

Spring break inspires travel plans

By JOE JEANETTE SCHLUETER
 THE BATTALION

Traveling is a popular idea for spring break, whether it is to a beautiful island, a snow-capped mountain or even the couch. Students at Texas A&M have many choices in deciding what to do over the break, and each seems to be a magnet to some. Stephanie Byzenski, manager for Destination Travel in Austin, said South Padre Island is a popular destination. South Padre Island gained fame for its white sandy beaches. "A lot of students love to escape to the island, and usually come back sunburned with a girlfriend."

Spring breakers have crowded Aggieland Travel, Inc. in College Station.

Marje Janacek, Aggieland Travel manager, said students have bought travel packages to Cozumel and Cancun. Colorado is popular with students too, she said. "There are always some last minute planners," Janacek said. "Students should plan their spring break trips as early as possible, favorably in the fall."

Janacek said those who plan early find the best deals.

Eric Salinas, a freshman general studies major, is traveling with a group of friends to South Padre Island for the break.

"We are going to live it up and enjoy all the craziness," Salinas said.

Salinas said his group has been planning the trip for about a month. They rented a condominium for the occasion.

Other students are attracted to higher altitudes.

The A&M Ski Club is offering a ski trip to Breckenridge, Colo.

Jackie Hinson, a member of the ski club and a junior education major, said there are 40 people going on the trip. The trip will cost \$490 per person, including transportation by bus and condominium lodging, she said.

Courtney Caswell, a senior international studies major, said she will be skiing in Crested Butte over the break. Her purpose for going, she said, is to keep in touch with graduates in resort towns.

"I am going to sit in the snow," Caswell said.

"I also want to find some free ski lessons from a cute ski instructor."

Airlines such as Continental Express and American Eagle have prepared for the busy travel week, and are flying students out of Easterwood Airport with

connecting flights to Houston and Dallas. Chris Newman, customer service agent for Continental Express, said this weekend's flights are full because of spring break.

"To make it [go] as smoothly as possible," Newman said, "flyers need to remember to arrive early, bring identification and check luggage in early."

Newman said security procedures will remain a priority.

While some students are hitting the slopes and the beach, others plan to stay home.

Rea McQueen, a junior journalism major, said she plans to relax for the break.

"I plan to catch up on sleep, catch some rays and find a job by the end of the week," McQueen said.



A&M scientists study venom for cancer cure

By BENJAMIN CHENG
 THE BATTALION

The venom of the diamondback rattlesnake has been secured by Texas A&M scientist Dr. Edgar Meyer as an aid in finding a cure for cancer.

The biochemistry and biophysics professor said the project began as a long shot, and many of his early grant proposals were rejected.

"No one was over-impressed," Meyer said.

He found an enzyme in rattlesnake venom, called collagenase, that tenderizes the rattlesnake's victim to make it more digestible. An enzyme in humans is used by tumor cells to tenderize the capillary walls and help in the spread of cancer cells.

Meyer said the enzymes must be similar in structure because of their similar functions.

Istvan Botos, a biochemistry graduate student who worked on the project for two years, said they found the collagenase enzyme structure in rattlesnakes is, in fact, similar to the one in humans.

"It's very unusual," Botos said.

Meyer said his findings coincided with the publication of articles that found a collagenase enzyme in humans. Pharmaceutical firms are working to find an inhibitor to prevent the enzyme from aiding in the spread of cancer cells.

"It's like placing a stick in the jaw of an alligator," Meyer said. "I think

in a few years there will be a cure [for cancer]."

Dr. Ethel Tsutsui, a cancer specialist, said removing tumor cells is difficult because they spread.

"They can't always tell where it is, so they have to guess," Tsutsui said.

Meyer hopes his research can be used to find a drug to be used as an alternative to current cancer treatments.

"A lot of chemotherapy today is brutal," he said.

"People lose their hair and other horrible things happen."

Tsutsui said inhibitors are not always 100 percent effective in preventing the spread of cancer.

"We still don't really know what causes it (cancer)," Tsutsui said.



Derek Demere, THE BATTALION

Heavy Metal Adam Chavarria, a junior engineering technology major, uses a metal lathe in an engineering technology class in Thompson Hall Thursday afternoon.

► Brewer & Shipley

'Hippie' folk duo visits B-CS

By MICHAEL SCHAUB
 THE BATTALION

Michael Brewer, half of the folk duo Brewer & Shipley, knows how it feels to be considered a relic.

"This young girl came up to me one time," Brewer said, "and told me, 'You guys are the last of the hippies. After you, there won't be any more.'"

The singer/songwriter took the comment as a backhanded compliment.

"It made us feel like a couple of California condors," he said. "We're not the last of the hippies. We never were hippies. We're a couple of musicians."

Brewer & Shipley will play at Dixie Theatre in downtown Bryan tonight at 9 p.m.

The duo got its start in the late '60s when Brewer met Tom Shipley, a fellow staff songwriter at A&M Records.

"We've never known what to call our music," Brewer said. "We're an acoustic duo, kind of the pioneers of 'unplugged' music."

Although the duo has released 12 albums, it remains best known for the 1970 top 10 single "One Toke Over the Line."

"We'll go to our graves with that song," Brewer said. "It's nice to have a classic rock hit. It's still being played on classic rock stations."

The folk anthem gained notoriety among conservatives of the era after it was discovered that "toke" referred to smoking marijuana.

"That was just silly," Brewer said.

"The government was threatening the FCC, who threatened the radio stations, for playing those bad, drug-oriented lyrics. They were coming down on Peter, Paul & Mary for 'Puff the Magic Dragon.'"



Folk duo Brewer & Shipley will play at Dixie Theatre in downtown Bryan tonight at 9 p.m.

The song was written as a joke, Brewer said.

The popular refrain of the single — "One toke over the line, sweet Jesus / One toke over the line" — led some to believe the song had a religious message.

"Some people still think that, and we just cop to it," Brewer said. "They'll say, 'Hey, you guys recorded that gospel song.' We tell them, 'Yeah, that's us.'"

The release of the single earned Brewer & Shipley an unlikely enemy and an unlikely fan.

"The vice president (Spiro Agnew) personally named us 'subversives to American youth,'" Brewer said. "That was a great day when we made the Nixon hate list."

"The irony is, at the exact same time, Lawrence Welk performed it as a gospel song on his show."

The duo still plays "One Toke over the Line" at its shows, as well as older and more recent songs.

"We can't not play 'One Toke over the Line,'" Brewer said, "but we can't do all the old songs. We don't want to be referred to as an oldies group. We're still writing and recording."

The band split up in 1979, but reformed eight years later for a special radio station event in Kansas City, Mo.

Brewer and Shipley's latest album, tentatively titled *Straight from the Heart*, is slated for a summer release.

"It sounds like classic Brewer & Shipley, but it's actually pretty high-tech and cutting-edge," Brewer said. "We recorded using computers, overdubbed in pedal steel, fiddle, mandolin."

The new generations of fans at Brewer & Shipley's shows makes the duo lose track of time, he said.

"We get second- and third-generation people who tell us they grew up with our music," Brewer said. "Time flies when you don't know what you're doing."

Opinions mixed on no-fault divorce laws

Texas lawmakers are seeking restrictions on requirements for no-fault divorces.

DALLAS (AP) — When the 35-year-old nurse decided a broken marriage and jaw was enough, she left her husband in the middle of the night, leaving young children and two garbage bags of clothes in tow.

She sought a no-fault divorce, citing irreconcilable differences, when he didn't want to call off.

The Palestine woman sees proposed legislation to make it harder for a husband or wife to walk away from a marriage against the other's wishes as a "red flag to an oppressive control freak if they don't want to let their spouse go." Current law allows a divorce with only one party's consent after a 90-day waiting period. Neither party has to be found at fault for the breakup.

Some Texas lawmakers are seeking to make the requirements for dissolving a marriage more restrictive.

"We believe that marriage is important enough to the state of Texas that if people are going to get divorced and destroy families, they

ought to at least stand up and say why," said Rep. Arlene Wohlgemuth, R-Burleson, one of five authors of the proposal awaiting a committee hearing.

"We have made it easier to break the contract of marriage than to break the lease on a rental car."

Between 1970 and 1995, divorces in Texas peaked at 6.9 per 1,000 population, state figures show. About 97,000 divorces were granted in 1995, the last year for which complete data was available. That's a rate of 5.2 per 1,000.

The proposed legislation would require both parties' consent for divorce and, if they are not the parents of children younger than 18, a one-year waiting period.

If the couple have children or only one party consents, a divorce could be granted only if one spouse proves the other was at fault — such as being absent, unfaithful, abusive or a convicted felon.

"We are seeing all these problems with juvenile crime, and a large percentage of those cases are from divorced homes where there is no father," Ms. Wohlgemuth said. "Fathers are important people. Mothers are important people. Let's keep fathers and mothers together."

Advocates for victims of domestic violence are among those who think reviving a fault require-

ment after 27 years is a bad idea.

Karen Perkins, executive director of the Women's Center of Tarrant County, contends that because many violent men are stalkers, women and children may be in greater danger if it takes longer to get a divorce.

"We don't need to throw up barriers in the path of mothers getting away from a violent marriage," Ms. Perkins said.

University of Texas law professor Sarah Buel, who teaches a course on domestic violence and the law, said she sympathizes with the goal of lawmakers.

"I, too, want families to stay together, but not if the price is continuing to bury the number of victims we are around this state and around the country," she said.

Many lawyers who specialize in divorce are critical of the bill.

"I think it's a giant step backwards," said Fort Worth attorney Jim Loveless.

Noted Dallas family lawyer Louise Raggio, who helped assemble the Texas Family Code, said she fears that a return to finding someone at fault is "just a vehicle for fraud and lying."

But she also advocates a one-year waiting period in some cases and favors sending parents to seminars about how breakups affect children.

Fiscal study puts A&M's impact on local economy at \$633.2 million

The local economy has been impacted \$633.2 million by Texas A&M University and other members of the system, a recent fiscal study found. The finding represents the system's largest economic impact to date.

The figure was the result of an in-house economic study requested by A&M President Ray Bowen. The 1996 economic study shows an increase of \$43 million over 1995, which can be contributed to increases in several different areas.

The study found the 19,855 employees of the Texas A&M System living in Bryan-College Station and the surrounding area are earning combined salaries of \$420 million.

This is an increase of 650 employees and 35 million dollars respectively.

A&M's 41,892 students contributed an additional \$5 million to the local economy, and now have a total impact of \$173 million. Major student expenditures include food and housing, clothing, school supplies and recreation.

Visitors to the Bryan College Station area make up \$29.3 million of the total, an increase of \$2.8 million.

Bowen said in a press release the opening of the George Bush Presidential Library later this year will impact the number of visitors to the campus and surrounding community.

"We are proud that many of our activities and programs contribute significantly to the economy of Bryan-College Station and the surrounding region," Bowen said, "and we hope to make even greater contributions this year and in the ones to follow."