



# THE BATTALION

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## Discussion centers on gender integration



Derek Demere, THE BATTALION

Stephen Foster, Corps commander, speaks at Saturday night's banquet.

► Friday's round table was the third and final discussion of Military Weekend.

By GRAHAM HARVEY  
THE BATTALION

Military gender integration was the topic of a round table forum Friday as Military Weekend continued at Texas A&M University.

A&M cadets and visitors from 16 military academies throughout the United States and Mexico met in the Governance Room of the Koldus Building for the discussion.

Mark Santos, Company E-1 first sergeant and a junior history major, moderated the meeting.

"This is not a discussion on whether or not we should integrate," Santos said. "We are sharing ideas

and views so we can integrate the best we can."

The cadets began by addressing the positives and negatives of mixed units and living quarters. Opinions ranged from keeping halls and units separate to fully integrating them.

Emerson Franklin, a cadet from Marion Military Academy, was in favor of separate living quarters.

"Place women in a hall together so they can give each other mutual support," Franklin said.

Opponents said separate living quarters and units create false environments, contrary to the realities of military life.

The discussion turned to the effects of gender integration on military leadership. One cadet asked whether it is more common for female cadets to receive leadership positions through quotas rather than merit.

Catherine Wattendorf, a cadet from Virginia Tech, said her corps does not do either.

"In my corps, there is a tendency to put a female

leader in a more secretarial role rather than a command position," Wattendorf said.

Cadets discussed whether lowering standards for female cadets is harmful or necessary.

Andrew Clark, a cadet at Virginia Military Institute, said VMI is essentially gender-blind where standards are concerned.

"The decision we made was to keep standards constant for all," Clark said. "Our system's basis is to treat everyone equally."

Further topics of discussion included the effects of gender integration on tradition and military integrity.

Friday's meeting was the third and final round table discussion of Military Weekend. Hazing and the future of national Reserve Officer Training Corps units were the subjects of the first two.

Santos said these meetings are essentially "think-tanks."

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## Crane supervisor worked on Bonfire for 28 years

### 'Preacher' Thornton passed away last Monday

By ERICA ROY  
THE BATTALION

Although some students may not have heard of Thomas E. "Preacher" Thornton, Aggies have seen his influence for the past 28 years when Bonfire burns.

Thornton has been the crane supervisor from H.B. Zachry Engineering Company of San Antonio since 1969. He died of a stroke Monday, Feb. 24.

Funeral services for Thornton were held Saturday in San Antonio.

Sgt. Maj. George Thomas, Texas A&M Corps of Cadets housing coordinator and a Bonfire adviser for 10 years, said Thorn-

ton's experience made him one of the most knowledgeable people on Bonfire.

"He (Thornton) probably knew about the makings of Bonfire more than anyone," Thomas said.

R. E. Hopkins, Bonfire 1996 head stack and a senior agricultural development major, said Thornton was part of the tradition of Bonfire.

"To me, that was part of Aggie Bonfire, [with] Preacher Thornton being out there," he said. "Him not being there, we're going to be missing something. We'll all remember him. We'll all be thinking of him."

Thornton was a representative of the

H.B. Zachry Company that donated some of the cranes to Bonfire.

He was also the supervisor of the crew that operated the cranes at Bonfire and was responsible for overseeing the equipment.

Troy Smith, a Bonfire 1996 junior redpot and an engineering technology major, said Thornton helped the redpots by providing them with equipment they needed at stack.

"He'd always ask what he needed to do," Smith said. "Whatever we wanted done, he'd get it done for us."

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## MEDALS representatives make appearance on television show

By MARISSA ALANIS  
THE BATTALION

A Washington, D.C., television show will put a Texas A&M program in the spotlight at the end of this month.

Twelve representatives of the Minorities Enrichment and Development through Academic and Leadership Skills (MEDALS) program traveled to the nation's capital Feb. 18-20 for the taping of *Excellence by Choice*, a half-hour educational program which airs on the Public Broadcasting System and its Washington, D.C., affiliate stations weekdays at 7:30 p.m.

*Excellence by Choice* targets the high school audience in minority communities and discusses social programs, prominent community leaders and college preparation. The show's format is similar to a talk-show, except there is no audience present during taping and it is

run by high school students. Two hosts conduct the interviews.

Lorinda Beekmann, MEDALS adviser and special projects coordinator in the Department of Multicultural Services, said working on the show gave the members experience outside of A&M.

"We did it mainly for the professional development of the students who put on the [MEDALS] program," Beekmann said. "They put on this great conference, hopefully to motivate other students to go to college, but this gives the students here some professional experience."

MEDALS has coordinated an annual statewide conference since 1990 to help guide high school students in their decision to attend college.

Beekmann said highlighting a program, such as A&M's, on television will benefit the University.

"I think a lot of the times we (A&M) are known for athletics, because that's a na-

tionally televised event," Beekmann said. Omar Bell, director of public relations for the 1997 MEDALS conference and a junior industrial engineering major, said he saw *Excellence by Choice* last summer when he interned in Washington, D.C.

Bell said he was interested in the show so he sent information about MEDALS to the show's producer. Representatives from the program were later invited to appear on the show.

Veronica Bennett, executive director of the 1997 MEDALS conference and a senior interdisciplinary studies major, said the interview was conversational and their responses catered to the hosts' questions.

"I feel, because of their attitude and tone on the set, they made us feel relaxed and comfortable," Bennett said.

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Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

### Dive On In

Sarah Vestal, a junior psychology major at the University of Texas, competes in the Big 12 Swimming and Diving Tournament at the Student Recreation Center this weekend. See related stories in Sports, Page 7.

## Jamboree party aims to bond organizations

### MSC Council and SGA will sponsor tonight's event.

By JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER  
THE BATTALION

The good times will roll tonight as the MSC Council, the Student Government Association and other student organizations have their last semester's jamboree at Bullwinkle's.

Last October, the Student Government Association and MSC Council began what Brad Russell, the association's external communications director and a senior journalism major, hopes will be the first student organizations.

"The first party did not include other organizations," Russell said. "It was meant to rid any feelings of competition between the two groups (MSC Council and Student Government Association)."

The purpose of this semester's party is to join organizations at Texas A&M so they can socialize, have fun and talk about co-sponsoring programs, he said.

"The party is a get-together for

all organizations," Russell said, "and I know everyone will have a good time."

All student organizations are invited to attend the party, which starts at 9 p.m., in Rocky's game room. Karaoke singing will be one of the highlights of tonight's party.

Trey Smith, manager of Bullwinkle's, said he was happy to host the second get-together.

"I love having parties that have anything to do with A&M," Smith said. "People love the karaoke."

Plans for the party at Bullwinkle's brings up memories of last semester's party for some students, especially Nellson Burns, MSC president and a senior international studies major.

"I remember the karaoke singing," Burns said. "Carl Baggett (student body president) and Chris Williams (former MSC president) sang 'I Got You Babe' to the audience. It was so funny."

For the previous party, Student Government Association and MSC Council rented the restaurant, but this semester Bullwinkle's will be charging \$1 at the door.

Smith said he is glad to see the organizations mix at his restaurant.

## McVeigh's lawyer says he knows where paper got memo

DENVER (AP) — Timothy McVeigh's lawyer said on Sunday he thinks he knows how The Dallas Morning News got what it said was a defense document in which McVeigh admits he was responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing.

The newspaper cited a memo that said McVeigh admits driving the explosives-laden truck that demolished the Oklahoma City federal building in April 1995, and choosing a daytime attack to boost the "body count."

"I don't know everything that The Dallas Morning News knows, but this is not a legitimate defense memorandum, and I don't know exactly how they obtained it," lawyer Stephen

Jones told ABC's *This Week*.

"But I have a pretty good idea this morning and we will be going to the court (Monday) to inform the judge of what we know."

McVeigh's trial, scheduled to begin March 31, was moved from Oklahoma City to Denver because of pretrial publicity.

Jones said he cannot say whether the news report is true because of U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch's gag order and his own code of professional responsibility. He also said the newspaper refused to give him a copy of the memorandum.

"So the only way that I can tell you an answer

to that question is to say, 'One, Mr. McVeigh has pled not guilty, and two, the defense will not present a false defense,'" Jones said.

Jones had threatened to seek to have the trial moved to Alaska or Hawaii. He said Sunday that he has not asked for a change of venue, but conceded the trial may have to be delayed.

Jones previously said his team talked with McVeigh about the report, and McVeigh responded, "There's a practical joker every week."

Legal experts and journalists continue to wrangle over the propriety of publishing the story.

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## 'A year's worth of tornadoes' kill 24

### The storms struck Arkansas on Saturday.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Nicholas Word was standing on his front porch when the tornado struck, smashing his tiny wood-frame house off its foundation and hurling him and the wreckage into his neighbor's yard.

"When I woke up, there was just rubble — rubble and fog," Word said Sunday amid the devastation of Saturday's killer storms. "All I can tell you is, it's the worst sound that you'd ever want to hear in your life. But I guess I cheated death."

The storms killed at least 24 peo-

ple in Arkansas, ripping through Little Rock, Arkadelphia and other smaller towns.

It seemed like "a year's worth of tornadoes," Gov. Mike Huckabee said Sunday.

There was a possibility the death toll could climb as rescue workers worked in Sunday's driving rain to pull away the wreckage, authorities said.

More than 200 people were injured and hundreds of homes, businesses and other structures were destroyed or damaged along a 260-mile path from Hempstead County in the southwest to Greene County in the state's northeastern corner. At least 10,000 electricity customers had no power.

The same huge system of thunderstorms also were blamed for as many as 14 deaths in Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. Flooding forced scores of people from their homes in West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio.

Huckabee said he would seek a federal disaster declaration covering at least 10 Arkansas counties. "The term I'm using to describe it is 'apocalyptic proportions,'" the governor said after flying over the damage in Little Rock and Arkadelphia. "There is no way to describe the level of damage we have."

President Clinton will head to his native state on Tuesday to inspect the storm damage.

### THE BATTALION INSIDETODAY

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