



# THE BATTALION

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## Workers injured in Reed Arena collapse

BY LAURA OLIVEIRA  
THE BATTALION

A portion of Reed Arena collapsed Tuesday as a crane malfunctioned, causing a chain reaction that brought down the superstructure of the arena, injuring three workers. The accident occurred around 3 p.m., when a crane carrying a load malfunctioned and collided with a second crane. The second crane crashed into the partially completed superstructure, which would have held up the roof of the arena.

Tom Davis, project manager for Huber, Hunt & Nichols, the company contracted to construct the arena, said a mechanical failure caused the collapse. The collapse may have been recorded on video. The construction insurance company was on the scene at the time of the accident.

The College Station and Fire Departments, University Police Department and Texas A&M Emergency Medical Services were dispatched to the construction site. The injured men were transported by A&M Emergency Medical Services to hospitals.

Michael Madera, a construction worker who was injured in the collapse, was taken to Columbia Medical Center where he was admitted for observation. He is in serious but stable condition.

Reddy Rodriguez, another construction worker injured in the accident, was taken to Joseph Regional Health Center and discharged at 6:50 p.m.

A third injured man left the construction site in a private car. It was not reported whether he received medical treatment.

Kelly Petronis, a lifeguard at the Student Recreation Center and a freshman international business administration major, witnessed the collapse from the outdoor pool.

Petronis said seeing the structure collapse was frightening.

"It was the most scary, helpless feeling I have ever felt," she said.

"There were four major structures in the middle of the arena," she said. "Then one crane fell on another crane and then that fell on the big metal structure. It was like dominoes."

"It was very loud. It sounded like a bomb."

Chris Mulvey, a lifeguard at the Student Recreation Center and a freshman biology major, also witnessed the collapse from the outdoor pool.

Mulvey said there was a lingering sound before the actual crash.

"It sounded like something was tipping over," he said. "It seemed like the screeching was never going to end and then there was a huge crashing sound."

Construction on Reed Arena began in September 1995. The special events center was slated for completion in early 1998.

Mary Jo Powell, associate director of public information for the University, said the collapse is likely to create considerable delays in the project's completion.

"This will have a significant impact on the construction timetable," Powell said.

The estimated cost for the arena is almost \$37 million.

The arena will seat 12,500 people and will be used for graduation commencement, concerts, basketball games and other special events.

**"It seemed like the screeching was never going to end and there was a huge crashing sound."**

Chris Mulvey  
Freshman biology major



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

### REED ARENA FACTS

**Namesake:**  
Named in honor of Houston veterinarian Dr. Chester J. Reed, A&M's Class of 1947.

**Size and Configuration:**  
230,000 gross sq. ft., with 177,821 sq. ft. of assembly space. 7,500 lower seats and 5,000 balcony seats.

**Capabilities:**  
Big-name concerts, circus and ice shows, dirt events, athletic events, conferences, conventions and special events.

**Meeting Rooms:**  
One large 6,000 sq. ft. and six smaller rooms totaling 4,800 sq. ft.

**Cost:**  
\$36,750,000

Left: A construction worker looks up at the fallen substructure of Reed Arena. A crane fell on the structure causing it to collapse around 3 p.m. Tuesday.

## Political groups hold debate

Aggie Democrats clash over education, term limits and economy

BRANDON HAUSENFELCK  
THE BATTALION



With less than a week to go before the presidential election, the Texas A&M Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and the College Republicans

held a crossfire debate Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the MSC College Republican building.

Livingston said the event was not actually a debate. "It was really just a presentation," he said. "It wasn't really biased one way or the other."

Kristy Perez, Aggie Democrat president and an educational psychology graduate student, said she enjoyed the debate with the College Republicans.

"It's always fun to tell people about the Democrats' platform," Perez said. "We have a lot to brag about."

Each side was given four minutes to give an opening statement. They were then given two minutes each to present their side of certain issues. After the presentations, the panel

took questions from the audience. A four-minute closing statement was then given by each side.

Yoshida Fransaw, Alpha Kappa Alpha president and a senior chemistry major, said the sorority planned for the debate to be objective.

"We were concerned about fairness," Fransaw said. "This was the time and place. And it was important to do it right before the election."

Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha said they were happy with the outcome of the debate.

Chelsea Johnson, a sorority member and a senior psychology major, said the debate was beneficial to the students who attended.

"[The debate] was very informative," Johnson said. "I was pleased to see we were able to bring out a mixed crowd."



Perez



Livingston

### ► El Día de los Muertos

## CAMAC seeks to increase awareness with celebration

BY JOANNE WHITTEMORE  
THE BATTALION

The dead are being remembered at Texas A&M tonight as the MSC Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture (CAMAC) holds its annual festival, *el Dia de los Muertos* or The Day of the Dead.

Jessica Hickey, festival coordinator and a sophomore biomedical science major, said the celebration traditionally starts on the evening of Oct. 31 and ends on the morning of Nov. 2. The dead are said to rise Nov. 1.

"We celebrate for one night, and the dead come back to walk the Earth the next day," she said.

Hickey said the festival sometimes begins weeks earlier to commemorate different types of deaths, such as those who have died of old age or in car accidents.

The relatives of the dead gather in remembrance with gifts and food for the deceased.

"Normally, families build altars, called *ofrendas*, in their living rooms," she said. "These are usually simple tables decorated with traditional flowers, typically marigolds, and pictures of deceased loved ones. They also place the deceased's favorite foods and drinks on the altar. If it is a child who has passed on toys are placed on the altar."

The festival tonight will honor Dr. Hector Garcia, former president of A&M at Kingsville, who died this year.

Anissa Silva, committee member and a senior

### EVENTS SCHEDULE

- 7 p.m. Introduction and welcome
- Ballet Folklorico Dance Performance
- Informational session on the religious aspects of the Day of the Dead
- Informational session on Dr. Hector Garcia
- Question and Answer session for students
- Refreshments served

sociology major, said CAMAC will have an altar set up for festival attendees to donate non-perishable food items.

"The non-perishable food items will be given as an offering to the dead, and then will be given to the Brazos Valley Food Bank after the ceremony," she said.

Silva said the deceased will be honored with a slide show.

"We are asking people to bring pictures of deceased loved ones because we will have a slide show in honor of them," she said.

Silva said the committee will explain the purpose of the altar and talk about traditional decorations. There will also be a traditional dance performance.

"The Ballet Folklorico is performing *La Bruja*, a dance performed by women to summon spirits before the ceremony," she said.

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### THE BATTALION TODAY

#### Power Up

The Texas A&M power plant and utilities complex helps sustain life on campus. Aggiefife, Page 3

#### First Glance

The A&M Cross Country team will meet new challenges Saturday at the 12 Championships. Sports, Page 7

#### Friendly Fire

Friendly rivalries perpetuate stereotypes not taken with a sense of humor. Opinion, Page 11

## Danger on Wellborn Road

### GSC researches ways to improve crossing safety

BY MELISSA NUNNERY  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Graduate Student Council is researching ways to improve pedestrian safety on the stretch of Wellborn Road passing through campus.

Markus Wawzyniak, GSC academic affairs officer and a mechanical engineering graduate student, said he was inspired to draft the proposal for safety improvements after a friend of his was killed in April by a train on the tracks adjacent to Wellborn Road.

Wawzyniak said the safety improvements are necessary because of heavy pedestrian and automobile traffic on the four-lane highway that runs through campus.

The thoroughfare and

its adjacent railroad divides West Campus from main campus. Motorists, pedestrians and cyclists must use one of three railroad crossings to access West Campus.

Traffic to West Campus has increased since the completion of the Wehner Building, West Campus Library and Student Recreation Center.

"I go over there (West Campus) a lot to use the Rec Center and my girlfriend is [a] business [major] and has classes on main campus and West Campus," Wawzyniak said.

John Alvis, a nuclear engineering graduate student, said the problem will grow worse as the University continues to expand on to West Campus.

"It used to be a long



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

The walk signal at Wellborn Road indicates that pedestrians may cross at their own risk.

time ago that Wellborn Road was one of the boundaries of main campus," he said. "But as the University expands, the problem is going to get worse and worse."

Wawzyniak said the GSC proposal is still in the planning stage.

The GSC is also enlisting the support of the Student Senate and Faculty Senate.

"We (GSC) want to get the attention of the administration and put together a team ... to see what can be done," he said.

See SAFETY, Page 5

### Scholarship established in memory of student

BY CARLA RENE MARSH  
THE BATTALION

The friends and family of Go Shibata helped establish the Shibata International Memorial Scholarship in memory of the Texas A&M international student.

Shibata was killed when he was hit by a train April 30, 1996, on the tracks that run parallel to Wellborn Road through campus.

Bob Perez, A&M judo coach and a close friend of Shibata, said the scholarship is an excellent way to remember him.

"His parents wanted Go to finish his education at Texas A&M," Perez said. "He would have graduated this December. The scholarship will allow another international student to finish their education at A&M."

Shibata was admitted to the A&M campus in Koriyama, Japan, in the Fall of 1992.

He enrolled at A&M in College Station in the summer of 1994 as a senior management major.

Rajesh Kumar, president of the International Student Association and a business graduate student, said Shibata was an active member in the association.

Kumar said the organization is contacting as many potential contributors as possible for the scholarship fund.

"We plan on contacting different companies and doing fund raisers," Kumar said.

Susan Droleskey, director of ISA, said the idea of the scholarship originated with family and friends wanting to honor Shibata's memory.

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