



**David Bowie**

Bowie concludes era of innovation, greatness with 'Sound + Vision' tour.

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## Banzai!



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Brett Hort, 10, of Bryan, enjoys the thrills and spills of his watery trip down the giant slide at the Bryan Aquatic Center.

## U.N. officials name A&M hazard center one of only two such facilities worldwide

By SEAN FRERKING  
Of The Battalion Staff

United Nations officials arrive today at Texas A&M to sign an agreement designating A&M's Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center as one of only two like it in the world.

A&M's Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center (HRRC) and the other natural disaster center in Thailand will focus on serving the United Nations Office of Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO).

They will serve primarily as research and consulting agencies.

The HRRC, which was established as part of the College of Architecture in November 1988, also will concentrate on national disaster plans and will produce educational materials to promote public awareness.

The two centers initially will work on two projects which focus on establishing a data base for hazard-related information worldwide.

Dr. Dennis Wenger, director of the HRRC, said the centers also are developing plans to deal with man-made catastrophes, such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

"We don't want to only focus on natural disasters," Wenger, a professor of sociology at A&M, said. "We also have to plan for the new technological mishaps that will make matters much worse."

Wenger said populations concentrated in high-risk areas near a sea coast or in seismically active areas increase the probability of costly disasters.

The HRRC also is studying the long-range recovery efforts used by the Caribbean islands of Monserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis and Antigua following the destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

The partnership opens many opportunities in international research and grants the HRRC daily information on disasters worldwide, Wenger said.

But even with this information,

annual losses caused by natural disasters are very difficult to calculate, he said. He said damages probably exceed several billion dollars a year.

"But that is only calculating the direct costs of the disaster," Wenger said. "At the present moment, we can't even begin to calculate the secondary costs like lost wages or the loss to the environment," he said. "Many of our problems don't even include figures from Third World countries."

Wenger said the new agreement, which was signed in New York on March 29, has helped pave the way for reducing time spent recovering from a disaster.

He said, however, the cooperative efforts with the United Nations are only a beginning.

Wenger said efforts to reduce the cost of natural disasters should stress preparedness.

He also said long-range recovery requires experts in many fields to research the best way to recover from the problems nature can cause.

"I think it is important to stress readiness in natural disasters," Wenger said. "We must bring together a team of qualified experts to deal with the plethora of problems nature can throw at us."

The research team at HRRC includes architects, building and city planners, policy analysts and engineers.

"At A&M, we have perhaps the largest and best multi-disciplinary team of its kind in the world," Wenger said.

Along with the signing of the U.N. pact, the HRRC is hosting a two-day workshop, which began this morning.

Hazard specialists from around the country will meet at A&M to discuss the U.N.'s proclamation of the 1990s as the "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" and listen to presentations by members of the HRRC Advisory Panel.

## Drug information permeates TV

By MIKE LUMAN  
Of The Battalion Staff

A Texas A&M survey found television is the leading source of drug information for middle and high school students in 24 Texas school districts.

The yearlong study, which did not distinguish between positive or negative drug information, was conducted by A&M graduate student Elaheh Mirzaee for her dissertation in health education.

The survey found that doctors, police and churches provide little or no drug information to adolescents and discovered parents were also an important factor.

"I was surprised parents were found to be an important source of drug information for students," Mirzaee said.

"Parents are certainly more involved than ever before," she said. "They are talking more about drugs, but I don't think it's enough."

Mirzaee said younger students depend more on parents and television for information, while older students rely more on friends and experience.

About 60 percent of those surveyed reported television as a leading source of drug information, and parents were reported by around 40 percent, she said.

Nearly 70 percent said doctors and churches provide little or no drug information, she said.

Mirzaee said other studies have shown doctors to be the most reliable and believable drug information sources for students.

She said this is true, but doctors are not involved in drug education.

Mirzaee also said police were an under-utilized source of information, but noted they have had a positive impact in some education programs.

"Some primary schools in Bryan-College Station use police," she said. "Police probably would not be effective with older students who rely more on peers."

Mirzaee recommends a coordinated anti-drug effort on television and an upscale endeavor involving parents, doctors, police and churches.

"The schools need to involve parents in drug education programs, particularly those for younger ages," she said. "Student leaders should get involved more in developing programs for older students."

Drugs considered in the survey included depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, alcohol and inhalants.

Mirzaee said it would be interesting to compare the results of her survey with an existing national survey, but has not yet done so.

## Germanies unite to hunt for terrorist

BERLIN (AP) — German officials in the East and West teamed up to capture the second top leftist terrorist suspect in a week, and a newspaper said Wednesday that police were on the trail of a third such fugitive.

West German authorities hailed the joint effort that led to the arrest of 46-year-old Inge Viett, and East Germany's interior minister called it an example of "success in German-German cooperation" following decades of enmity.

The East German minister, Peter-Michael Diestel, also promised to investigate the extent to which his country's former Communist government had harbored West German terrorists.

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## Medical ethics come under fire

# Professor examines doctor's role in suicide

By JULIE MYERS  
Of The Battalion Staff

Bringing murder charges against the doctor who helped a dying woman commit suicide would be absurd, a professor of medical ethics at the Texas A&M College of Medicine said.

"If that were the case, then they should prosecute all those who manufacture guns and sell or make liquor," Dr. Don Self said.

Dr. Jack Kevorkian faces a possible murder charge for supplying Janet Adkins with a device last week that ended her life in about six minutes.

Self said all A&M medical students are required to complete a medical ethics course which covers euthanasia, suicide and patients' rights.

"To a large extent, those who approach euthanasia from a theological or religious perspective consider suicide or doctor-assisted suicide unethical," Self said.

But ethical decisions regarding doctor-assisted suicide also should be weighed against the concepts of patients' rights and autonomy.

"In almost all cases, suicide is irrational and inappropriate and should be avoided, but at times it is an option," Self said.

Because Kevorkian supplied Adkins, a woman from Portland, Ore., dying of Alzheimer's Disease, with the device and did not administer the lethal chemicals himself, the suicide is considered passive, Self said.

Adkins came to Michigan with her husband, Ron, and a friend, but they left before she died.

Providing the means to commit suicide is a felony in Oregon, but Michigan has no law against suicide assisted by a physician.

Passive suicide is considered ethical by the American Medical Association, but Texas law prohibits it.

Aiding and/or abetting a suicide is a third-degree felony in Texas, Jerry Pickle, assistant general counsel for Scott and White hospital in Temple and assistant professor in the Department of Humanities in Medicine said.

Pickle said Kevorkian and other doctors who help patients commit suicide risk civil and criminal penalties like fines, jail terms and restraining orders for using devices that haven't been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for medical use.

Additionally, such actions could cause doctors to lose their licenses or memberships in professional organizations depending on the laws of the state where they practice medicine and the ethics codes of the organizations in which they belong.

"There are different levels of ethical decisions and lots of ethical issues in medicine," Self said. "Doctors should take seriously a patient's wish to take their own life."

## Bars promote designated driver program

# Students get advice to drink smart

By KEVIN M. HAMM  
Of The Battalion Staff

Serving as designated driver during an evening of hedonistic merriment is an unwanted burden for most.

But local drinking establishments and Texas A&M's Center for Drug Prevention and Education are making it easier for students to practice responsible drinking.

In conjunction with the Texas Designated Driver Program, the CDPE is cooperating with local bars, clubs and restaurants to encourage responsible drinking among college-age drivers. This age group is involved in more than 50 percent of all motor vehicle accidents.

The center provides businesses with posters, cups and buttons advocating the designated driver program, who in turn encourage patrons to adopt the smart-drinking philosophy.

Deborah Theis, coordinator of the CDPE program, said the main focus of the program is to inform people about the advantage of designated drivers and to get more businesses involved.

"Most of them (drinking establishments) have been receptive," she said. "They all want to get involved in some way."

Seven local businesses participate in the program, but Theis said she expects the number to increase in



Graphic by Jayme L. Blaschke

the fall. More student volunteers will be available then and Aggies Against Driving Drunk will lend support to the cause.

Don Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken, said he backs the designated driver program "100 percent," but added it is not an absolute solution.

He said in addition to promoting the program, he employs people whose responsibility it is to look for patrons who might have had too much to drink.

Ganter said he or his employees have driven patrons home on numerous occasions, and have called taxis or friends for people too intoxicated to drive.

"We're guilty of giving people rides home ourselves, even before programs like this were in 'vogue,'" he said. "We're extremely responsible and sensitive about it as humanly possible."

But on the whole, Ganter thinks students are becoming more responsible drinkers.

"I think there's more of an awareness among college students than there was two or three years ago — it's refreshing," he said.

Paul Winston, manager of Sneakers, agreed the program is a good one, and in cooperation gives designated drivers free non-alcoholic drinks.

But he said clubs only can go so

far to promote responsible drinking, it is really up to the patrons.

"Because most people that are going to do it (designate a driver) have already made up their mind, we're just helping to push it along," he said. "All we can do is reinforce the idea. We're not going to change anybody's mind."

"The concept is good, it just needs a little more work to get the message out, let people know the clubs are doing it."

"Anything (the program) can do to help prevent drunk driving is a good effort," Winston said, adding that Sneakers often calls taxis for intoxicated patrons.

Rita's Cantina Manager Robin Burt said the restaurant also is cooperating with the CDPE to promote designated drivers.

The restaurant offers free non-alcoholic drinks and appetizers to designated drivers, in addition to "expressing our appreciation."

Since Rita's is a restaurant, not just a bar, she said there hasn't been much of a change in the number of designated drivers frequenting the restaurant. But she agrees with the program.

"It seems to be something people are doing because it's the best thing to do," she said.

Other businesses involved in the designated driver program are Dudley's Draw, the Flying Tomato, Waivers and the Front Porch Cafe.

## Electric car saves gas, produces no pollution

By JULIE MYERS  
Of The Battalion Staff

It's the future, he said as he unplugged the car from its electrical cord.

The car doesn't use gas, produces no pollution and is ideal for use in heavy traffic because it can't overheat and uses no energy while it idles.

Dr. David Swan, a research scientist at the Texas A&M Center for Electrochemistry, drives one of four electric cars used for research at A&M.

Swan said when he gets behind the wheel of his electric car, he is driving the future of transportation.

Because the electricity that powers the car can be generated at a power plant using a variety of fuels like solar power, coal or natural gas — which are available domestically — electric cars could decrease the United States' dependence on foreign energy sources, Swan said.

Additionally, even though producing electricity at power plants releases pollutants, electric cars are still cleaner than internal combustion engines, Swan said.

In fact, operating 33 electric cars is as clean or cleaner than driving one car with a combustion engine. And they are more efficient.

Swan said electric cars also run quieter, need fewer repairs and use no electricity when idling or coasting.



David Swan, research scientist from the Texas A&M Center for Electrochemistry, unplugs an electric car after a battery charge.

Electric cars, however, weigh considerably more than their internal combustion counterparts.

A sub-compact, like Swan's, weighs about 700 pounds more than a similar car with an internal combustion engine. Swan's car has 1,000 pounds of batteries on board.

With that added weight, they still only have a range of about 25 miles, then they have to recharge for four hours, he said.

Unlike combustion engines, however, when electric cars run out of power, they slow down, but don't stop the moment the power is used up.

Swan said companies, like General Motors, are trying to overcome the limitations of electric cars that presently make cars with combustion engines preferable to the electric models.



An open hood reveals the electric car's 'engine.'

Photos by Eric H. Roalson