

A challenge to convenience

Students once depended on trains. But many now say the railroad tracks pose a nuisance and a threat.



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

By MICHAEL SCHAUB
 THE BATTALION

The railroad bisecting the Texas A&M University campus has played a crucial role for the university and Bryan College Station.

But Tyenise Tarrant, a junior marketing major, said she is just about fed up with it. "I think it is an inconvenience," Tarrant said. "Whenever you're late, you have to wait 10 or 15 minutes. I think the railroad should be moved."

But the railroad, which runs parallel to

Wellborn Road, was here before the first cadet ever set foot on campus or the first quarterback ever threw an interception.

In fact, the railroad is the reason College Station is College Station, noted Gary Basinger, manager of business development for Bryan-College Station's Chamber of Commerce.

"The name derives from the railroad," Basinger said. "One of the reasons the state put A&M here is because it was on the railroad route."

In 1871, a state commission selected what is now College Station to be the site of

the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. The site lay on the Houston & Texas Central Railroad, which ran from Houston to Bryan.

The railroad stop was referred to as "College Station" even before a railroad depot was established in town, in 1883.

"It was instrumental in the growth of College Station, bringing students in and taking them home," Basinger said. "It had a major impact on College Station."

But time passed and things changed. The last railroad depot was razed in 1966. Passenger trains that once carried students

to and from the college turned into cargo trains hauling limestone and caliche through a growing city.

As the University expanded, the railroad intersected the campus. The University grew west, constructing buildings and parking lots on West Campus.

And that is where the problem lies, students say.

Regina Castillo, a junior accounting major, said the presence of the trains makes getting to classes on time difficult.

"It's worse when you're on the bus," Castillo said. "It's pretty inconvenient."

Texas Department of Transportation public information officer Denise Fischer said 28 trains per day run through campus.

But this a cold comfort for many A&M students, some of whom would prefer the train to just disappear.

"They should find a way to build an overpass or something," Tarrant said.

In fact, the city of College Station has considered building underground tunnels for students to walk through, Basinger said.

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Texas A&M visual artists explore boundaries

The J. Wayne Stark Galleries feature a new collection of artwork by College of Architecture faculty and staff

By KAREN JANES
 THE BATTALION

Purple horses, "morphed" presidents and green men now can be seen in the Memorial Student Center.

From now through March 12, the J. Wayne Stark Galleries in the MSC are featuring an exhibit titled "Exploring Boundaries." The exhibit is a collection of new artwork by faculty and staff members in the College of Architecture.

Catherine Hastedt, curator for University art exhibits, said the 16 artists (including two teaching assistants) contributing to the exhibit represent the architecture and visualization labs.

"The exhibit has a wide variety of drawing, painting, photography and computer animation and manipulation," Hastedt said.

"The Green Man" by Kevin Thomason is a short animated video combining computer animation and hand-drawing.

In the film, the main character

has green skin, while everyone around him is purple.

The green man deals with his difference by coloring himself purple, but one day his disguise is revealed.

"The Green Man" is a statement on tolerance," Hastedt said.

Ergun Akelman's two exhibits also incorporate both cartooning and computer science. He said he turned to computers while looking for an easier way to draw his cartoons.

Akelman uses trajectories of differential equations to program the computer to draw figures. He also uses a computer to morph actual photographs of U.S. presidents, making them appear deformed and cartoonistic.

Dick Davison's work depicts objects' actual sizes.

"Davison's work is a surrealistic combination of architectural elements and pieces of junk," Hastedt said.

Both of Joseph M. Hutchinson's paintings are autobiographical and

portray members of his family. "A Portrait of My Father as a Young Man" shows his late father riding a horse. Hutchinson said the painting reflects mortality.

Catherine May's work is the only of its kind in the exhibit. May, a book artist, displays several of her most unique creations in "Exploring Boundaries."

Some of her book covers are hand-embroidered, one is decorated with coffee bean imprints and some of the books fit into matching boxes.

May said she gets inspiration from other art forms and things she learned while earning her degree in the book arts program.

Chang-Shan Huang's works took as little as an hour to complete. His pencil drawings are field sketches of landscape architecture.

"Field sketches capture the essence of a space," Hastedt said. "They are better than taking a photo."



Dave House, THE BATTALION

See STARK, Page 5 Robert Schiffhauer's "Organic Remains" is at the Stark Galleries. Alan Stacell's "Bentlow Stairs" is shown in back.

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