

Students observe festival



Indu Yaidya practices traditional Indian dances for the Diwali festival that will be held Sunday night.

BILLY MORAN/The Battalion

By BILLY MORAN

Special to THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M India Association will celebrate Diwali, the most widely observed festival in India, on Sunday with an evening of music, dance and food.

Srikanth Kandharam, an Indian graduate student in computer science, said that Diwali is a time for Indians to forget all feuds and come together to celebrate the most important festival of the season.

Sunday's celebration will begin in Rudder Theater at 6 p.m.

Indian students and other members of the local Indian community will perform traditional dances.

A buffet, featuring Indian foods, will follow at 8:15 p.m. in MSC room 225. Dinner music will be provided by an Indian band from Oklahoma.

Admission to the dance program is free. For tickets to the dinner call Millikarjuna Sarma at 268-6884 or Padmanabhan at 846-6260.

In Advance

Fraternity holds lip sync contest

By TANYA WILLIAMS

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Saturday night at 7 p.m., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. will present its fourth annual Lip Sync competition in Rudder Theatre.

Lip Sync is a competition between different acts that lip sync to former and recent musical artists.

Mayphous Collins, a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and coordinator for the program, said that Lip Sync is a program for all to enjoy.

"It's a form of entertainment where everyone can come out and enjoy themselves," Collins said. "It also allows people to express themselves through diverse talents; it's like another outlet."

The competition will feature 10 acts singing

songs from Mary J. Blige and TLC to Van Halen. "The thing about this year's program (is that) we have added some multiculturalism to our acts," Collins said. "We want to try to unite the entire campus, we want to bring out different audiences not just a black audience—the show is catered for all to enjoy."

This year's show will try a new format featuring amateur comedians like Home Box Office's "The Comedy Jam" and amateur dance acts, Collins said. The Godfather of Soul will also be stopping by.

The program's tickets will cost \$5 in advance and \$6 at the door.

"It's going to be a very hype program," Collins said. "It's one of the biggest events that A&M has to offer."

Write-in vote changes election results

Democrats lose elections

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Four Democrats who thought they had won their elections turned into losers Thursday after Harris County officials counted thousands of write-in votes cast for a candidate recruited by abortion opponents.

A total of 41,000 write-in votes were cast for John Devine, who decided late this summer to run against State District Judge Eileen O'Neill.

O'Neill had incurred the wrath of abortion opponents after she jailed several Operation Rescue leaders who came to Houston in August to stage protests at clinics during the Republican National Convention. Those jailed were later released.

Although O'Neill handily won the election with more than 500,000 votes to Devine's 41,000, the write-in ballots changed the outcome of four other races, Harris County Clerk Anita Rodeheaver said.

The races included one state representative race and three judicial races. The new winners are all Republicans.

"I've never, never heard of anybody having that many write-in votes," Rodeheaver said. "This is a pretty odd situation."

The new losers are Donald Peter Fogo in the 144th state congressional race; Terry O'Rourke in the 80th district court race; John Kyles in the 208th district court race; and John Ackerman in the 339th family district court.

With the write-ins, Robert E. Talton won the congressional race by 77 votes, Denise Collins took the 208th by 19,547; Caprice Cosper won the 339th by 20,167; and Scott Link was the winner the 80th by 5,900.

Rodeheaver said the write-in votes were not counted until Wednesday, and the results were announced Thursday.

The results are final, although she conceded they may be challenged by the winner-turned losers.

Ken Bentsen, chairman of the Democratic Party in Harris County, said he will take a close look at the new results, and he believes there should be a recount in the representative race because it was so close.

The new losers could not be immediately reached for comment Thursday night to see whether they will seek a recount.

"It's a very curious situation," Bentsen said. Bentsen and Rodeheaver attributed the turn-around to the efforts of Operation Rescue to try to get O'Neill defeated.

"Apparently a lot of them (anti-abortion activists) turned out and they also voted Republican," Bentsen said.

Operation Rescue leaders, including founder Randall Terry, repeatedly voiced their anger to reporters about O'Neill, who had issued a temporary restraining order telling anti-abortion protesters to keep their distance from abortion clinics before and during the GOP convention.

Auditor urges program overhaul

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Texas' disease prevention program is underfunded, poorly organized and concentrates on treatment instead of prevention, according to a report released Thursday.

The Texas Department of Health disease prevention program should be overhauled, according to the state auditor's review.

State health officials said they have done the best they can with limited dollars. They said the report recommends many changes that they have sought.

"I think that we have done a good job with the personnel and budgets that we've had available," said Dr. Diane Simpson, associate health commissioner.

She said that problems in preventing disease in Texas are similar to those faced by states nationwide. "We need to take a very critical look at the public health system," she said.

The report submitted to legislative leaders said the failure of the Health Department to reach disease prevention goals set in 1990 is not the fault of the current administration.

The agency's new health commissioner, Dr. David Smith, was appointed last March.

The report noted that the disease prevention program "has not been successful in preventing some diseases... disease prevention has not been a primary focus in health care during the past two decades."

The cost to treat and care for individuals with preventable

diseases could exceed \$1 billion per year, the report said.

The report calls for increased efforts to provide basic immunizations to all children by age 2, a recommendation that coincides with a task force report calling for comprehensive health care for all children and pregnant women.

"The cost to vaccinate one child against most childhood diseases can range from \$90 to \$150, while the cost of care for a severe case of a childhood disease could approach \$10,000-\$20,000," the report said.

The program is designed to help the poor, but while the number of people living below the poverty level increases, program funding as a percentage of the Health Department's total budget has dropped, the report said.

Lawmaker urges automatic suspension for DWI

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — A state lawmaker said Thursday she again will try to pass a bill to automatically suspend the driver's license of anyone arrested for drunken driving who fails a blood-alcohol test or refuses to take one.

Sen. Judith Zaffirini, touting the measure as a deterrent to drunken driving, stood at a news conference behind graphic photographs of a young boy who was severely injured in an alcohol-related traffic crash.

"That is the result of the damage

caused by drunk drivers," she said.

The boy's mother, Joyce Hunt, urged support for the bill.

Zaffirini said she would attempt for the fourth time to win approval of the bill in the regular legislative session that begins in January.

A license-revocation measure was approved by the House in last year's regular session, and in the Senate in two subsequent special sessions.

But it has never passed both chambers as required for passage.

Under the bill, drivers with suspended licenses would immediately get a temporary driving permit valid for 40

days. That would allow them time to request a hearing on whether the suspension was valid. If the suspension was upheld, it could last from 90 days to one year, depending on whether a driver had a previous offense.

After serving the suspension, drivers would have to pay a reinstatement fee of \$100 to get back their license.

Supporters say this would allow the system to pay for itself and generate funds for the state.

The license revocation would be separate from any criminal court proceedings against the driver.

In 1991, 1,249 people were killed and

33,856 were injured in alcohol-related crashes in Texas. Zaffirini estimated her measure would save 100 to 150 lives, saying that drunken driving has decreased in the 31 states with such laws.

She said she believes she will have enough votes in the Legislature to pass the bill, but that it's important for such key players as committee chairmen to support it.

The previous measures died in committee.

Temple Police Chief Tom Vannoy, president of the Texas Police Chiefs' Association, said he has seen people die in drunken-driving accidents and that the

bill is needed.

Hunt said her 7-year-old son, Mitchell, was left a paraplegic after the crash five years ago.

She said it's important for people to see the photographs of the crash's aftermath.

"I want you to imagine how much pain he went through, and how much pain I went through when this happened," she said.

"My child underwent 18 major operations to sustain life, all because someone chose to drink and drive. We have to start deterring drunk drivers before this happens."

The Battalion

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The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone number is 845-3316. Fax: 845-2647.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Opinion Page staff or the contributor and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Texas A&M Battalion editors, student body, administration, faculty or staff.

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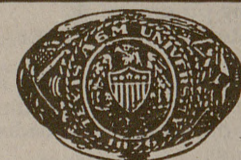
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