

Spanning Generations



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

Paige Schroeder, a sixth-grader at Willow Branch Intermediate School, cleans away excess glue used in constructing the 25-foot-long bridge before the dedication ceremony. Texas A&M's Department of Geology and Geophysics worked with the students to complete the project.

Sixth graders build 6,000-straw bridge

BY JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER
THE BATTALION

To bridge the gap between Texas A&M and the surrounding community, 16 local sixth-graders have literally built a 25-foot, 4-inch bridge — out of drinking straws.

The Gluin Stros Causeway, made of approximately 6,000 straws, was dedicated last night during a ceremony at Willow Branch Intermediate School in College Station.

In September, A&M's Department of Geology and Geophysics began working with Willow Branch students to complete the project.

At that time, Willow Branch's Structure Club formed a mock company called We Build Big Structures Inc.

Guided by Willow Branch's enrichment coordinator, Lisa Burns, and A&M's geology department, the students built a truss bridge out of drinking straws held

together with glue and poster board.

Burns, the project manager for WBBS Inc. said the students worked hard on the project.

"We're all excited that the students had the opportunity to combine their special interests with a mentor and turn it into a 25-foot-long truss bridge," Burns said.

Burns works with students in the enrichment program to help them discover their special interests and goals.

"Part of enrichment is pairing students with mentors to expand on their special interests," she said.

Lloyd Morris, chief of field operations for the Department of Geology and Geophysics and project superintendent, guided the students through the construction and certified the final design.

"We have extrapolated this into a symbolic bridging of the gap between A&M and community schools," Morris said.

Morris stressed the importance of contribut-

ing to the next generation.

"I think it's important that students who graduate and get into careers find a way to get to the schools and pass (knowledge) on to the students — this gets them excited and [they want to] do the same thing," he said.

The bridge stands 16 feet above the school's atrium at the intersection of the school's four main hallways.

The students of WBBS Inc. have worked about 460 hours since October, with each student working for about 30 hours.

One of the student engineers on the project was Stephanie McCasland. She said teamwork was the key to success in the project.

"We all had to jig things together," McCasland said. "We all had separate pieces of the bridge to build, and then we had to put them together."

Phil Rabinowitz, head of the Department of Geology and Geophysics, attended Tuesday's ceremony.

"It is important to our department to help educate Texans of all ages about geology and geophysics," he said. "We want to show everyone that we are committed to 'bridging the gap' between the community and the University."

"We have extrapolated this into a symbolic bridging of the gap between A&M and community schools."

Lloyd Morris
Project superintendent

City evaluates Northgate hotel proposal

BY BENJAMIN CHENG
THE BATTALION

For two years, the City of College Station has been in the process of reviewing proposals for a full-service hotel and convention center, with the Northgate area as a possible location.

On April 4, the College Station City Council rejected six proposals and called for new proposals to be submitted by May 16. A city council resolution said the reasons for starting the process again were to gather more information and to allow more time to evaluate proposals.

Tom Brymer, College Station assistant manager, said John Q. Hammons Hotels initiated the proposal process two years ago when they identified College Station as a market for a new hotel.

Hammons Hotels' proposal, which was rejected by the city council, called for construction of a hotel in the Northgate mud lot.

Skip Noe, College Station city manager, said the new hotel, which is part of the Northgate Revitalization Plan, would be a valuable asset to the city.

"It would help anchor down the east end of Northgate," he said.

Noe said Texas A&M's convention facilities do not fully meet the needs of the community. He said the city is studying the possibility of creating additional parking spaces in Northgate to alleviate the possibility of a parking problem stemming from the construction of a new hotel.

Emilia Wright, manager of scheduling and services at the University Center Complex, said the new hotel will not affect the Memorial Student Center hotel because the complex's facilities are not advertised and the prices are moderate.

"One of the things over there (at

Northgate), is that there's no room for expansion," Wright said.

Steven Hodge, director of special events facilities for A&M, said there is enough demand to provide the new hotel, the MSC, the new Reed Arena and the Bush Conference Center with business. Hodge said Reed Arena will host large events such as concerts and ice shows and the Bush Conference Center will host primarily academic functions.

Reed Arena will open in Spring 1998 and the Bush Conference Center will open this fall.

Peruvian soldiers storm mansion, rescue hostages

LIMA, Peru (AP) — In a bloody, lightning assault, Peruvian troops stormed the Japanese ambassador's mansion Tuesday, rescued 71 hostages and ended a four-month standoff with leftist guerrillas.

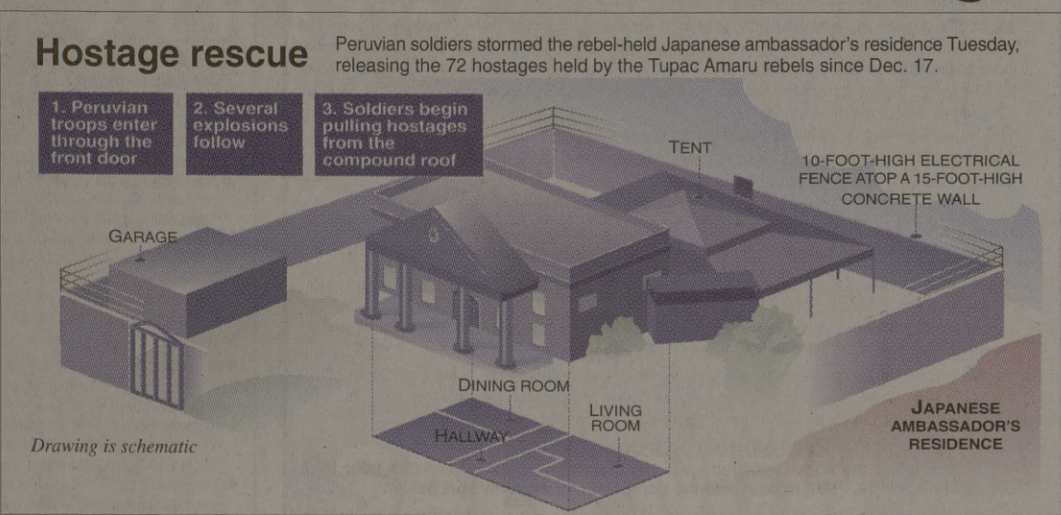
One captive, Supreme Court Justice Carlos Busti, and two soldiers were killed, along with 14 rebels, including leader Nestor Cerpa, President Alberto Fujimori said.

He said 25 other captives were injured in the gunfire and explosions that rocked the compound, only two seriously — Peru's foreign minister, Francisco Tudela, and another Supreme Court justice, both suffering gunshot wounds.

"I didn't waver for a single minute in giving the order for this rescue operation," said the president, who throughout the crisis adamantly rejected the guerrillas' demand that jailed comrades be freed in exchange for the captive diplomats and businessmen.

The operation ended an international ordeal that had transfixed two nations and focused global attention on a little-known leftist rebel group, Tupac Amaru, which has waged guerrilla war here since 1984.

In Tokyo, Japan's prime minister called it a "splendid rescue," but also said it was "regrettable" that Peru had not forewarned his govern-



ment of the surprise, broad-daylight attack. Fujimori told reporters late Tuesday that intelligence information convinced him it was an ideal time to end the impasse by force. He gave no details.

The 140-man military-police assault team struck at about 3:30 p.m. (4:30 p.m. EDT),

pouring through the compound's front gate, then blasting open the mansion's front door. Others attacked from the rear, and a third unit climbed to the rooftop and shepherded hostages down.

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A&M team chosen to fly on NASA aircraft

► Nuclear engineering students took part in a project involving reduced gravity.

BY KATHLEEN STRICKLAND
THE BATTALION

A team of six senior nuclear engineering students from Texas A&M and a CNN news anchor were selected to fly on NASA's KC-135 reduced gravity aircraft.

The KC-135 aircraft climbs steeply into the atmosphere and then dives to create about 25 seconds of zero-gravity. This process is repeated 40 times during a three-hour flight.

The A&M group was one of 23 teams chosen to be a part of the 1997 NASA Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunities Program, a NASA-funded project directed by the Texas Space Grant Consortium. The team conducted experiments involving a two-phase flow separator designed for use in microgravity.

Burke Fort, director of the Texas Space Grant Consortium, said he hopes the program will become an annual event.

"This is the first time that we have done this program on a national scale," Fort said. "This was like a pilot program for future years."

The program was entirely student-generated. Students were responsible for the proposals, experiments and funds.

Dr. Frederick Best, associate professor of nuclear engineering and director of the Center for Space Power in the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, was chosen by the group to serve as its faculty adviser.

"This is a very exciting opportuni-

ty for the students," Best said. "They had to write the proposal to become involved and find the funding to build the experiment. They raised about \$10,000 for the design, fabrication and construction of the experiment as well as the cost of living and traveling to the Johnson Space Center in Houston."

Jimmy Fuller, one of the group members, said the feeling of being at zero gravity was indescribable and sometimes nauseating.

"It was like the world's biggest roller coaster," Fuller said. "Actually, saying it was like a roller coaster doesn't even come close."

He said he also was excited about the results the group achieved.

"Overall, we were pretty successful," Fuller said. "We want to try to change [things] up a little and submit a new proposal next year."

Although the flight experiences ended for the team last week, the program will continue with educational outreach to local grade schools and high schools.

"The principal goal of the program was to create outstanding educational experiences for students," Fort said. "They are also required to translate what they have learned into outreach materials that will encourage young children to become interested in science, engineering, and possibly the space program."

Group members included leader Shannon Bragg, Daniel Dorsey, Michael Ellis, Jimmy Fuller, Elizabeth King and DeLeah Lockridge. The journalist the group chose to accompany them was CNN anchor Miles O'Brien, host of "Science and Technology Week."

The team will appear on CNN's "Science and Technology Week" Saturday at 10 a.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. and will be on CNN's "Saturday Morning" this weekend at 6 and 9.

Rec Center's hours will accommodate students

BY JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER
THE BATTALION

Students will be allowed to use the Student Recreation Center over the break between the spring and summer semesters.

Beginning the day after graduation, May 9, students enrolled for Spring 1997 can use the Rec Center until May 30. Students preregistered for the summer can begin using it May 8th.

Mike Waldron, student development specialist for Recreational Sports, said there are a number of students who want to work out during the break.

"We're here, we're open, and the Rec Center is for the students," Waldron said.

He said there are advantages for students who want to work out over the break and the summer.

"The facilities are not overcrowded, and there is more equipment available, especially in the weight room," he said.

The Rec Center is a great place to socialize, Waldron added, and people meet others there all the time.

The Read Building and G. Rollie White will be closed over the break. They will reopen when classes resume in the summer.

Justin Paloza, a senior health and kinesiology major, said he plans to spend much of his time over the break at the Rec Center.

"I am glad to have something to do until summer school starts," Paloza said.

"There is a lot at the Rec Center that will entertain me. I can also work on my abs."

Kara Miller, a freshman microbi-

Rec Center
OPEN

Summer Hours

May 9th through June 1

Monday - Friday	6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

June 2 through August 14

Monday - Friday	6 a.m. - Midnight
Saturday	8 a.m. - Midnight
Sunday	10 a.m. - Midnight

July 4th

	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
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Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

ology major, said she was worried the Rec Center would not be open.

"I don't know what I would do if the Rec Center closed," Miller said. "This is the perfect time for me to get my figure back."

The Rec Center offers a snack bar and quiet area for students who want to study or relax after a hard workout.

Hours for the break between the spring and summer semesters are Monday - Friday 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Summer school begins June 2 and ends August 14, and the Rec Center will be open from 6 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to midnight on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to midnight on Sunday.

The Rec Center also will be open during Spring 1997 finals.

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