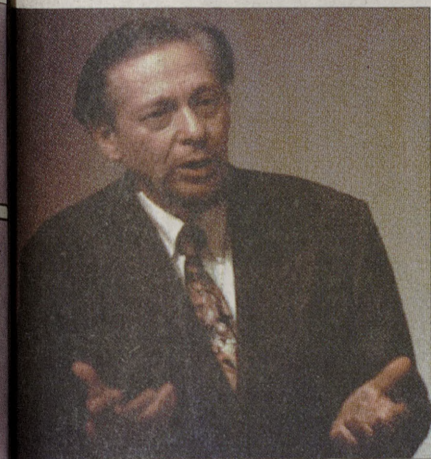


## NASA director supports theory of life on Mars



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Dr. Gerald Soffen, program director for NASA, discusses evidence of life on Mars at lecture in Rudder Theatre Tuesday night.

By JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER  
THE BATTALION

New information about life on Mars was released last night at a lecture at Rudder Theatre given by Dr. Gerald Soffen, program director for NASA.

Soffen discussed evidence found supporting his theory of Mars containing life forms.

"I am so excited about this new information," Soffen said. "I changed my profession because of it."

Soffen has decided to devote his time to a new field called astrobiology for NASA. Previously, his focus was space missions.

"This rock suddenly hit and my whole world has changed," he said.

Soffen discussed the controversial meteorite from Mars that hit Antarctica. Detailed pictures of rod-shaped bacteria on the rock were magnified and shown to the audience.

He said new findings on temperature prove the substance found on and in the meteorite could be bacteria. Scientists at the Johnson Space Center determined yesterday that the rock was weathered in a temperature from zero to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Magnetic fields were also discovered in the rock, which is still being researched.

Scientists have proven the rock is from Mars, Soffen said, because it contained trapped gasses in its core that duplicate the exact ratio of ones found in the atmosphere of Mars from the Viking expedition.

Soffen took the audience on a trip back in time to the \$1 billion Viking expedition in 1976. He worked on the mission and studied the results.

"At that time, no life seemed to be present," he said. "The landscape was red with a pink sky."

Soffen said tests were run to determine

if metabolism, growth and photosynthesis were found, but all were inconclusive.

Some images show ice, which Soffen said was significant because life forms are basically made of water, not just carbon.

Soffen said approximately 42,000 meteorites have landed on Earth. Of them, only 12 are known to be from Mars. They are being studied for existing dead bacteria at the space center in Houston.

"Most come from the asteroid belt," Soffen said.

"A couple come from the moon, but these came from Mars."

Soffen said the meteorite they found bacteria on is about 4 billion years old.

The Pathfinder mission, a recently launched probe headed for Mars to investigate these new findings, was also discussed. It is expected to land on Mars on July 4, 1997.

A new feature on this probe is air bags

for landing. The bags will inflate and cause the probe to bounce a mile high, Soffen said, because of the planet's low force of gravity.

Scientists at NASA have decided to plan other missions to Mars in two years with a goal of obtaining rock samples. A human mission is not possible, Soffen said, because the amount of fuel to get home is impossible to carry.

He said researchers are working with Texas A&M engineering students to study drilling through the permafrost ground on Mars.

Dan Brooks, a wildlife and fisheries sciences graduate student, said this new information deals with his field of study.

"Biology is the study of life," Brooks said, "and, being a biologist, I am interested in the possibility of life on other planets."

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## Regents to consider application fee hike

By KATHLEEN STRICKLAND  
THE BATTALION

Beginning next year, students who wish to apply to Texas A&M may

PART TWO IN A SERIES OF FOUR.

face an increased application fee.

The proposal to increase the fee from \$35 to \$50 will go before the Board of Regents for approval next week.

Danny Parker, assistant provost for Academic Affairs, attributes the increase to the Hopwood case.

"The number of automatic acceptances has been reduced," he said. "During the review process of the ap-

plications submitted to the University, we are going to have to go into many more individual reviews."

As the number of individual reviews increases, more staff members will be hired to assist in the review process, he said.

Gary Engelgau, executive director of admissions and records, said more factors will be considered to ensure an adequate review.

"The costs of the admission process will increase as we consider factors beyond straight academics," Engelgau said. "We will need to give consideration to students' high school course work, their class rank and ACT and SAT scores."

The money obtained from the fee goes directly to support admissions activities and is limited to use in that department. Parker said funds provided by the state do not adequately cover the costs

of the office.

"The fee does produce a substantial amount of money, but quite a bit goes into the actual salaries of people involved in the application process," Parker said. "This is the main reason for the increase."

Last year, the admissions office received about 20,000 undergraduate applications.

"We received approximately 16,000 freshman applications. Out of those, about 13,000 to 14,000 showed credentials that would make them eligible for acceptance," Engelgau said. "We accepted 10,000 to 11,000 students, and the freshman class had a little over 6,300 students."

Laurent Therivel, vice president for finance in Student Government and a senior management and marketing major, said the fee was originally used as a "weed-out fee."

"The application fee started off strictly as a deterrent for high school students who wanted to apply to 60 different universities just to see which ones they would get accepted to," Therivel said.

"It has evolved into a source of income for the people who review the applications."

Students may still apply to receive a waiver from the fee, if they can demonstrate financial need and have a specific request from their high school or financial aid office.

This will be the second time the fee has been raised to increase revenue.

If approved, the new rate will go into effect for applications submitted for the spring of 1998.

**"The costs of the admission process will increase as we consider factors beyond straight academics."**

Gary Engelgau  
Executive director of admissions and records



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

**Pin Drop** | L.J. Jone, a full-time employee at the bowling alley in the MSC basement, changes a belt on the pin setter Tuesday afternoon.

## Magazine article applauds Texas A&M

By MELISSA NUNNERY AND  
LAURA OLIVEIRA  
THE BATTALION

Texas Monthly's April cover story named Texas A&M the best public university in the state because A&M "put education ahead of football, admitted more women than men and learned the difference between good traditions and bad ones."

The article noted changes at

A&M over the years that have positively affected the University's reputation.

A&M President Ray Bowen said the reporter probably found A&M interesting. He said the University has gained attention for faculty members' accomplishments and success with programs such as the "Capturing the Spirit" endowment campaign.

"[They were] interested in the idea that A&M has turned itself into

a great university," Bowen said.

Lane Stephenson, deputy director of University Relations, escorted the Texas Monthly reporter, Paul Burka, around campus. He said Burka became interested in A&M when the University was ranked one of the top 50 schools in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.

"I tip my hat to Mr. Burka," Stephenson said. "He did a magnificent job researching and talked to a number of people."

Bowen also said the reporter did a good job observing and writing about A&M.

"My impression is that he (Burka) was very impressed by the students he met," Bowen said.

A&M has been featured in three magazines in the last year, and Stephenson said the publicity proves that the University is finally receiving the recognition it deserves.

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## Help line offers counseling to students 24 hours a day

Volunteers handle variety of situations over the phone

By KEVIN CUMMINGS  
THE BATTALION

The student counseling help line offers an open ear and a helping hand to students in need.

Trained volunteer counselors man phones 24 hours a day to help troubled students through the problems college life can sometimes present. Five psychologists on a rotating schedule are always available to help with more serious calls, such as suicide.

The 43 student volunteers undergo 40 to 45 hours of intensive training to learn how to deal with the types of problems they will encounter.

Susan Vavra, help line coordinator, said the counselors are trained extensively, because they must be prepared for a variety of issues.

"We train our student helpers on anything a college student may need help with," she said.

Calls to the help line include questions about romantic relationships, academic problems, drug abuse and sexuality.

"We never know what kind of call we are going to get," Vavra said. "It could be anything from homesick freshmen to students contemplating suicide."

Volunteers receive, on average, two to five calls a night. The most common type of problem the help line deals with is romantic relationships, with loneliness and depression being the second-most frequent topic.

Vavra said the help line provides an important service to the students of A&M, and can be helpful to young students who are adjusting to college life.

"A university of this size needs a help line," she said, "particularly for incoming freshmen who may be overwhelmed by their first time away from home."

A volunteer, who declined to be identified, said all it takes to work on the help line is a sympathetic ear.

"We (volunteers) are here to listen," she said. "A lot of times it helps for a student to talk out their problems, and if they do need more help we can refer them to a psychologist."

She said working as a volunteer is a rewarding experience.

"It just feels good to know that we might be really helping someone," she said. "There are students who feel that they have nobody else to talk to, and we can be there for them."

Another volunteer, who also chose to remain anonymous, is working the help line for the second year. She said volunteering allows students to spend time helping others.

"It's so easy, especially in college, to get caught up in our own lives," she said. "I think it's good to take a step back and help others in any way we can."

## White House seeks new CIA chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reeling from Anthony Lake's sudden withdrawal, the White House considered a quick move Tuesday to name acting CIA Director George Tenet as a substitute nominee to head the nation's spy agency.

Senior White House officials, Republican senators and even Lake himself advanced Tenet's name as a non-controversial way to bring a new chief to a CIA that has been without a confirmed director since early December. Other names were on President Clinton's short list, but Tenet was the only candidate undergoing a final White House review. Barring a snag, Tenet could be nominated as early as Wednesday.

"I have a lot of respect for him. We believe he's capable," said Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee and the man who orchestrated much of the criticism of Lake that led to his withdrawing his name Monday night. Shelby indicated the committee could move quickly on a Tenet nomination — in sharp contrast to the drawn-out consideration of Lake's nomination.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry said Clinton wanted to move quickly but was not ready Tuesday to fill the vacancy left by the departure in last year's post-election shuffle of John Deutch. Senior White House officials who spoke anonymously

said Clinton's staff was pushing Tenet's candidacy in private meetings with the president.

In an unsolicited appraisal, McCurry told reporters that the front-running Tenet "does a spectacular job and has a great reputation inside the agency. I think he's very well-liked on the Hill."

Without mentioning Tenet by name, Clinton suggested his list was down to one name.

"I would ask you to respect the fact that we have to do some review of our own before we send a name up there," Clinton told reporters. "It's really not fair to put someone out on the line on this until we know that the president is in fact determined to nominate him or her."

Other Republicans echoed Shelby's favorable comments toward Tenet. And after the ordeal experienced by Lake, White House officials were listening carefully.

"Barring something I don't know about, he looks like he'd be a good choice," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss.

Tenet, unlike Lake, has been previously confirmed by the Senate. In 1995 the Senate confirmed him as deputy CIA director, the agency's No. 2 post, after Tenet got a unanimous endorsement from the Intelligence Committee.

If Clinton chose Tenet, it would not be the first time he had selected

a well-liked deputy after the failure of a controversial national security nomination. In 1994 after Adm. Bobby Inman dropped out of the running for defense secretary, Clinton chose Deputy Defense Secretary William Perry and the Senate quickly confirmed him.

Tenet started out in Washington on the staff of the late Sen. John Heinz, R-Pa., and moved from there to the staff of the Intelligence Committee where he served as staff director for four years. During Clinton's first term, Tenet served on Lake's National Security Council staff as principal intelligence adviser.

### THE BATTALION INSIDETODAY

**SHORT AGAIN:** The Aggie Baseball Team lost to Lamar, 5-4, in 10 innings last night.

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