

Students to vote on yell leader run-offs

After a petition was verified Tuesday, students will vote on yell leader run-off elections.

By JOE JEANETTE SCHLUETER
THE BATTALION

Students will decide today whether or not to include yell leader run-offs in the upcoming election.

If approved, a run-off election would follow the general election.

Students would then vote on the top five senior candidates and top four junior candidates.

Currently, the top three seniors and top two juniors are chosen in a single election.

A petition bearing 5,470 signatures calling for a binding referendum on yell leader run-offs was verified Tuesday with 4,815 valid signatures.

Kevin Jordan, Student Government judicial board chair and an accounting graduate student, said he expects a large voter turnout.

"Any time Texas A&M students have a chance to voice their opinion about something that affects them, they do," Jordan said.

Student Body President Carl

Baggett said he does not want the election process to become a di-

"Whatever the students decide, we'll do everything in our power to abide by their votes."

Chris Torn
Head yell leader

viding issue.
"The Senate, among many other organizations on campus, has

done so many good things," Baggett said. "I just don't want this to divide the students."

Chris Torn, head yell leader and a senior agricultural development major, said he is primarily against yell leader run-off elections.

"For Corps and nonregs, run-offs are not the best thing for yell leaders," Torn said. "We are elected by the student body, and whatever the students decide, we'll do everything in our power to abide by their vote."

Gary Kipe, yell leader and senior agriculture development major, said he is in favor of having yell leader run-offs and believes they will help the University.

"This (the referendum) isn't

against anybody," Kipe said. "It is for the whole student body."

Jason Waligura, Public Relations Officer for the Corps of Cadets and a senior petroleum engineering major, said the reason there are no yell leader run-offs is the Student Senate.

"Even though the student body supported it," Waligura said, "the Student Senate stopped it and voted it down."

Students may vote today at the Commons, Sterling C. Evans Library, Wehner Building, Memorial Student Center and the Underground.

RUN-OFF CRITERIA AT A GLANCE

- ✓ The top four junior candidates will advance to the run-off election.
- ✓ The top five senior candidates will advance to the run-off election.
- ✓ Any candidate receiving a majority of the vote in the primary election will automatically assume the office without the run-off.
- ✓ If more candidates receive a majority of the vote than there are positions, then the candidates receiving the highest number of votes will assume the offices.



Pat James, THE BATTALION

Friendly Face Shalena Poffenberger, a senior psychology major and member of the Diamond Darlings, hands out scorecards between the baseball games at Olsen Field Tuesday.

Churches observe Ash Wednesday

Fasting, abstinence mark the traditional beginning of Lent

By GRAHAM HARVEY
THE BATTALION

Churches and student organizations will observe Ash Wednesday, the traditional beginning of Lent, in a variety of ways today.

Lent is the Christian season of preparation for Easter.

Father Mike Sis of St. Mary's Catholic Center said that while Ash Wednesday is not a required day of mass or a holy day of obligation, Roman Catholics look fondly upon it.

"It is a very popular day for Catholics [with] a lot of personal meaning," Sis said. "It is a day of fasting, abstinence (from meat), and repentance of sin."

On Ash Wednesday, Roman

Catholics wear ashes, a pre-Christian sign of repentance, on their foreheads in the shape of the Cross.

There will be several Catholic services today. St. Mary's will hold mass at 7 a.m., 12:05 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The Catholic Student Association will hold a service in the All-Faiths Chapel at noon and a service in Rudder Theatre at 5:30 p.m.

Stavros Megas, secretary of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship and a senior history major, said Lent does not begin for members of the Orthodox faith for about another month. The Orthodox Easter is on April 27, whereas the standard Easter falls on March 30.

Megas attributes this to the split of the Christian church in

1055 between the Orthodox and Catholic faiths.

"The Catholics changed the calendar," Megas said.

Protestants also observe Ash Wednesday. The Rev. Mark Crawford, chaplain for Episcopal students, said the Episcopal observance of Ash Wednesday has English roots.

The ashes used are obtained during the Imposition of Ashes, a ceremony in which palm leaves from the previous Palm Sunday are burned. Crawford said the day's service will include the Litany of Penitence, a repentance ceremony authorized in The Book of Common Prayer, the Anglican code of procedure translated in 1549.

"Ash Wednesday reminds us of

our mortality, our human nature and the promise of salvation," Crawford said.

As a historical note, Crawford said, the modern English word 'Lent' is derived from the Middle English word 'lente,' meaning 'springtime,' which itself is derived from the Old English word 'lengten,' meaning 'the lengthening of days.'

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church will hold service at 7 a.m. There will be services at St. Francis Episcopal Church in College Station and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Bryan. St. Thomas' will hold a special Ash Wednesday Service for college students at 6 p.m.

See **CHURCHES**, Page 6

Fire ant outbreak prompts control efforts

Benjamin Cheng
THE BATTALION

A booming fire ant population in Texas has prompted state research facilities, including Texas A&M, to coordinate efforts to control the insects.

The research institutions, which include the University of Texas and Texas Tech University, will announce the Fire Ant Management Plan at a press conference today in Austin.

The institutions collaborated on a bill to manage the fire ant population. The bill, which asks for \$2.7 million per year for the next six years, will be presented to the Texas Legislature during the current session.

A news release said fire ants have infested 56 million acres of Texas, about two-thirds of the state.

Dr. Bart Drees, an entomologist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, said the arrival of red imported fire ants from South America in the '30s has led to the fire ant overpopulation.

"What's bad about them (fire ants) is that there's too many of them," Drees said.

The ants cause an estimated \$300 million in

losses in Texas each year, he said.

Dr. Ray Frisbee, head of the A&M entomology department, said a lack of natural controls caused the fire ant population to increase and displace native fire ants.

"Most native ants are not as damaging as the red imported fire ants," Frisbee said.

Frisbee said part of the solution lies in reducing the fire ant population, allowing native fire ants to recolonize their former territory.

Drees said the Fire Ant Management Plan advocates a community-wide effort to control the fire ant population.

"We can do a lot better job if we work together with neighborhoods, homeowner associations or communities to coordinate control efforts," Drees said in a news release.

Frisbee said fire ants, unlike other ants, can inflict multiple stings.

"A fire ant sting probably hurts as much as bee sting," he said. "It's usually a multiple number of [fire ants]."

Frisbee said fire ants interfere with crop harvesting and pose a danger to the cattle industry.

See **EFFORTS**, Page 5



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

Sherry Ellison, a technician in the entomology research lab, examines a fire ant nest that developed over a six-month period.

► MSC Council

Senior dedicated to A&M's 'living room'

By LAURA OLIVEIRA
THE BATTALION

Nelson Burns first saw the MSC during a visit to Texas A&M University his senior year in high school. Now, a senior in college, he will assume the position as MSC Council president beginning April 1.

"I remember the MSC representing tradition and being a place where a lot of students came together," he said.

Burns, an international studies major, was appointed to the position on Monday Feb. 3. Burns said through inclusiveness and teamwork, the MSC can remain the "living room of the campus."

"I am very team-oriented," he said. "If we can get different people with unique characteristics and strengths working toward the same goal and same vision, we can do a lot for the University."

Burns said community development gives the MSC competition. He said activities such as going to clubs, playing laser tag and seeing movies at Hollywood 16 lure students away from the MSC.

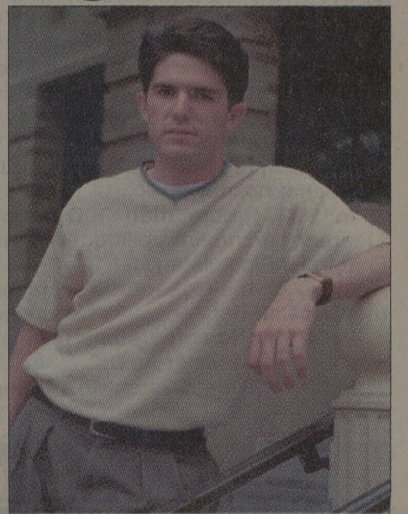
"A&M is not what it was 20 years ago," he said. "The MSC has to remain competitive in order to give the students what they want."

The MSC Council will take surveys, establish focus groups and talk to organizations to get input on student needs.

"We want to find out what the student body wants and give it to them," he said.

Burns will move into his new office when his term begins in April.

Burns said he will have a picture of his parents when they were younger and a picture of them taken recently



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Nelson Burns, a senior international studies major, hopes to restore student focus to the MSC by serving as Council president.

on his desk. He said looking at the pictures puts life in perspective.

"When I look at the younger pictures, I see them as I am now," he said. "And then I look at the other pictures and see who I want to be."

Burns has traveled to Europe five times through A&M programs and plans to study in Mexico this summer. He said he gains an understanding of different cultures when he travels.

"Other cultures may go about doing something in a different way," he said. "It is just as valid, but it is different."

"Learning about this may provide insight as to how we can solve problems in our own society."

Burns said he wants to travel more after graduation and someday open his own business.

Deputy chancellor devotes career to educational goals

By BRANDON HAUSENFLUCK
THE BATTALION

Dr. Leo Sayavedra, Texas A&M University System deputy chancellor for academic institutions, is an example of how an education can change one's life.

Until he was 12 years old, Sayavedra, a Rio Grande Valley native, never set foot in a classroom. He, his five brothers and two sisters spent their childhoods working to supplement the family's meager income.

One day while Sayavedra was working on a farm, a truant officer approached him and asked why he was not in school. Sayavedra said working was the only life he knew.

"At age 12, I had a regular job," Sayavedra said. "I didn't know I had to be in school."

"There was a need for [everyone in the family] to contribute to the family income."

Ironically, Sayavedra made education his career.

Although he started the first grade when other kids his age were starting the seventh, he finished high school at 18 and went on to college. In 1960, Sayavedra received a degree in mathematics from Trinity University in San Antonio. He received a master's degree in education in 1968 from North Texas State University (now University of North Texas). He went on to earn a Ph.D. in educational curriculum and instruction at the Uni-

versity of Texas at Austin in 1976.

Sayavedra has held a variety of positions during his career. For 12 years, he taught chemistry, physics and mathematics. During that time, Sayavedra coached high school football and basketball in Texas public schools and was a University Interscholastic League coach.

Throughout his career, Sayavedra has been a member of nearly 30 professional organizations. He served on the Texas Lottery Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for the Law School Admission Service and was the Policy Committee Chairman for the Hispanic Association of College and Universities.

See **CHANCELLOR**, Page 5

THE BATTALION INSIDETODAY

PRO/CON: Yell Leader Gary Kipe and Student Senator Javier Martinez debate yell leader run-off elections.

Opinion, Page 11

Aggelife	Page 3
Toons	Page 6
Sports	Page 7