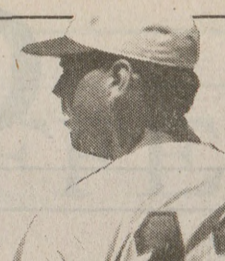


**FORECAST**  
**WEEKEND**  
 Partly cloudy  
 Lows in 60s  
 Highs in 80s

**SPORTS**



**THE SHOWDOWN**  
 Longhorns, Aggies duel it out at Olsen Field in key SWC series  
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**OPINION**  
 Christmas is not important to Christians  
 —Michael Quinn Sullivan, columnist  
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# The Battalion

Vol. 91 No. 128 College Station, Texas "Serving Texas A&M since 1893" 8 Pages Friday, April 10, 1992

## BBC analysis predicts Conservative victory in Great Britain

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister John Major, who waged a come-from-behind soapbox campaign to extend 13 years of Conservative Party government, appeared headed for a nerve-wracking election victory Thursday.

With results in hand from 602 seats out of the 651 contested, the British Broadcasting Corp. computer analysis predicted the Conservatives were assured of an overall majority in the House of Commons, winning 334 seats. Labor was projected to win 273 and the Liberal Democrats 19,332 seats.

Projections by Independent Television

News gave the Conservatives 333 seats, Labor 271 and Liberal Democrats 21, with the rest going to smaller parties.

"The evening is not yet concluded, but I believe when it is concluded, it will have a satisfactory result, the right government, and we can push ahead with the recovery for Britain that all of us wish to see," Major said. He won his own district by 36,000 votes, the biggest victory of the night.

"I'm very pleased. Everything we have done in the last 13 years will now be conserved and built on in the future," former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher exult-

ed. No party had won four straight elections in Britain this century.

With actual tallies in from 596 districts, Conservatives had won 315 seats, compared to Labor's 268 and 14 for the Liberal Democrats.

"The battle is not yet over," insisted Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock.

The BBC projected that the Conservatives would win 43 percent of the popular vote, matching their share in three landslide victories under Margaret Thatcher.

"This is very, very bad news for Labor," said BBC analyst Peter Kellner. "It is also rotten news for the pollsters... they

blew it."

The combined verdict of the last opinion polls this week showed Labor about a point ahead, though the difference was well within the margin of error.

The projections moved steadily toward the Conservatives after the polls closed as Labor failed to win in several battleground districts.

If no party wins a majority, Major would have the first chance to line up enough support from other parties to govern. If he failed, Kinnock would have a try.

The rejuvenated Labor Party cam-

paigned hard on the theme that the Tories have held power too long.

But what hurt the Conservatives most was an enduring recession that has pushed the unemployment rate to 9.4 percent. The other big issues were taxation and the state-run National Health Service.

The opinion polls suggested that both major parties might fail to win a majority in the 651-member House of Commons, which has happened five other times this century.

If that occurred, both parties likely would try to form a government based on the informal support of smaller parties.

## Brenham explosion inquiries intensify

Officials investigate possible valve flaw

By Karen Praslicka  
 The Battalion

BRENHAM — Indications of a possible valve malfunction hours before had no consequences on the explosion, said officials investigating the blast near Brenham Tuesday.

Charles Batten, head of the operations group of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), said there was a backup valve connected to the valve that caught on fire during the explosion.

"There was an earlier concern about a signal at 4 a.m. on records, indicating a possible change in the status," he said. "Adjacent to that valve was a manually operated valve that was closed. If the signal in fact determined that the valve moved, it would be of no consequence, because there was a valve closed adjacent to it."

George Mocharko, a spokesman for the NTSB, said the investigation will continue.

The fire was extinguished at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, which allowed investigators to get closer to the disaster scene.

Mocharko said one of the four connections on the six-inch flaming valve was blown off, and it was found 47 feet away. Another connection was cracked and bent, he said.

These connections will be sent to a Washington lab for examination.

Investigators have learned from three witnesses and Seminole Pipeline Co. employees that a large water column was seen in the air over the plant area minutes before the explosion.

"We're looking at the opera-

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ORTRUN GINGERICH/The Battalion

## Final touches

Margot Havel, a seamstress at a local clothing store, alters a dress for Ring Dance, which will take place this Saturday in the MSC. Havel is a third-generation seamstress.

## Officials investigate possible rape

By Alysia Woods  
 The Battalion

As Texas A&M authorities continue to investigate a possible date rape that occurred on campus last Sunday, another sexual assault was reported to the College Station Police Department on Tuesday.

This latest incident is the 11th reported rape in College Station

since the beginning of the year. Last year, nine sexual assaults were reported in College Station for the entire year. These figures do not include rapes reported on the Texas A&M campus.

The woman who reported the sexual assault to CSPD on Tuesday said she was raped by an acquaintance who gave her a ride home after a party late Monday night. She has decided not to press charges, said Lt. A.W. Un-

stott of CSPD.

The woman involved in Sunday's reported rape said she was visiting the accused at his residence in Dorm 12. This case is the second reported rape on campus for the 1991-92 school year, said Bob Wiatt, director of University Police Department.

UPD keeps its statistics on reported rapes separate from Col-

See UPD/Page 4

## U.S. court convicts Noriega

Miami jury finds former leader guilty of 8 of 10 racketeering, drug charges

MIAMI (AP) — Manuel Noriega was convicted today of eight of 10 drug and racketeering charges that led to the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama.

The former Panamanian leader was found guilty of the key counts of racketeering and racketeering conspiracy, plus six lesser charges. He was acquitted of two lesser charges, cocaine distribution and conspiracy to import cocaine.

The federal court trial lasted seven months, during which the government painstakingly built its case against a head of state it called "a small man in a general's uniform" who was "just another crooked cop."

The jury finished work in its fifth day of deliberations. On Wednesday, they announced they were deadlocked with one hold-out; U.S. District Judge William Hoeveler urged them to try again.

Noriega's lawyers maintained he was a victim of U.S. politics, saying the case "smelled all the way to Washington." They had defended him by portraying the government's witnesses — confessed drug traffickers in many cases — as unscrupulous thugs looking only for a "get-out-of-jail-free card."

The trial marked the first time the United States invaded a sovereign country and brought back its leader for a trial on criminal charges.

Noriega, who records say is 54, was indicted on Feb. 4, 1988, along with 15 other people, including the head of Colombia's Medellín drug cartel, Pablo Escobar. At the time, Noriega was still in power in

Panama, and sneered at U.S. demands that he step down.

On Dec. 20, 1989, the United States invaded Panama. U.S. forces tracked Noriega to a Vatican mission in Panama City, surrounded it and blasted the Panamanian leader with rock music until he surrendered.

His trial opened in U.S. District Court on Sept. 5 with jury selection; opening arguments began Sept. 16.

The government called 46 witnesses, plus 14 others on rebuttal after the defense rested. The defense called 19 to the stand.

The most crucial prosecution witnesses were confessed drug traffickers, some with violent streaks, including Carlos Lehder, Max Mermelstein and Jose "Pepe" Cabrera.

In exchange for pointing the finger at Noriega, they won reduced sentences, immunity from other charges and sometimes the right to keep millions of dollars in drug profits.

The witnesses said Noriega's formal relationship with the Medellín traffickers began in late 1981. Leftist Colombian guerrillas had kidnapped the sister of the cartel's Ochoa brothers. As head of Panama's powerful G-2 intelligence division, Noriega negotiated her release.

In response, pleased cartel leaders sent emissaries to him in early 1982 to establish a business arrangement, prosecutors said.

Soon, prosecutors said, drug- and cash-laden Colombian planes were flying into Panamanian airports.

## Incoming Battalion editors summarize theories, strategies

### Summer editor's objectives include thorough reporting

By Matari Jones  
 The Battalion

As the new summer editor of The Battalion, Todd Stone plans to provide Texas A&M with balanced and complete news coverage.

"First and foremost, I want to provide the public — Texas A&M and the surrounding communities — with objective and thorough reporting of the news," says Stone, a first year graduate student in the Graduate School of Business.

Secondly, he wants to train future journalists with hands-on newspaper experience.

Stone began his undergraduate

journalism career as a reviewer for The Battalion on the Lifestyles desk from Fall 1989 to Spring 1990. In the summer of 1990, he was promoted to Lifestyles editor.

Stone says he is most interested in writing columns about personal experiences.

"Writing is a personal way to communicate to the general public that reporters are human, too," he says.

After graduating from A&M in 1990 with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism, Stone worked for a year in Dallas with Temp Associates Personnel Company. He says it was a good experience because

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BILLY MORAN/The Battalion

Todd Stone, left, editor for the summer, and Atlantis Tillman, editor for the fall, prepare for the upcoming semesters.

### Fall editor seeks diverse staff to cover wide range of issues

By Julie Polston  
 The Battalion

Atlantis Tillman plans to make The Battalion as diverse as possible in her role as editor of the school paper next fall.

Tillman, a senior journalism major from Garland, was officially chosen as the fall editor for The Battalion by the Student Publications Board April 3.

"I want to hire a diverse group of people to represent and cover all aspects of the student body, as much as we can," she said.

Every semester there are always one or two major controversial issues, she said. Therefore,

Tillman wants a staff that works well together and can handle any situation fairly.

"I'm really excited about having new people in new positions to give The Battalion a new personality," she said. "So many people are going to be coming on in the fall, and I really hope to get a group that works well together, like the group we have now."

In addition, Tillman plans to focus more on the administration around campus and in the community. This includes the Board of Regents, Faculty Senate and city council.

"There are things going on

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