

The A&M men's basketball team prepares to play in the Bank IV Classic.

MELISSA MEGLIOLA: I remembered to smile, big and mouthy, as I tried to hide that I was scared to death. I was a first-time, inexperienced and utterly clueless bridesmaid.

The A&M women's basketball team hosts the Lady Aggie/Holiday Inn/Domino's Pizza Invitational at G. Rolie.

THE BATTALION



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NEWS BRIEFS

NAFTA has cost U.S. jobs, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — Instead of living up to its promise as a jobs creator, the North American Free Trade Agreement has resulted in a net loss of 10,000 U.S. jobs, Sen. Byron Dorgan said in releasing a congressional study Thursday. A Joint Economic Committee study requested by the North Dakota Democrat estimates that while NAFTA created roughly 127,000 jobs in its first 18 months, increased imports from Mexico have cost 137,000 U.S. jobs. "While we have only nine months experience with NAFTA, it's important to note that what little experience we have confirms the worst fears that one of us had that this was, if not a gut sucking sound, still a steady drain on our jobs," he said. Commerce Department officials questioned the findings, saying their own analyses show job gains as a result of increased trade with Mexico. They were reluctant to assign specific job gain numbers from NAFTA, saying it's very difficult to separate the trade agreement's effect on jobs from overall trade patterns with Mexico.

Clinton to use \$25 bil. for military training

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton, aiming to counter Republican charges he's weakened the military, said Thursday he'll pump \$25 billion into future Pentagon budgets to give troops higher pay and enough training to stay combat-ready. "Our number one commitment is to the readiness and well-being of our men and women in uniform," Clinton said at a Rose Garden ceremony. "Our military will remain the best trained, best equipped, the best fighting force on earth," Clinton pledged as Defense Secretary William Perry and the generals and admirals of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stood by. The president also said he will ask Congress to replenish funds taken out of this year's defense budget to pay for unanticipated military deployments in Haiti, Kuwait and the Caribbean. Pentagon officials said that would amount to more than \$2 billion.

Scientists discover genetic link to gender

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers have isolated a genetic switch that separates the boys from the girls. It turns off the female in the human embryo and starts biological changes that eventually put hair on the chest. Dr. Michael Weiss of the University of Chicago said the new study advances the understanding of the complex cascade that determines whether people are male or female and sheds new light on how this process can sometimes go awry. In research to be published Friday in the journal Science, Weiss and his team use sophisticated imaging techniques to explore an atomic level the biological pathway to maleness. Their research report traces the development of maleness, from the turning on of the SRY gene, which is on the Y chromosome, to the work of another gene, called MIS, that removes the female parts of the original embryo.

Three refute police chief's prosecution

MALLEN (AP) — Three people allegedly tortured in Mexican police custody say the Mexican government has framed the former police commander. Maria Sanchez denied Thursday that she had been beaten, contradicting detailed statements attributed to her by Mexican prosecutors. "In Mexico, you sign what's put in front of you, or else," added Jose Filipe de Jesus Victoria Cepeda, claiming that the Mexican attorney general's office falsified his complaint to implicate Guillermo Gonzalez Calderoni. U.S. Magistrate Peter E. Ormsby is holding a hearing to determine whether Calderoni, a former top commander in the federal judicial police, should be extradited to Mexico to face charges of torture and abuse of authority.

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A&M student leaders want voice on Board

By Michele Brinkmann
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M System student leaders want student representation on the Board of Regents and asked the Board on Thursday to allow an ex-officio member to sit with the Board at future meetings.

In front of a roomful of students, three students who serve on the Chancellor's Student Advisory Board presented their proposal to the Board at its monthly meeting.

Toby Boenig, speaker of the Student Senate, Amanda Spennath, chairwoman of the CSAB, and Kenna Young, a CSAB member from Prairie View A&M University all spoke to the Board about their proposal.

Boenig said he thought the presentation went well.

"What you saw was a unison effort," he said. "I wasn't expecting it to go that well. We realized doing what is best for students is fine."

A student ex-officio member would serve as a liaison between the Board of Regents and the System. The position would provide a unique opportunity for discussion and interaction between students and regents.

to vote or meet in executive session.

Most regents said they were also supportive of a student ex-officio, but Regent T. Michael O'Connor and Vice Chairman Raul Fernandez said while they supported student interest in what the regents do,

on the Board than we would have in the audience."

"We have to draw the line somewhere." Chancellor Barry Thompson, who said he was in full support of the proposal, suggested that the regents put a student on the Board for a two-year trial basis.

"I think it is complimentary to the Board that there is so much concern of students," Thompson said.

O'Connor said he wanted to make sure students understood the time and effort regents put into Texas A&M before he votes on the proposal.

"I've had some miserable times in the time I have been here," he said. "I came in here to troubleshoot some things. It's not been pleasant."

"I have been here almost two years and I have only seen a handful of students show up to meetings. We make an effort and it is not shown."

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"I have been here almost two years and I have only seen a handful of students show up to meetings. It bothers me that students don't show up to our meetings. We make an effort and it is not shown."

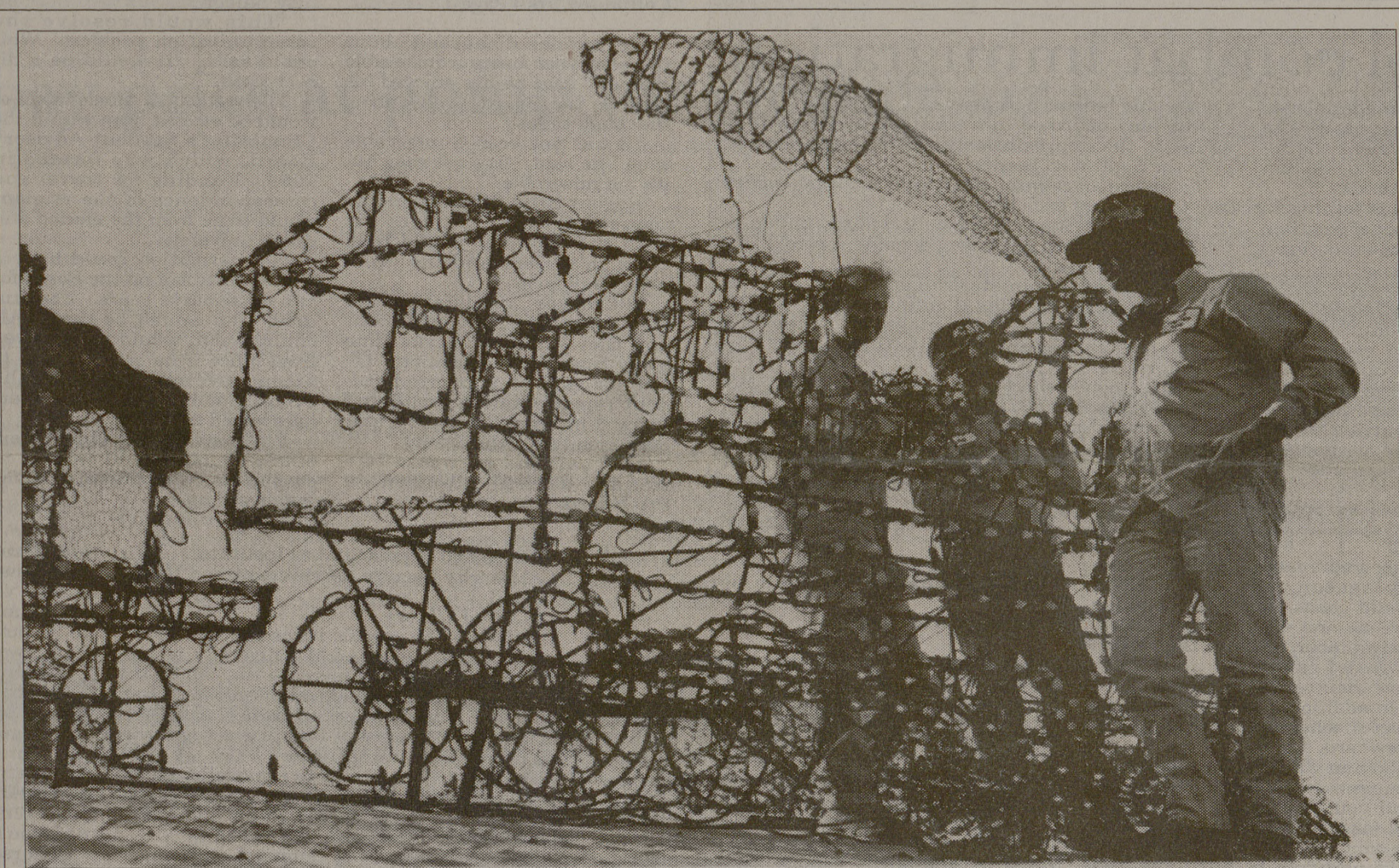
— T. Michael O'Connor, Regent

If the Board approves the item at its January meeting, a student ex-officio member report would be placed on the agenda at each Board meeting, the student would sit on select Board committees and would conduct business in the manner of a member except he or she would not be allowed

they were concerned about the problems that could arise.

Fernandez said he was concerned with all of the other constituents wanting representation but liked the CSAB's proposal.

"I don't want to have Pandora's Box," Fernandez said. "We'd have more people



Robyn Calloway/The BATTALION

Arranging the Christmas train

(Left to right) Jennifer Johnson, Joey Ganem and Roy Johnson put the finishing touches on the decorations for Christmas in the Park. It will be officially lit today.

Black Awareness Committee, AASA celebrate Kwanzaa

By Amy Lee
THE BATTALION

The MSC Black Awareness Committee and the African American Student Association celebrated Kwanzaa early with dance, song and speakers at their Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration last night.

Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday celebrating family, community and culture.

"Kwanzaa is celebrated in all African nations," Shae Harvey, a junior political science major, said. "It is an African agriculture celebration. It is where people come together to celebrate the first fruits of the harvest."

The Kwanzaa celebration was started at Texas A&M in 1966, Ron Rochon, a professor in the education department and guest speaker, said.

"It was created for the sole purpose of recognizing and appreciating the history, culture and heritage of the community," he said. "It is where people pay homage to the different facets of African-American culture through ceremonies, family, poetry and music."

Kwanzaa is celebrated between Dec. 26 and Jan. 1. It is celebrated then as to not compete with Christmas and other holidays.

There are seven different principals celebrated during Kwanzaa which are called Nguzo Saba.

The first is Umoja, or unity. The second is Kujichagulia, or self-determination.

"African Americans need to be determined to define, create and speak for themselves," Rochon said. "African is not synonymous with poor or jungle bunny or a third world country. African is synonymous with beauty, richness, glorious past, glorious present and glorious future."

The third principal is Ujima, or collective work and responsibility. The fourth is Ujamaa, or cooperative education.

"We need to support black businesses," Rochon said. "We need to educate our community that no one will help sustain the African American business until African Americans support African Americans. We need institutions. In order to have institutions we need

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That's not Santa downstairs

Holidays present opportune time for crime

By Stephanie Dube
THE BATTALION

As students begin to get caught up in the festive holiday spirit, they need to remember that the need for safety does not stop during the holiday season, police officials said.

Sgt. Betty LeMay, crime prevention specialist for the University Police Department, said the crime rate always increases around the holiday season.

"People need to take extra special care for personal safety at this time," LeMay said. "Don't get lost in the spirit of the season."

Sgt. Choya Walling, community relations and crime prevention specialist for the Bryan Police Department, said burglary and theft are the main crimes for the holiday season. This includes theft of Christmas decorations, packages from cars, money and purses.

When students leave for the holidays, they need to take their valuable items home with them, she said.

If living off campus, students leaving on vacation should let someone know where they can be contacted in case something happens, LeMay said.

People leaving their houses for a vacation can also contact the local police and request a vacation house check, Walling said. The police will send a patrol to periodically check the house and will contact the residents if something is out of the ordinary.

In addition, students leaving for the Christmas vacation should find out what they can do with their houses' pipes in case of a freeze, LeMay said.

One year, students returned after the vacation to find that their pipes had frozen and broken during the break and flooded the apartment once the pipes thawed out, LeMay said.

"It's easier to take a little precaution now than to come back and have to fix a lot later," LeMay said.

The campus is also not immune to holiday crime, Lt. Bert Kretzschmar, crime prevention specialist for UPD, said.

"The campus will be relatively quiet, but that's a prime opportunity for thieves because no one is around," Kretzschmar said.

Students living in residence halls should take their valuables home and lock their doors before they leave in case someone is able to get into the dorm, she said. These students, especially those who live on the ground floor, should also make sure their windows are locked to discourage thieves.

LeMay said campus buildings are frequently burglarized during the Christmas break.

"We check on the buildings, but invariably someone leaves a door unlocked," she said. "There should be one person responsible for locking the door. If a person has any questions about if a building is locked, the person should check before leaving for the holidays."

When buildings are burglarized, people may steal mail, computers, any money left behind and small items easily disguised such as radios and recorders, she said.

"If you see something suspicious on campus, give the UPD a call," LeMay said. "We're here 24 hours a day, seven days a week, holidays included."

People should also use precaution if traveling, Kretzschmar said. If driving somewhere, they should make sure someone knows when they are leaving, when they expect to arrive and what route they will take. Travelers should also never leave

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