

SETTING STANDARDS

Becky Silloway reaches goals as first female Student Senate speaker. Aggeliflife, Page 3

NO FOOD, DRINKS OR JOURNALS

Halbrook: The library has made great strides by adding a desk, but more should be done. Opinion, Page 11

SHOT DOWN

The hot-shooting Houston Cougars down A&M, 79-75. Sports, Page 7



THE BATTALION

Vol. 102, No. 98 (12 pages)

Serving Texas A&M University Since 1893

Thursday • February 22, 1996

A&M probes into possible Boenig hazing

The abduction of the student body president on Presidents Day may be considered hazing by University regulations.

By Wes Swift
THE BATTALION
The Department of Student Activities is investigating a possible hazing incident involving Toby Boenig, Texas A&M student body president, which has drawn complaints of unfair treatment from fraternities and

Corps members. Boenig, a senior agricultural development major, was kidnapped early Monday by six Fish Aides, or freshmen Student Government assistants, in honor of Presidents Day. The six freshmen handcuffed and blindfolded Boenig and took him to Albertson's grocery store. Boenig was then covered with sugar, syrup and eggs and taken to the corner of Texas Avenue and George Bush Drive. There, Boenig held a sign that read, "Honk if you love your student body president."

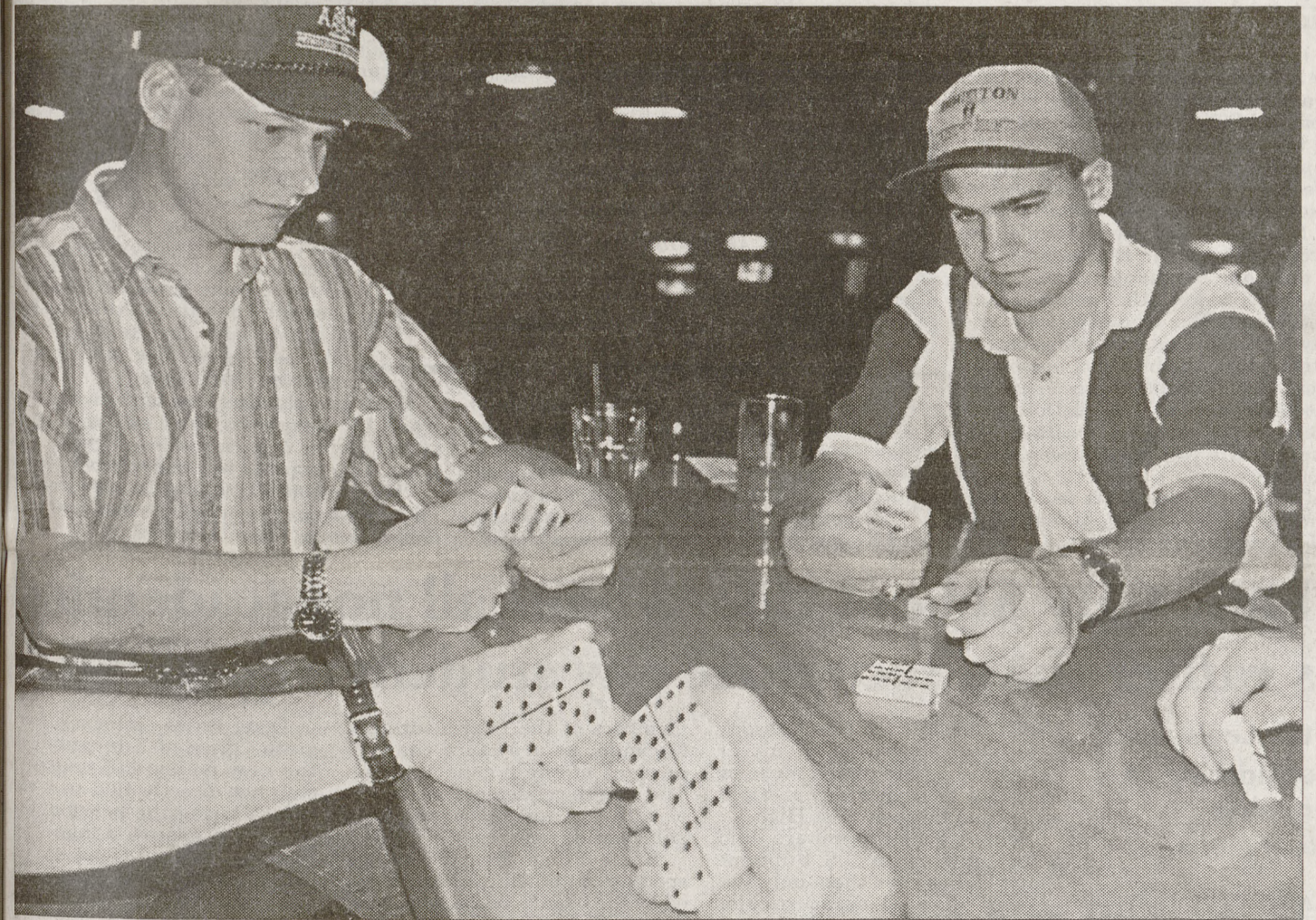
See related EDITORIAL, Page 11

The Department of Student Activities began the investigation after Christi Moore, head of the Student Organization Hearing Board, saw a picture on the front page of The Battalion of Boenig on the street corner holding the sign. Moore also heard of several complaints from fraternity members alleging that the kidnapping fit the definition of hazing. Under University regulations, hazing is defined as "any act of threat, physical or mental, perpetrated for the purpose of submitting a student or other person to physical pain or discomfort, indignity or humiliation..." Moore said she plans to talk to the six Fish Aides who par-

ticipated in the incident, as well as Boenig, to decide if the case should be referred to the hearing board, which will determine if any disciplinary action should be taken. Boenig said he is cooperating fully with the investigation and has already talked to Moore. He defended the incident as well, saying that several circumstances distinguish this incident from typical hazing incidents. "I have power over these six freshmen," Boenig said. "At any time, I could have told them to stop, and they would have." The nature of the incident will be considered, Moore said, but

will not carry more weight than other factors. "Certainly the intent will be taken into consideration," she said, "but it doesn't change the action." The handcuffs the freshmen used, Boenig said, were plastic and easily breakable. The fact that the freshmen bought him breakfast, Boenig said, shows no malice was intended. University regulations, however, say intent and consent are irrelevant in hazing incidents, specifically citing physical bondage, such as handcuffs and taking students somewhere and dropping them off, as hazing. A&M fraternities have objected to the incident.

Jason Jordan, Interfraternity Council president and a junior marketing major, has received "a ton of calls" from fraternity members who were furious that the incident was being treated as a joke. Jordan said the Battalion picture reminded him of similar incidents involving fraternities and the Corps of Cadets that drew penalties from the University. "When I saw the picture, I realized it was all in good fun," Jordan said, "but by the time I finished the story, [the kidnapping] reminded me of some incidents that caused fraternities to pay big fines and serve a lot of community service hours."



Gwendolyn Struve, THE BATTALION

PLAYIN' WITH THE BOYS

Tom Thurmond (right), a senior petroleum engineering major, lays down a domino in the game of 42 at SidePockets Wednesday for Engineering Week. Matt Stewart (left), a senior petroleum engineering major, is Thurmond's partner.

Student Senate, GSC mull merits of GUF proposal

Senators said that though A&M needs the revenue, students may not respond well to another fee increase.

By Heather Pace and Kendra S. Rasmussen
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M undergraduate and graduate students have mixed reactions to a proposal by Dr. Ray Bowen, A&M president, to increase the General Use Fee (GUF). Bowen presented his plan to the Graduate Student Council (GSC) Tuesday night and the Student Senate Wednesday night. Bowen's proposal calls for an \$8 increase per semester credit hour in the General Use Fee for Fall 1996 that would generate an additional \$11 million for A&M. The increase would raise the General Use Fee from \$24 per credit hour to a maximum of \$32 set by the state Legislature. Students would pay an additional \$100 to \$120 more per semester if the proposal is approved.

The added revenue would be used primarily for merit-based salary increases. Revenue would also fund instructional enhancements, such as classroom and library materials, and classroom improvements, such as chair replacements and new visual-aid equipment. Josh Hennessey, a freshman senator and a business major, said the revenue from the General Use Fee increase would have little impact on A&M because the funds would be so diversified. "The increase in the GUF is not only too much for the students at this point, but the spending is so spread out that A&M will see no real effect," Hennessey said.

Bowen said the fee increase is necessary for A&M to remain competitive and uphold its reputation, but students are worried it may have an ad-

verse effect on the University. Ashanti Johnson-Pyrtle, a Black Graduate Student Association representative and an oceanography graduate student, said she worries the University will suffer decreased enrollment in the long run. "It appears as though the University severely needs the income," she said. "However, I am concerned about how this increase will affect the students." "My concern is that the price may be too high. Some students may not be able to afford to continue their education, especially graduate students that stay around for six years or so." Students said Bowen presented a well-researched proposal. Kyla Dodson, a masters of business administration representative and MBA graduate student, said she does not welcome the idea of an increase in fees but realizes it is necessary.

"I simply cannot support such a drastic fee increase without a parallel proposal to increase financial aid."
— Bo Armstrong
off-campus senator

"I hate to see it become more expensive for us to get an education, but I think people will still come to A&M," she said. "It looks like (Bowen) has been really thorough in his analysis. There seems to be no room for internal budget cuts. The proposal was presented on a really strong business and economic basis. It didn't seem like a big political presentation." Bo Armstrong, an off-campus senator and a junior computer science major, agreed that the proposal was well-researched, but he said many students are already struggling to pay current fees. "I simply cannot support such a drastic fee increase without a parallel proposal to increase financial aid," Armstrong said. Stephen Moore, GSC president and a meteorology graduate student, said she feels Bowen is sincere in his

See GUF, Page 10

Film critic sites problems in entertainment

Michael Medved spoke about the need for people with traditional American values to regain control over the entertainment industry.

By Heather Pace
THE BATTALION

Michael Medved has completed law school projects with Hillary Clinton. He has appeared on the Phil Donahue Show with Las Vegas showgirls. And he recently appeared on Rush Limbaugh's show as a guest host. But Tuesday night, the well-known

film critic, added another experience to his résumé when chatted about entertainment and politics with Texas A&M students. Medved came to A&M as part of Rush Week II, an event sponsored by College Republicans. Much of Medved's speech focused on problems he sees within the entertainment industry, and he said his wide range of experience has given him a broad understanding of how the industry functions. Medved said that though Hollywood has inaccurately judged America's desire for entertainment, its detrimental effects on the American family can be reversed. "For the past 10 years, the American people have demonstrated that they do not believe movies and television are orna-

ments to our civilization," Medved said. The argument that sex and violence sell better, he said, is simply not true. For example, Medved said G- and PG-rated movies generate two-and-a-half times the revenue of R-rated movies. "America is craving more wholesome entertainment," he said. Medved asserted that the failure of many movies, such as *Showgirls*, shows that producers do not understand what the public wants. "Lots of people call producers bad people," he said. "I call them bad businesspeople. They turn to hopelessness for shock value so they can gain peer respect." Hollywood entertainers, he said, argue

See Medved, Page 10

University, Brazos Valley receive zero anti-Semitic activity reports

Some Jewish officials said that, overall, A&M does an effective job of discouraging anti-Semitic activity.

By Lisa Johnson
THE BATTALION

Though 35 incidents of anti-Semitic activity in Texas were reported to the Anti-Defamation League in 1995, no incidents were reported in the Brazos Valley. Anti-Defamation League Director Jonathan Bernstein said the majority of

anti-Semitic acts in Texas occurred in the San Antonio and Houston areas. Rabbi Peter Tarlowe of the Hillel Foundation in College Station defined anti-Semitism as a form of racism in which an individual is judged by his or her affiliation with an ethnic group rather than who they are as a person. Anti-Semitism can be categorized in two forms, passive and active. Passive activities include the exclusion of a person or group based on their affiliation, and active anti-Semitism includes destruction of property and physical or verbal abuse toward a person or group be-



cause of their affiliation. The ADL report covered anti-Semitic acts that were specifically anti-Jewish. Tarlowe said he is not surprised by the lack of reported anti-Semitic activity in Brazos Valley, specifically on the Texas A&M campus. He said the University has gone out of its way to be sensitive to the Jewish issues he has brought to the administration in his 13 years at the Hillel Foundation. "The University has really managed to be an island of administrative tolerance," Tarlowe said. "The administration, and especially Dr. (J. Malon)

Southerland, (vice president for Student Affairs,) have immediately stepped in whenever anything came up that I thought would present a problem for Jewish students." Tarlowe said potential problems in the past have included moves to say Christian prayers at campus events and to hold final exams on Friday nights, which would interfere with Jewish religious services. But one University area where anti-Semitism has not been corrected easily, Tarlowe said, is in the contents of The Battalion. He said the publication has failed to print any articles about activities

conducted in conjunction with Holocaust Day. "Holocaust Day is participated in by all of the area churches here," he said. "A few years ago, we had a huge thing on Holocaust Day here on campus. It was covered by The Eagle and by other members of the press, but The Batt acted as if it did not exist." Tarlowe said, however, that such occurrences were probably the result of ignorance or incompetence on the part of The Battalion staff. Overall, he said, the University does a good job of countering anti-Semitic

See Anti-Semitism, Page 10