



THE BATTALION

"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

Volume 103 • Issue 71 • 12 Pages

Friday, December 13, 1996

The Batt Online: <http://bat-web.tamu.edu>



1996 Reflections

Aggies face challenges, deal with changes

BY WESLEY POSTON
THE BATTALION

Wellborn Road.

Toby Boenig

Former Student Body President Toby Boenig was partially paralyzed following his graduation in May on a rafting trip on the Guadalupe River with friends. Boenig rolled out of the raft and struck a large, underwater rock, dislocating the C4 and C5 vertebrae in his neck.

Boenig's injuries left him with limited use of his legs.

Since the accident, Boenig has been recovering at Warm Springs Rehabilitation Center in Gonzalez. Today, he will return home and continue his physical therapy on an out-patient basis.

Although told he may not be able to walk again, Boenig disagreed and

insisted that he would be able to stand.

"Just today (Thursday) we walked in the rolling walker for 102 feet," he said. "I've got a 'For Sale' sign on my wheelchair."

Boenig said his goal is to be rid of the wheelchair by his birthday, Feb. 19 — one year after being kidnapped by the Student Government Fish Aides.

Boenig also plans to attend a friend's April 19 wedding with only the help of a cane.

Greg White

Returning to College Station from first Bonfire cut Sunday, Sept. 22, Greg White, a sophomore civil engineering major, was killed when the truck he was in rolled over and struck

a large highway sign. Nine other students were injured in the accident.

Eight of the students, including White, were riding in the back of the truck. The incident prompted Bonfire redpots to take a stand against riding to and from Bonfire cut site in the backs of trucks. The Women's Bonfire Committee also responded by setting up a rest stop between cut site and College Station.

Residents of Aston Hall, White's dormitory, along with the Residence Hall Association, organized a Greg White Memorial Scholarship.

Aston residents have also joined the fight to move a bill through state Legislature that would change the laws regarding riding in the beds of trucks.

Reed Arena

A crane malfunctioned, crushing a portion of the Reed Arena Special Events Center superstructure Oct. 29, injuring three construction workers.

Gen. Wesley E. Peel, vice chancellor for Facilities Planning and Construction, said the workers were all able to return to work in a few days, but the damage to the arena would set the expected completion back from Fall 1997 to Spring 1998.

The crash caused \$4 to \$5 million in damage, which will all be covered by insurance.

Peel said the contracting company, Huber, Hunt and Nicholas, was required to include builder's risk insurance and liability insurance as a part of the construction.

Currently, the damaged steel is being removed and the extent of the damage is being reevaluated with each new piece that is moved.

Replacement steel has been ordered from Virginia and should begin arriving shortly after Christmas.

"They will be assembling it as it arrives," Peel said.

In the meantime, work continues on areas of the arena that were not damaged by the collapse.

"There's a lot of work going on that has nothing to do with the damage," Peel said.

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Clockwise from top: The Aggie Band participated in ESPN's Battle of the Bands. PHOTO BY STEW MILNE. The destruction of Law and Puryear was stalled with the dorms half way torn down. PHOTO BY RONY ANGKRIWAN. Toby Boenig, former student body president, was partially paralyzed in an accident. PHOTO BY RONY ANGKRIWAN. The Reed Arena collapsed, injuring three workers. PHOTO BY STEW MILNE. Redpots march around Bonfire before it is lit. PHOTO BY TIM MOOG. Students can no longer dunk their Aggie rings in pitchers. PHOTO BY TIM MOOG. The lunar eclipse will not return until the year 2000. PHOTO BY STEW MILNE.



THE BATTALION TODAY

Year in Review

John LeBas and James Francis take a look at the 1996 year in entertainment. Aggiefife, Pages 3,4

A Look Back

Presenting a pictorial review of the Fall 1996 varsity sports scene at A&M. Sports, Page 7

Report Card

The Battalion's Editorials Board grades various A&M administrators and organizations. Opinion, Page 11

Around the World

Close to home and far away, 1996 made history

BY MELISSA NUNNERY AND ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

From the Centennial Olympics to military sex scandals, 1996 can be measured in a vast assortment of worldwide events.

Unabomber

Federal authorities arrested Unabomber suspect Theodore J. Kaczynski, a former Berkeley math professor, April 3 in Lincoln, Mont. He is suspected of using letter bombs to kill three people and injure 23 others between 1978 and 1995.

On Tuesday, Kaczynski pleaded innocent to the charges of sending a mail bomb that killed Thomas Mosser, an advertising executive, two years ago.

Saudi Bombing

On June 25, 19 American soldiers were killed when a bomb exploded near an American military building in Saudi Arabia. A parked truck exploded outside apartment buildings at a military compound near Dhahran, which housed

American, Saudi, French and British troops.

Gene Lutz, a junior business analysis major, was stationed in Saudi Arabia after the Persian Gulf War for Operation Southern Watch. He said the June bombing was especially disturbing because he had once lived there.

Lutz described the bombing as a breach of Saudi security on the perimeter of the base.

"It bothered me that security was lax enough that something like that could happen," Lutz said. "It's a natural progression for [security] to get lighter."

Lutz said he plans to return to active duty when he graduates from Texas A&M. He said if he is stationed in Saudi again he would be more aware of the threat.

"You're going to be frightened when you're sent into hostile territory," Lutz said, "but it's just part of the job, one of the risks."

Yeltsin Re-election

On July 3, the people of Russia re-elected Boris Yeltsin as presi-

dent. The election was Russia's first presidential vote as an independent country.

Voters were presented with two distinctly different choices in the election. Yeltsin endorsed a government system similar to a Western style of democracy, while his opponent, Gennady Zyuganov, promoted a revival of communism in Russia.

Olga Cooke, an associate professor of Russian, said Yeltsin and his political allies provide greater stability for Russia than Communist forces.

"It's very important that a Communist not be President of Russia," Cooke said.

"It's better to have Yeltsin with a coalition of reform-minded forces ... than Zyuganov with the Communists."

Cooke said Russia's stability is not only vital for the country's relationship with the United States, but critical to international relations as a whole.

"It's absolutely crucial that the

stability in Russia be real," she said.

Cooke said the United States should continue to support Russia's attempts at a democracy and free enterprise, but the U.S. should not tolerate infractions against the people of Russia.

"It's very important if free enterprise thrives in Russia," she said.

"At the same time, we have to continue to criticize them if they violate human rights."

Yeltsin bolstered his campaign by asking Alexander Lebed, a military general and third party presidential candidate, to be his National Security Adviser in July. Lebed's supporters switched their vote to Yeltsin after the two joined forces.

In October, Yeltsin released Lebed from his office. The release was made after accusations that Lebed planned to seize power with help from the Russian military.

Airline Tragedies

On July 17, TWA flight 800 exploded, killing all 229 people on board and starting an investigation which has yet to be concluded.

The bodies of some passengers have yet to be recovered.

Airport security nationwide has been examined and tightened as a result of the explosion and the speculation that a bomb brought the plane down.

A spokesman for Easterwood Airport said security there is better than what is required by the Federal Aviation Administration.

He said all employees are required to wear identification badges and unauthorized personnel are not allowed in restricted areas.

Airport procedures were already being studied as a result of the crash of ValuJet flight 592 into the Florida Everglades just two months prior. The May 11 crash killed all 110 people on board.

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