

The Battalion

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"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

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Brent Bates (left foreground), a sophomore business major from Houston, participates in a marshmallow eating contest on the MSC plaza Thursday afternoon. The contest was part of Greek Week, which will last through this weekend.

JENNIFER LOCKARD/The Battalion

Cable TV bill could benefit Brazos Valley

Law attracts innovation, manager says

By REAGON CLAMON

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Alternative cable technologies may find Bryan-College Station more attractive in the wake of a new cable regulation bill, said Randy Rogers, general manager of TCA Cable.

The bill will benefit alternative technologies, such as "wireless" cable — where a company broadcasts their programming, through microwaves, directly to their subscribers using a special antenna — more than traditional wired cable companies, Rogers said.

If a traditional wire cable company were to relocate in Bryan-College Station, it would still have the same initial capital investment as TCA — running wire and putting cable boxes in their subscriber's homes — but wouldn't be able to expand the current revenue base, Rogers said. The revenue base would simply be split between the companies.

"That's been tried here in Bryan-College Station, and both companies went out of business," Rogers said. "It's a simple fact of economics."

It was more likely that a wireless cable company would move into the community, Rogers said.

Wireless cable would be able to avoid the problem of a large initial capital investment and could provide service 20-25 percent cheaper than traditional "hard-line" cable companies, said Robert Davis, president of United States

Wireless Cable in Austin. Wireless cable would be able to compete more effectively with "hard-line" cable because of the "open programming" clause of the new cable regulation bill, Davis said.

"Some of the programmers, like TNT, were refusing to sell to wireless, trying to protect the

"The new bill will help us tremendously because it will guarantee us programming at the same cost as the other people."

— Robert Davis, president of United States Wireless Cable in Austin

wired-cable monopoly," Davis said. "The new bill will help us tremendously because it will guarantee us programming at the same cost as the other people."

A wired-cable company would also be at a disadvantage to wireless because of the complicated process of franchise-ment. If a wired cable company decides to come to Bryan-College Station, it will have to apply for a franchise agreement from both cities, said Mary Kaye Moore, director of Support Services for the City of Bryan.

This agreement allows a cable company to run its wire through public areas. Bryan-College Station includes certain requirements in their agreement that cable companies must meet in order to use the public right of way. Wireless cable wouldn't need the agreement and thus wouldn't have to meet the requirements.

Whatever happens, it may be a while before any change takes place, Rogers said.

"The FCC has to go through a lot of rule-making," he said. "We really don't know how this will affect us just yet."

Texas campaigns against compulsive gambling

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — A statewide campaign was launched Thursday to inform Texans about the problems of compulsive gambling, with officials saying some 1,100 people have sought help since the Lottery began selling tickets May 29.

"Not all addictions come with bottles, pills and needles," said Larry North, president of the Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling.

"Like alcohol and drug addiction, compulsive gambling is a treatable disease, and likewise without treatment it can be just as deadly to its victims," North said.

The council, which operates the state's gambling hotline, was created as a companion to

creation of the state lottery to provide awareness, prevention, training and intervention programs.

Its public awareness campaign will advise those with gambling problems to "bet on yourself" by seeking help.

The agency began fielding calls at 6 a.m. May 29, the same time the lottery began selling tickets.

"At 6:14 a.m., we had a call asking for the nearest Gamblers Anonymous meeting," said Sue Cox, the council's executive director.

Although its telephone hotline number so far has only been available from lottery tickets, Ms. Cox said the new awareness campaign would include television and radio announcements, posters and educational materials.

She said the hotline number has received

more than 54,000 calls, but many were from people wanting information about the lottery. Calls have come from people with problems, their friends and families, she said.

Of those seeking help, 50 percent said they had problems with lottery, 14 percent with bingo, 11 percent with dice, cards and pool, 8 percent with casino gambling, 7 percent each with sports and horse race betting and 2 percent with dog race betting.

Ms. Cox said one of the biggest surprises was the number of calls from people seeking help for problems with bingo. She said the council hopes to convince bingo parlor operators to display the hotline number.

"It's a much more serious problem than we had envisioned," she said. "Some bingo players say they play six, seven times a week."

'93 stamps to honor singers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — From rock and rhythm to country and Broadway, the U.S. Postal Service is facing 1993 with a song in its heart. Next year's postage stamps will include Buddy Holly and Otis Redding, Hank Williams and the Carter family, "Porgy & Bess" and "My Fair Lady."

The stamps will cover such contrasting music as Patsy Cline's country twang, Ritchie Valens' love song to Donna and Henry Higgins' struggle to bring cultured speech to a poor flower seller.

"In January, there will be more Elvis sightings than ever," said Postmaster General Marvin Runyon, announcing that 300 million stamps honoring the late king of rock 'n' roll will go on sale following first-day ceremonies in Memphis on Jan. 8, which would have been Elvis' 58th birthday.

Introduced as Rockin' Runyon, the postmaster general stood before a sign reading "Embassy of

Rock and Roll," at the Hard Rock Cafe, which hosted the news conference.

In addition to rock music, the 1993 commemorative stamps will feature country and western

"It's going to be a musical, magical, wonderful year for stamps in 1993."

—Marvin Runyon, postmaster general

singers, Broadway musicals, history, nature and other aspects of American culture.

The Elvis stamp, which generated national attention last year when the public voted on the design, will also be part of a booklet of seven stamps being issued in June to honor pioneers of rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues.

That booklet will also feature Buddy Holly, famous for his hiccup-like song Peggy Sue, and Ritchie Valens, whose life was re-

cently made into a movie. The two died together in a plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa.

Rock-around-the-clock pioneer Bill Haley will also be part of the booklet as will Otis Redding, Clyde McPhatter and Dinah Washington.

Country singer Hank Williams will be featured on a stamp in August and also will be included in a September booklet of stamps along with Patsy Cline, Bob Wills and the Carter Family.

"Millions of Americans bop with Buddy Holly or cry with Patsy Cline," Runyon said. "It's going to be a musical, magical, wonderful year for stamps in 1993." He said he became a fan of Cline and Williams after moving to Nashville several years ago.

Extending the musical theme, four popular Broadway musicals will be honored in a booklet of stamps in March. They include "Showboat," "Porgy & Bess," "Oklahoma" and "My Fair Lady." The "Oklahoma" stamp will also be issued separately.

UT's drum Big Bertha turns 70

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Big Bertha, the legendary quarter-ton mascot of the University of Texas band who turns 70 years old next month, is... well... a lady with a hidden past.

Longhorn fans who naturally assume this drum-to-end-all-drums has been burnt orange as long as Texas sunsets are in for a big shock. Not only did the University of Texas save her from a discard heap, but Bertha, the world's largest bass drum, began her life pounding out support for that true football power — the University of Chicago Maroons.

Her secret life is as loud as the overpowering boom she emits and includes dalliances with Arturo Toscanini, John Philip Sousa and Enrico Fermi.

Some of Bertha's escapades are worth a chuckle, such as the time Toscanini couldn't use her in his orchestra because she was too fat to get in the elevator, but an alleged radiation incident has sobered many of her closest supporters, such as Glenn Richter, director of the Longhorn Bands.

Fortunately, the drum was found to be free of radiation.

Bertha's strange trip began in 1922, at the C.G. Conn Music Co. of Elkhart, Ind. C.D. Greenleaf,

president of the company, decided his alma mater, the University of Chicago, needed a new band, complete with a massive drum, larger than Purdue University's elephantine seven-footer (in diameter). He decided to build it and donate it to the school.

As the University of Chicago prepared to phase out football in the late 1930s, what to do with Bertha became a problem.

Eventually, having worn out her welcome at colleges and concert halls, Bertha had been returned to her womb in Indiana and was being displayed as a museum piece.

Then, in the 1950s, University of Texas officials went looking for the world's biggest drum without knowing about Bertha's colorful career.

Crockett brought the drum back to Austin the winter of 1954 but had to wait until summer to start badly needed restoration efforts.

Although Texas students were initially thrilled with Big Bertha, much as earlier students at Chicago were, the giant drum has brought UT problems.

Whether or not Bertha is the largest bass drum around has been debated incessantly. At this point, it's probably better for some mystery to remain. Purdue University has a drum nearly as large and the bragging between the two schools has continued pretty much unabated.

Presidential candidates face off in first TV debate

By BILLY MORAN

Contributing writer to THE BATTALION

Supporters of each of the three presidential campaigns are confident their candidate will prove victorious in the first of the election season.

The first of three scheduled presidential debates will be held Sunday, Oct. 11, at 6 p.m. in St. Louis. ABC, NBC, CBS and CNN are planning live coverage.

Voters should not view the debate as a three-way prize fight, looking for who can avoid rhetorical punches, said Dr. Kurt Ritter, associate professor of speech communication at Texas A&M. Instead, voters should look for the candidates to respond to issues.

"In all other parts of the campaign (the candidates) are free from being confronted," Ritter said. "The debates bring the



Bush

issues into focus."

The first presidential debate will feature a panel of reporters asking the candidates questions. The second debate will have a single moderator directing the discussion, and the third will be divided into two parts, giving both a single moderator and a panel of reporters equal time. All of the debates will last 90 minutes.

Structure was a major issue in the planning of the debates. The Clinton campaign preferred the single moderator format which allows a follow-up, said Jim James, chairman of the Brazos County Democratic Party. Roger Lewis, chairman of the Repub-



Clinton

lican Party of Brazos County, said that a single moderator "wouldn't be limited" and could go off on a tangent on any particular question. Therefore, he said, the Bush campaign prefers a panel.

Bush prefers the panel format because attention will be directed away from the economy to issues such as foreign affairs, where Bush has more strength in his arguments, Ritter said.

Clinton, Ritter said, wants a single moderator because he has negative political "baggage," which would less likely be pursued under a moderator.

For Perot, the panel of reporters would probably be the best format, Ritter said.



Perot

Lou Zaeske, former regional coordinator of the Perot petition process, said that the format will not affect Ross Perot.

"It's more like a TV interview than a public speech," Zaeske said. "That's where he does very well. He is a master of the soundbite."

Perot's attendance at the debates will mark the first time in the 30-year history of televised presidential debates that a third party candidate will appear with candidates of the two major parties.

The presence of a third candidate opens the possibility of two candidates "ganging up" on the remaining candidate, Ritter said. He predicts Clinton will

cast his responses in a way that will make Perot side against Bush.

Phillip Meuret, president of the Texas A&M College Republicans said he believes that if Perot and Clinton both go after Bush, it will help the president. Americans will see Bush outnumbered and be sympathetic.

The Bush campaign has had virtually nothing to do with Perot since he entered the presidential race, Lewis said. Perot's one-liners are appealing to the media, he said, but Bush and Clinton will hold him accountable in the debates.

"Perot is just in to cause trouble and inflate his ego," Lewis said. "He has lost all credibility."

Zaeske said that Perot's presence at the debates sends a message to the two political parties. "What he is doing is in the best interest of the country," he said. "However it turns out will be healthy."