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Vol. 90 No. 11 USPS 045360 10 Pages

College Station, Texas

Monday, September 17, 1990

Dorms to receive washers, dryers

By SUZANNE CALDERON
Of The Battalion Staff

Texas A&M students who have been without adequate washers and dryers in their residence halls will be happy to know new machines are on the way.

A&M's contract with Fabric Care, the local company that provided the University with laundry service for 12 years, expired in July. The coin-operated machines since then have been in short supply.

The University has contracted Web Service Company Inc., with headquarters in Redondo Beach, Calif., to run the coin-operated washers and dryers on campus. Negotiations still are in progress for the dry-cleaning contract.

Don Powell, A&M's business services director, says Web is scheduled to begin installing new machines Friday.

Because of the number of machines being installed, it will take several days to complete the process, he says.

Web provides coin-operated laundry service to college campuses across the nation including the University of Hawaii, Vanderbilt University, Southern Methodist University and the University of California at Los Angeles.

"They are a company that has been received on many college campuses, so they are a national company as opposed to one here in the local area," Powell says. "They are in the business of providing this type of service on college campuses all over the country."

Rex Janne, A&M's director of purchasing, says dissatisfaction with Fabric Care was not a reason for opening the laundry services contract for bidding.

"The level of service they (Fabric Care) provided was satisfactory — that was not the reason," Janne says. "It was the current market conditions telling us this was probably a good time to put out proposals."

Powell says Web was awarded the contract because its proposal indicated it could provide students and the University the best laundry services.

Some concern is being raised because the University will invest money in an out-of-state company rather than in Fabric Care, a local company.

Powell, however, says the selection was made only on what was best for everyone concerned.

"Our only interest is in providing good service at the lowest prices we can to the students —

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Souter unveiled

Supreme Court confirmation hearings to resume today

WASHINGTON (AP) — David H. Souter, described by one senator early in his Supreme Court confirmation hearings as "the stealth nominee," is not the same mystery man he may have been to many Americans just days ago.

His two days of nationally televised testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee yielded significant insights into Souter the man and Souter the judge.

Everyone was not satisfied with his answers, especially his reluctance to detail his views on abortion. But at least something was learned of this New Hampshire judge who was virtually unknown outside his home state when he was tapped by President Bush in July.

Perhaps more will be learned Monday — Souter's 51st birthday — when he returns for a third day of answering senators' questions.

Here's some of what has been learned so far:

- Souter says he gave the Bush administration no assurances about how he would vote on any case, including one involving abortion rights. And he says he has not made up his mind about how he might vote if the court were asked to overturn its 1973 decision in Roe vs. Wade legalizing abortion.

- He believes the Constitution provides a general right of privacy even though such a right is not specifically mentioned and that the right extends to married women's use of contraceptives.

- He thinks constitutional provisions should not be interpreted to mean only what their framers intended, but what they mean in today's world. That separates him from those conservatives who espouse an "original intent" approach.

- He disagrees with Justice Antonin Scalia, the high court's most conservative member, about how judges should search out American

tradition in determining some forms of constitutional protection.

In a recent decision, Scalia said the father of a child born out of wedlock is not entitled to certain parental rights because those rights previously had been recognized only for married people. Souter said he found that reasoning too confining.

- He never heard his parents refer to another human being in racial or ethnic terms. "I am glad I am conditioned by my beginnings, and I am glad I do not have to overcome them," Souter told the committee.

- He is not unflappable. Questioned by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., near the end of Friday's session, Souter for the first time began answering before his interrogator had finished speaking.

Iraq unexpectedly opens Kuwaiti border

KHAFJI, Saudi Arabia (AP) — At least 1,000 refugees from Kuwait streamed into Saudi Arabia on Saturday after Iraqi border guards opened at least one frontier crossing.

Scores of newly arrived Kuwaitis were lined up early Sunday to be processed at a Saudi government office in this border town and waited to use pay phones to call relatives who had fled Kuwait earlier.

A Saudi government source who

had spoken to an official at the border said he was told that about 1,000 Kuwaitis had crossed into Khafji on the Saudi side and each was being registered by the Saudi government.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said most government officials had been instructed to say publicly that there had been no abnormal activity at the crossing point.

Iraq's motives for opening the border were not immediately clear.

Several of the Kuwaiti refugees said the border had been abruptly opened Friday, but most of those who left did so on Saturday.

A Kuwait City lawyer, who gave his name only as Shaheen, said he didn't know why the frontier had been opened, but said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "is asking the Kuwaitis to leave Kuwait and go out about the border."

He said that in the last three days about 25 young Kuwaitis, ranging in

age from 15 to 25, had been taken away by Iraqi soldiers for unknown reasons.

Shaheen added that he had heard rumors of several Americans and other Westerners hiding in Kuwait.

"If you help a Westerner in your home you will be hanged, but some people are still hiding them," he said, referring to Iraqi threats that persons caught sheltering Westerners would be put to death.

What a catch



Photo by J. Janner

Junior Yell Leader Drew Lewis is carried off the field by freshman cadets after the Aggies' 63-14 victory over Southwestern Louisiana Saturday. Lewis led a yell practice at the Fish Pond after he was thrown into the pond. See related story on page 8.

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Business placard allows faculty and staff more freedom to park in campus areas

By KATHERINE COFFEY
Of The Battalion Staff

The Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services started a University business placard last week to assist staff and faculty who don't have a University vehicle and need to use their own car to do University business.

The business placard is a parking permit that allows faculty and staff members to park in various campus areas to do University business without taking designated parking spaces.

Kathie Mathis, parking administrator for the department, said they are working to satisfy the needs of faculty and staff, and she hopes this placard will help.

The business placard is issued to faculty and staff for loading or unloading supplies or materials, attending meetings or having temporary business in other campus areas, she said.

Mathis said the department replaced the previous "number one placard" because it allowed parking in designated spaces, which many times prevented faculty and staff from parking in their assigned lots.

"Students, when buying a parking permit, have choices in different areas on campus, but the faculty and staff are different in that they

have to park in a certain lot no matter where their classes or meetings are," she said. "If they cannot find a spot in their lot they have to leave. But on the other hand, students have choices all over campus to where they can park."

Mathis said she recommended the program to Tom Williams, director of the department.

She then decided to work on a solution to provide easier parking access for faculty and staff.

"Our main purpose is to provide a place for people, including both faculty and staff, who buy a permit to park," she said. "We are working on it the best we can."

She said the new parking garage, the 30-minute parking spaces and more student-allocated spaces also should help alleviate parking problems.

The parking administration is working with Bus Operations toward becoming a more user-friendly administration for students and faculty, she said.

"We are working toward becoming service oriented and communicating more with others," Mathis said. "It is difficult to come up with a program that's not going to hurt or dislocate students or staff but also allow everyone to do their job."

The department also is working with Student Government, off-campus students, on-campus

students and RHA (Resident Hall Association) to make sure needs are met and parking problems are solved efficiently, she said.

"I could not have made the changes I did this year without the input from students," she said. "Their input has educated me much faster than just doing the day to day work and trying to find the best ways to solve the problems."

"I hope the (student) committee continues to be candid and open. I want the student committee to tell me and recommend what is needed because they are the only ones I can get a student perspective from."

Steven White, the Student Government special assistant to traffic and transit, said he is working with the traffic and transit department to make sure student parking needs are met in the best way possible.

Student Government is working with the department on the bikeway system, bus and shuttle routes and parking allocations.

"We need all concerns and positive comments from students to help the parking," White said. "The best way we can represent the student body is when students write in The Battalion's mail call or give us specific comments," he added.

Students with questions or comments can call the Student Government office at 845-3051.

RHA, OCA working together for students

By ELIZABETH TISCH
Of The Battalion Staff

One is on campus and the other is off, but they work together to ensure safe and happy living for all Texas A&M students.

Residence Hall Association President Kyle Jacobson and Off Campus Aggies President Keith Powell spend several hours a week planning, drafting and implementing policies and programs related to student housing.

Jacobson, a senior civil engineering major, presides over about 8,300 students living in residence halls.

This number, however, excludes the Corps of Cadets Halls and Cain Hall, which houses A&M athletes.

He said the Residence Hall Association basically acts as a liaison between campus residents and the University administration.

"The RHA council tries to promote the physical improvements of the residence halls and also to promote better policies within the residence halls," he said.

The 24-hour visitation policy was one of many policies the RHA council passed after several months of careful drafting and promoting.

The RHA president said the council, which includes the 74 hall presidents, presently is working to create more coed halls.

RHA is active not only in the making and promoting of policies but also in the planning of major campus events.

"This year, we are putting on a casino in Houston during the Texas A&M football game in Houston," he said. "It is in conjunction with the yell practice which will take place there too."

The annual Casino Night in the MSC also is planned and sponsored by RHA members.

Powell, a senior economics major, is responsible for relaying information to 30,000 students who live in apartments around the A&M campus.

As president for Off Campus Aggies, Powell's main objective is to get off-campus students involved with A&M's student life.

"I want the students who live off campus to get involved with the student activities on campus," he said. "Traditionally, it has seemed the off-campus students are not as involved as on-campus students."

Powell works with 14 other officers and executives that make up his council.

This off-campus group had its first meeting of the semester with a large turnout of active members.

"OCA is currently signing up more off-campus students to be active members for the next two weeks," he said. "People who are interested can come by the OCA office on the second floor of the Pavilion."

In some cases, RHA and OCA members work together. For example, they meet in conjunction with the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services to distribute student parking spaces.

Jacobson compares the relationship between RHA and OCA to a brother-sister relationship where both ends of the spectrum are covered.

"If, however, there is any competition between the two, it is a friendly kind of competition," he said.

Both Jacobson and Powell said the two groups will make some visible changes this year.

"I think things have really changed this year," Powell said. "OCA is going to be very visible where a lot of people will take notice."

Bells Across America Constitution 203 years old; bells ring out in celebration

The bells in Texas A&M's Albritton Tower will ring Monday in unison with chimes across the nation to commemorate the 203rd anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

At 3 p.m. CDT, the exact time the Constitution was signed, bells across the country will ring simultaneously for 203 seconds.

On Sept. 17, 1787, 39 men signed their names to a document which established the world's first government of the people, by the people and for the people. The Constitution is the world's oldest written instrument of national

government.

During the ringing of the bells, students, faculty and staff are asked to reflect upon the blessings of liberty and the ideals of justice and equal opportunity made possible by the document.

The event, called Bells Across America, is sponsored by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in cooperation with the Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

Two local DAR chapters are arranging community participation in the event.