

# Texas A&M *The Battalion*

Vol. 93 No. 122 (8 pages)

Serving Texas A&M since 1893

Monday, April 4, 1994

## First woman elected student body president

### Leslie wins with 61 percent of vote, credits success to staff's hard work

By Jan Higginbotham  
*The Battalion*

When the announcement of the newly elected 1994-95 student body president was made Thursday night, the crowd gathered in front of the statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross broke into wild excitement.

One young woman was lifted above the crowd as she tried to hide her tears and excitement. Brooke Leslie wrote a new page in the history books of Texas A&M University when she became the first woman to ever hold the position of student body president.

"I do not want to be remembered as the first woman president," Leslie said. "I want to be remembered as the best student body president ever."

Leslie waded her way through congratulatory hugs from the crowd members and found herself facing Brian Walker, 1993-94 student body president.

Walker offered his congratulations to Leslie.

"You're going to have a hell of a year," Walker said. "You don't know what is in store. It all starts right now."

Leslie's pride and excitement shined

through as she thanked her mother for being with her during the campaign.

"I want to thank all the people who have helped me," Leslie said. "I get the credit and spotlight, but it's my staff and the people who believed in me who deserve the credit."

Leslie, who won the election with 61 percent of the votes, said she is glad the campaigning and election are over.

"The whole year ahead of me is running through my mind," she said.

Leslie said she and her campaign manager, Tobin Boenig, had been planning since October.

"We knew it was going to be tough," Leslie said. "We knew we had some paradigms to break through."

Boenig said Leslie's volunteers made the difference in the campaign and election.

"We've had about 20 people put their lives in this campaign," he said.

Leslie said she is eager to get started with the duties and responsibilities of her job.

"I plan to work however many hours a day it takes to accomplish all of my platforms," Leslie said.



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Brooke Leslie rides high on the shoulders of her supporters last Thursday evening after the election commission announced Leslie won the race for student body president.

## Texas felons serving more time as releases slow

The Associated Press

HUNTSVILLE — Ever so slowly, it appears prison time served by Texas felons is going up.

In 1993, Texas inmates served an average 2.4 years of their total sentence, which averaged 11.3 years.

The time served was 26 percent more than the previous year's average, 1.9 years for sentences averaging 11.1 years.

"The combination of more beds and parole policies slowed down the flow of releases," Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesman David Nunnelee says.

The statistics, compiled in the agency's 1993 annual report for the year ending Aug. 31, show a life term in Texas generally

means 13.2 years behind bars. For 1992, life equaled 12.7 years before parole or some form of probation.

Carol Vance, chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, noted in the report that more than 500,000 Texans are in prison, on parole or on probation for serious crimes.

"This is one out of every 34 Texans and roughly one out of every 18 males," he said. "This is a shocking and disturbing fact of life."

"The home has been severely weakened and too often is found to be dysfunctional or non-existent. The lack of sound family values and morals leads to dropouts, alcohol and drug use, unemployment, and theft and violence."

"Until some massive societal changes can reverse this pattern and restore our collective

sense of right and wrong, especially with our youth, more prisons will be a way of life," Vance warned.

Some 32,364 inmates were received in 1993, swelling the state's prison population to 64,313. Of those, 14,104 were returned as parole violators.

Ninety-five percent of all inmates were male; 47 percent were black, 28 percent white and 24 percent Hispanic.

The average inmate was almost 33 years old, had an IQ of 92 and quit school in the 10th grade. Fifty-five percent had served time before in a Texas prison and 70 percent previously had been on probation.

Twenty-three percent came from the Houston area and 21 percent from the Dallas metropolitan area. Fort Worth accounted

for 7 percent of the prison population.

Almost half of the people locked up — 47 percent — were there for violent offenses. Property offenses accounted for 28 percent of the inmates and 18 percent were incarcerated for drug offenses.

The number of paroles dropped 37 percent, from 29,860 in 1992 to 18,887 in 1993. At the same time, the backup of state inmates in county jails increased 41 percent, from 17,286 in 1992 to 24,320 in 1993.

The jail backup has continued to grow, swelling to 28,000 by the end of the calendar year. State officials have announced plans to ease the county problems by opening temporary lockups and work camps to hold thousands of inmates until new prisons are completed this summer.

## Gay Mexican accepts asylum in U.S., opens door for others

By Jan Higginbotham  
*The Battalion*

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service recently took steps that could set a precedent for future asylum requests by foreign citizens, says a Texas A&M University official.

Kathy Sands, manager of immigration services in A&M's human resources department, said the recent case involving a gay Mexican man who requested asylum on the grounds that his sexual orientation had subjected him to abuse and discrimination in his homeland will definitely be a factor in future cases.

"This case may open up a lot more cases like it from other countries," Sands said. "This is an unusual case, but it certainly will set a precedent in other countries."

Ray Everett, an information specialist with the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), said this type of asylum request is not uncommon.

"There is a long pattern of discrimination against gays and lesbians in Mexico," Everett said. "There are similar cases from all over."

"This is the first time an asylum officer has found sufficient evidence to grant asylum. There have been a couple of cases where people claiming membership in a part of a social group were granted asylum on appeal."

Everett said the man, Jose Garcia, approached one of the lawyers from AILA for assistance in applying for asylum in the United States. AILA is a professional bar association consisting of immigration lawyers and professors.

See Citizens/Page 8

## Bomb scare threatens campus building; police evacuate area

By Rob Clark  
*The Battalion*

A bomb scare rocked the Engineering-Physics Building Friday when a plastic milk container, which held potentially dangerous chemicals, was found by an employee in a first floor bathroom.

Lt. Terry Thigpin of the College Station Fire Department said the container appeared to be an explosive device.

"They had some type of plastic jug with a balloon connected to the inside of it, and some substance at the bottom of it," he said. "It smelled like vinegar, and it had some baking soda in it."

Bob Wiatt, director of the University Police Department, said the vinegar and baking soda were the only components of the container, but they could have combined to make a gas, causing an explosion.

Wiatt said any explosion would have been minimal, but the building was evacuated for safety precautions.

Bland Ellen, assistant chief of the College Station Fire Department, said the intent behind the device hasn't been determined.

"It was made by somebody intentionally," he said. "I would suspect that it was made to alert or alarm someone."

An Explosive Ordinance Disposal Team was called to the scene to handle the device.

"We took it out, disassembled it, and we'll send it in to be analyzed," Ellen said.

Thigpin said that even if it wasn't a bomb, precautions were taken because the container's contents could have been dangerous.

"It could have been an explosive, or it could have been corrosive, or it could have exploded as fire," he said. "We had to handle it as a bomb threat."

Justin Hood, a freshman mechanical engineering major, was working on a research project in the building when the bomb scare occurred.

"I saw some guy walk in dressed like Darth Vader, and he pulled out a little milk carton-type thing, and they started poking it," he said. "Stuff came out, and they took little pieces of it and put them into containers."

Hood said he didn't realize the urgency of the situation.

"I didn't know they had actually found something," he said. "I thought someone just called in a prank, so I was kind of relaxed about it. If I'd known they had actually found something, I would've been hauling ass out of there."

Ellen said the situation was handled well.

"We didn't have a detonation, and everything went smoothly," he said.



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Members of the College Station Fire Department handle an explosive device found in the Engineering-Physics Building on Friday afternoon.

## Student group to assess campaign fines

### Student judicial board to discuss lifting \$25 fine on candidates

The distribution of the Thursday, March 31 edition of *The Battalion* was limited to 14,000 issues because of the Good Friday holiday. This is half the normal distribution. *The Battalion* regrets any inconvenience this may have caused.

By Jan Higginbotham  
*The Battalion*

Questions raised regarding a memo signed by Corps Commander Will Haraway listing all Corps and non-Corps candidates running in last week's student elections will hopefully be resolved tonight by the Student Judicial Board.

The Board, which oversees student government activities, is scheduled to discuss appeals filed by those candidates who were fined \$25 because their names were listed on the memo.

Michael Crain, election commissioner, said the issue of possible fines is now in the hands of the judicial board.

"(The election commission) made our call," Crain said. "It's up to the J-board to interpret the regulations. Their opinion is what matters."

"My job is to make sure this race is fair for everyone; that everyone has an equal chance of

representing Texas A&M University. If they haven't played by the rules, they've been fined."

In a separate incident, a few cadets were accused of tampering with voter packets by scratching senior yell leader candidate Trent Ashby's name off the voter packet.

Despite the tampering, Haraway said he thinks the fines will be the major issue at the judicial board meeting.

"I don't believe the ballot tampering will be an issue at the meeting," Haraway said. "If we find out who did the tampering, they will be punished within the Corps."

Haraway also said he does not think the circulated memo will be an issue.

"In publishing the memo, I haven't done anything wrong," he said. "I did the same thing last year, and it wasn't wrong then."

Another issue surrounding the memo that caused Haraway to come under fire was including the name Benedict Arnold under Corps member Steve Kendrick's name which was listed on the non-Corps list.

Haraway said the placement of Benedict Arnold under Kendrick's name was an accident. He said he did not even know Kendrick is in the Corps.

"The comment was not directed at Steve Kendrick," Haraway said. "I will not comment on who the comment was directed at."

"It was an ill-conceived attempt at making a statement. I apologize to Kendrick. I didn't know he was in the Corps."

Crain said four people were caught Wednesday scratching names off ballots. Three students scratched off Ashby's name and one student scratched off the names of all Corps members running for yell leader, Crain said.

Election officials collected the social security numbers of those four students and reported the incidents.

"Their ballots were kicked out," Crain said. "They didn't have a chance to voice their opinion."

Crain said election officials spent all day Wednesday checking voter packets. No cases of tampering were reported or discovered on Thursday.

The student body elections came to a close Thursday with the announcement of the winners.

While Scott Torn and Scott Whitaker were re-elected to yell leader positions, Ashby, a non-

## Discussions, exhibits mark weeklong diversity week

Several programs and activities will highlight Texas A&M's fourth annual Celebrate Diversity Week, which begins today.

Some of this week's events include:  
An information meeting for anyone interested in participating in the 1994-95 University Awareness for Cultural Togetherness retreat will be Monday at 9 p.m. in MSC 231.

A brown bag discussion of a current cultural topic will be Tuesday at noon in MSC 229.

A panel presentation on institutional racism and discrimination will be at 7 p.m. in MSC 201.

A ceremony honoring students, faculty members and staff who encourage and promote diversity at the University will be Thursday at 10 a.m. in MSC 206.

An exhibit honoring those killed in the Holocaust will be at 12 p.m. in the MSC Flagroom.

The second annual Whoopstock, a unity festival, will be Saturday from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Simpson Drill Field. This event will include bands and representatives from the University.

## More inside . . .

Election '94 Pg. 2  
Opinion Pg. 7  
Sports Pg. 5  
What's Up Pg. 4

See Election/Page 8