



THE BATTALION

Vol. 93 No. 101 (12 pages)

1893 - A Century of Service to Texas A&M - 1993

Thursday, February 24, 1994

Gage optimistic about Big Eight merger

By Mark Smith

THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's Interim President E. Dean Gage and several members of A&M's athletic department are optimistic about the proposed merger of four Southwest Conference schools with the Big Eight Conference.

"Overall, the specifics of the matter would be premature to comment on," Gage said. "But, in the long term, as far as athletics and academics are concerned, it is an attractive offer."

The Southeastern Conference's defection from the College Football Association's television contract with ABC and ESPN two weeks ago may have been the major impetus for other conferences' possible realignments.

The Big Eight was offered a \$60 million television contract with ABC and ESPN to begin in the 1996-97 football season, and was offered an additional \$20 million if the Big Eight was merged with the SWC.

Monday, the Big Eight invited A&M, the University of Texas, Baylor and Texas Tech to join the conference.

The Big Eight has set a Friday deadline for the four SWC schools to reach their

Baylor regents vote unanimously to accept conference bid

The Associated Press

WACO - Baylor regents voted unanimously Wednesday to become the first Southwest Conference school accepting a Big Eight merger offer, in what could be the beginning of the nearly 80-year-old SWC's demise.

Board of Regents Chairman Thomas R. Powers emerged from a 2 1/2-hour closed meeting of the board to announce the school was severing its ties with the SWC.

"We are delighted and excited that our board unanimously voted to accept the invitation that's been offered," Powers said at a news conference. "We think the financial possibilities of this new alliance are exciting."

Two other original SWC members, Texas and Texas A&M, and longtime member Texas Tech all had re-

gents' meetings scheduled this week to consider the offer from the Big Eight's Kansas City, Mo., offices.

A formal announcement of the merger appeared only to need regents' rubber-stamping at the schools.

"We're looking forward to the challenge. I believe it's a new era for us," said Baylor President Herbert Reynolds.

Reynolds said Baylor received the invitation late last week and that the Big Eight schools voted unanimously to invite his university, Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech.

Disintegration of the SWC, which began in 1990 after Arkansas joined the Southeastern Conference, would leave Houston, Rice, Southern Methodist and Texas Christian to fend for themselves in the competitive world of TV sports.

The offer was designed to find the best possible tele-

vision contract beginning in 1996-97. The Big Eight, with other conferences already signed with networks, decided having the four SWC schools would make for a more lucrative offer.

Baylor is the first of the four schools to accept the Big Eight's offer. Regents at A&M will meet via conference call Thursday afternoon, with boards at Tech and Texas scheduled to discuss the offer Friday.

That's the Big Eight's deadline for the SWC's so-called "haves" to accept or reject its invitation, sources told The Associated Press.

"We're on the very first step of a long ladder toward this merger," said Baylor athletic director Dr. Dick Ellis.

He said the four SWC schools would still have two

See Baylor/Page 9

decisions. If the schools cannot reach a decision, the Big Eight will accept the ABC offer without the SWC.

Wednesday, Baylor regents voted unanimously to accept the proposal.

The A&M Board of Regents will meet at 2:30 p.m. today and will discuss the

invitation.

A decision should be reached by the Friday deadline, said Wally Groff, A&M athletic director.

"I'm glad to see this thing moving so quickly," he said. "I'm sure we'll finish in time."

Four years ago, after the University of Arkansas left the SWC for the SEC, A&M and UT both discussed the possibility of leaving.

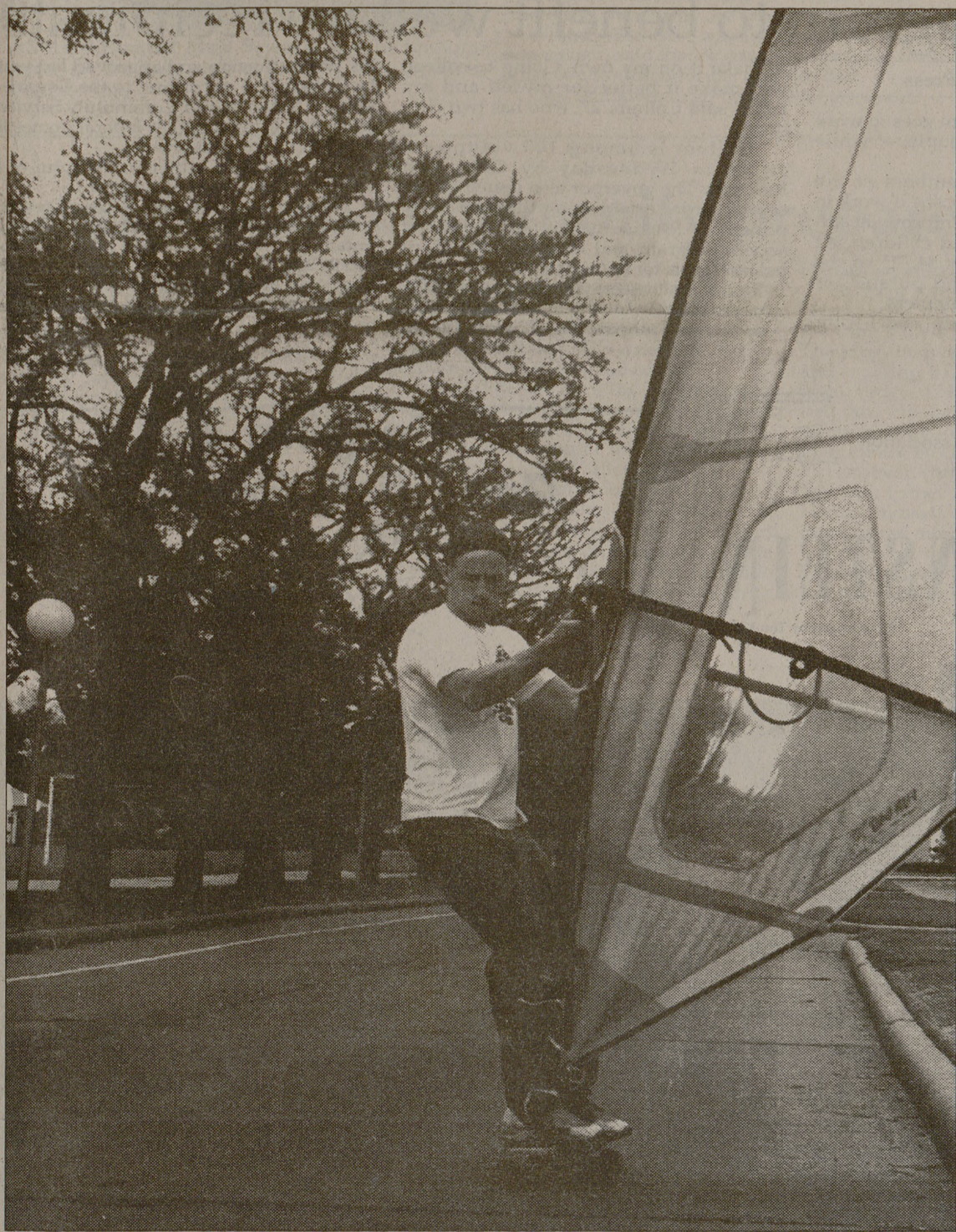
But political pressure by the Texas State Legislature forced the two schools to reconsider any move.

Gage said, however, that the political climate is different this time.

"I think there has been a reasonable amount of time that has passed for the revenue and attendance to increase,"

See A&M/Page 10

Riding the wind



Lee Reynolds/Special to THE BATTALION

Taking advantage of the recent windy weather, Ty Weaver "sail-skates" along the side of Simpson Drill Field. Weaver constructed the skate after seeing it on television.

Liberal Arts Council plunges ahead with multicultural classes

By Jan Higginbotham

THE BATTALION

The College of Liberal Arts Council decided in a special session Wednesday to proceed with a proposal to implement a three hour international studies requirement for the 1994-95 school year.

The decision came after Texas A&M University Interim President E. Dean Gage announced last week he would not approve the council's proposal to require Liberal Arts students to complete six hours of U.S. racial, ethnic and gender cultures and three hours of international studies.

Dr. Woodrow Jones, interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said he was shocked by Gage's decision, but was pleased with the council's positive attitude and their decision to go ahead with the international studies requirement.

"There has been a tradition here that the president not act in curriculum matters," Jones said. "In practice, we have never gone to the president in curricular matters and the president has never taken such action."

Jones said the University's administration folded to outside pressure in deciding against the requirement.

"Why is it so easy to talk about international cultures and not talk about our own cultures?" he said.

"There is a lack of leadership at this University and it's at the top."

In addition to their decision to go ahead with the international studies, the group also agreed to take action in response to Gage's decision.

After much discussion, council members decided to send letters of response from the dean of the college and from the council's steering committee to Gage.

The council's curriculum committee will pursue further changes at the college level and a delegation of council members will be sent to speak with the interim president about the issue.

Marco Portales, a professor of English, said sending a delegation to speak with Gage is important to make him understand the magnitude of the issue.

"The issue has been clearly politicized," Portales said. "He (Gage) has been listening to other people. He needs to look at what is needed and what should prevail."

"We need cultural commerce so we can get on with the business of creating a society," he said. "We need to go out of our way to diversify."

Many of the council members were concerned because Gage acted outside of his authority and questioned the issue of faculty governance.

See Requirement/Page 6

Student Senate wants University to give Aggies a voice in fee hikes

By Kim McGuire

THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Student Senate wants the University administration to obtain the opinion of the student body before any mandatory student fee is increased.

The Senate passed a bill Wednesday petitioning the administration to give the Senate prior notification before any fee change occurs.

Sen. Ben Dale, academic affairs chairman, said students are often neglected when fees are being discussed.

"The way the system works now a fee can be created and implemented without the knowledge or opinion of students," Dale said. "People who initiate the fee always say 'this will benefit students.' Yet if the Senate says 'no' they won't be able to say that."

Dale said the Senate is asking that the group proposing a fee change make a presentation to the Senate Finance Committee to discuss the reasons behind the change.

The committee would then question the group, do follow-up research and present its findings to the Senate.

Dale said Interim President E. Dean Gage and Vice President of Student Affairs J. Malon Souther-

land have promised an official response to the bill.

The Senate also passed a bill that will exempt students from exams after 5:30 p.m. on the day of Aggie Muster.

Sen. Jeb Jones said this bill was created because many students have to miss Muster because of exams.

"Muster is such a special tradition," Jones said. "No one should ever have to miss it if they want to go."

The bill originally called for all classes to be canceled on the day of Aggie Muster, but it was revised.

Jones said the bill was changed because it "wouldn't fly" with the Faculty Senate.

In other business, senators heard the first reading of a bill that would approve a Parking, Transit, and Traffic Advisory Council's recommendation restricting campus residents and parking garage permit holders from parking anywhere but their assigned areas on weekday nights.

Kathy Mathis, PTTS associate director, said the council recommended changing current policy because it would allow more students to park closer, enhance safety and reduce unnecessary traffic on campus.

"The problem we're trying to resolve is red and green permit holders parking in staff areas and keeping off campus students from getting a space at night," Mathis said.

Assault victim takes aim at accused attackers

By Angela Neaves

THE BATTALION

The victim of an assault involving Texas A&M students and former students testified Wednesday in a civil court case that he was beaten by more than one individual.

A 12-person jury will decide if Kevin Ormston, 23, acted alone when he assaulted John Walker, former A&M student, or if three other students, Stephen Swan, a senior finance major, Gregory Pappas, a graduate agricultural economics student and Earl Dyke, a former A&M student, participated in the assault of Walker in front of Redstone Apartments on the night of April 9, 1992.

Walker, who is now attends Sam Houston State University, testified that he did not know who hit him first, but he said he is posi-

tive he was beaten by more than one person.

"It seemed like an eternity to me," Walker said. "I was definitely struck by more than just one person. I was experiencing blows to my head and ribs while also being kicked. One person could not have done the damage."

Walker suffered injuries to his face, head and ribs, he said. His clothing was torn, and his cowboy hat and boots were stained with blood, he said.

He is suing to recover the costs of his clothing and medical bills, and he is also suing for punitive damages.

Ormston testified that he was the only man who hit Walker.

"I thought Walker had beaten a female friend of mine," Ormston said. "Two days later I found out I had fought with the wrong man. It was senseless and very stupid on my part."

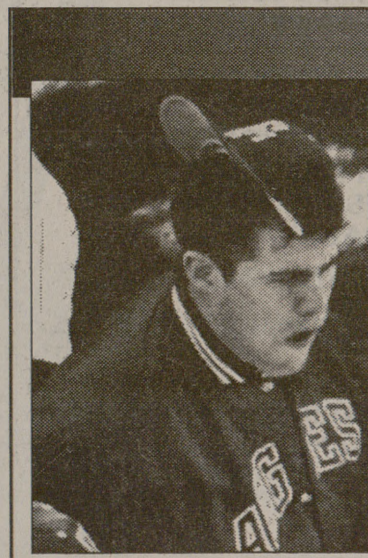
During the fight, Ormston said he stopped for a moment and asked Walker about assaulting his friend.

"I asked him if he liked beating women," Ormston said. "It was at that point that Stephen (Swan) pulled me off of Walker. He said 'he's had enough, man.'"

Ormston was later convicted of criminal assault charges, sentenced to two years probation, 300 hours of community service and was banned from any establishment that serves alcohol.

"I've learned violence is not the answer," Ormston said. "I messed up in a bad way, and I will pay for that mistake for the rest of my life."

Ormston said he repeatedly tried to contact Walker after discovering he had assaulted the wrong man.



Inside

SPORTS

• A&M baseball splits double-header with Southwest Texas State

Page 7

Aggielife

• Dairy Products Lab: Serving Aggies for more than 40 years

Page 3

OPINION

• Megliola: From land of dreams to land of screams

• Editorial: Abandon ship, A&M should join Big Eight

Page 11