Capt. Donnie Hampton said he was notified by Possum Kingdom officials all four times a gate was opened at the dam, beginning at 7:15 a.m. Thursday.

But by then, the rains — unofficially as much as 18 inches in some areas — had al-

ready flooded parts of the county, he said. Lt. B.G. Watson of Brownwood Police Department said Sunday that the sunny and warm weekend weather was helping his

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town dry out. Brownwood was one of the areas hit hardest by the flooding. Mayor Bert Massey called the flooding

the "worst disaster to ever hit Brownwood." Massey estimated that damage in the business district alone will exceed millions of dollars.

But Watson said most Brownwood residents had either returned to their homes or had found temporary shelter with relatives.

"Things are shaping up nicely; all the roads are open and the creeks are down," Watson said. "Now it's just a process of trying to get cleaned up and getting back to business."

The American Red Cross will help North Texans get back on their feet by opening a disaster relief center at the Coups United Methodist Church in Weatherford.

Polly Brumfield, a spokeswoman for the American Red Cross, said the center will open Monday at 9 a.m. She said volunteers will interview people with disaster-related losses until 6 p.m.

The Red Cross opened 11 shelters in recent days in Brown, Comanche, Cook and Young counties.

"We will be providing emergency assistance such as food, clothing and shelter," Brumfield said. "But each person will be interviewed one-on-one to see what is required."

In Houston, meanwhile, residents in west Harris County were picking up debris left behind from a tornado that cut a path about three-quarters of a mile wide over a 5-square-mile area Friday evening. Damage was estimated at \$20 million, but no injuries were reported.

The all-glass facade of the First City Bear Creek Bancorp. of Texas building looked like it was under construction as scores of workers operated cranes, hauled away debris and replaced some of the 138 glass panels that were blown out by high winds.

The National Weather Service received unconfirmed reports Friday of at least a dozen tornadoes from Bryan to Galveston, but Bear Creek residents have no doubt a twister touched down in their neighborhood.

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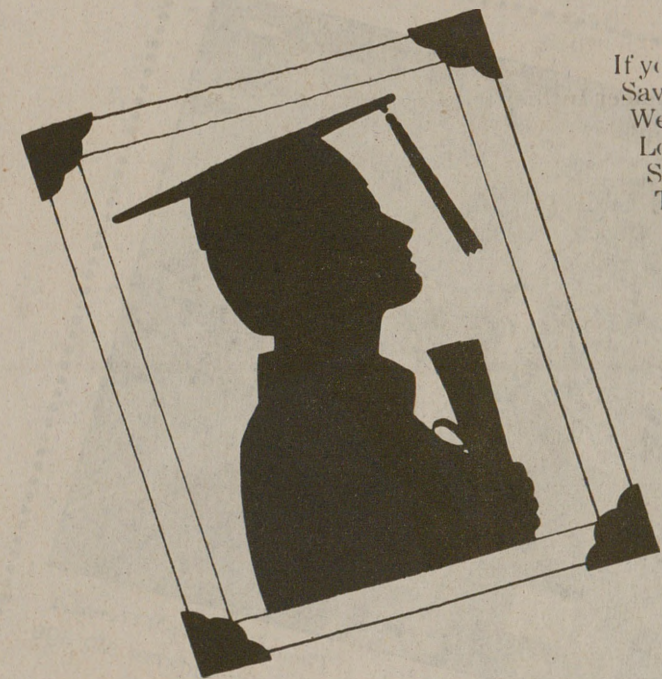
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