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Today

Tomorrow

See extended forecast, Page 2.

NEWS BRIEFS

Trayce team finishes fourth in competition

Texas A&M University placed fourth among 36 entrants in the 1997 Sunbelt cross-country race for solar-powered vehicles that wrapped up last week. The Mach V, which finished with a time of 29 hours, 47 minutes and 21 seconds in the biennial competition, stretched 1,250 miles from Indianapolis, Ind., to Colorado Springs, Colo. The Mach V, which was expected to finish seventh, maintained an average speed of 41.7 mph.

Team places third in submarine race

Texas A&M University ocean engineering students won third place in the two-person division of the fifth International Submarine Races held in Bethesda, Md. The Mach V, one of the two-person divisions, one steers while the other propels the submarine. Students design and build the submarines, which are propelled by hand in scuba gear. The craft must complete a 100-meter and 10-meter underwater course. There were 22 submarines entered in the competition.

CSPD opens new community center

The College Station Police Department will host the opening of its Windsor Point Community Police Center Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. The center will house offices for the department's Community Oriented Police Program (COPP), which is designed to help CSPD better interact with the community by placing more authority in the hands of the patrol officers who serve the area neighborhoods. The program's goal is to build trust and a sense of community between residents and local government. The opening ceremony will feature a ribbon-cutting ceremony by Mayor Lynn McIlwain and information on COPP and other programs will be available.

C to test interactive programming format

NEW YORK (AP) — Starting this fall, the NBC viewers will be able to use television remote controls to look up plot summaries of network shows, check sports statistics or order products advertised on the air. The network on Monday announced a partnership with California software developers Wink Communications that allow NBC to become the first major U.S. broadcaster to offer interactive programming to consumers. Participating viewers will be able to access information about actors and various shows, find out sports scores and view viewer polls.

TODAY IN BATTALION

LIFESTYLES

Birth: The anticipated first birthday is not what students may wish for.

See Page 3.

OPINION

Clinton's apology for hardships of slavery might mark improved race relations.

See Page 5.

ONLINE

http://bat-web.tamu.edu

Press to-date Hong Kong coverage on AP Wire.



GRAPHIC: Tim Moog

British era ends peacefully

HONG KONG (AP) — With a midnight change of flags, an anxious, excited Hong Kong ended its 156-year British colonial era and embarked Tuesday on an uncertain new age under the sovereignty of an exultant Communist China.

The few pro-democracy protests were sparse and peaceful, and the Chinese army moved in with punctilious discipline. Except for rain that drenched the farewell ceremony, the eight-hour rite of passage unfolded with a flair worthy of a territory famous for its wealth and sophistication.

The brief ceremony, seen worldwide on TV, administered the coup de grace to 19th-century colonialism and erased what China has always regarded as a fundamental humiliation — Britain's seizure of Hong Kong in 1841 from a Chinese emperor too weak to defend his country.

The broad smile of Chinese President Jiang

Zemin summed up China's triumph. For Britain, it was a melancholy reminder of its shrunken role on the world stage, although Prince Charles, along with Chris Patten, the last British governor, managed to turn their retreat into a dignified, restrained spectacle of British patriotism.

For Hong Kong's 6.3 million people, the biggest question was still unanswered: Can a free capitalist society survive in the embrace of a Communist power, even one that has promised to keep Hong Kong politically and economically free?

The initial signs seemed mildly encouraging. At dawn, the Chinese army poured in 4,000 troops in long convoys of trucks, jeeps, buses and armored personnel carriers.

Please see HANDOVER on Page 2.

A&M groups commemorate new Hong Kong

BY JOE JEANETTE SCHLUETER
THE BATTALION

Britain's turnover of Hong Kong to China is official, and Texas A&M University students from both Hong Kong and China say only time will tell how the change will affect the former British colony.

Friday night, the Texas A&M China Club commemorated the event with speeches, dancing and singing at the Memorial Student Center.

Rongwei Yeng, vice president of the China Club and a mathematics graduate student, said the transfer will help improve life in Hong Kong.

"This (the transfer) is a great event for me," Yeng said. "We're certain it will be more prosperous for the future of both people."

The Chinese Communist government has said it will not influence or change Hong Kong's society for at least 50 years. Yeng said he feels the government will keep its promise.

"China will not do anything to hurt Hong Kong," he said. "It is too much of an asset for us."

The Chinese government moved over 4,000 troops to the border of Hong Kong to keep or-

der during the week of the handover, a move that has alarmed some Hong Kong residents.

Hui-Chi Chung, a Hong Kong native and a resident of Bryan, attended the ceremony Friday and said the Chinese do not care for the people of Hong Kong.

"China sees Hong Kong as nothing but money," Chung said. "The people of Hong Kong will see that Chinese rule will ruin their lives and take away their freedom."

Jason Cheng, treasurer of the Hong Kong Club and a senior computer engineering major, is from the south side of Hong Kong Island and moved to the United States at age 16. His father is an engineer in Hong Kong, and his mother runs a flower shop there. Cheng said he worries the changeover will affect his family.

"It won't affect me too much while I'm in the United States," Cheng said, "but soon I will return to my family, who faces the problem now."

Cheng said Hong Kong residents are afraid of China because of past negative experiences with the nation.

Please see GROUPS on Page 2.

University works to improve campus housing conditions

BY JENARA KOCKS
THE BATTALION

The Department of Residence Life at Texas A&M University plans for \$26 million in renovations over the next 10 years to its 106 residence halls as a result of a study of the buildings completed last fall.

Dan Mizer, assistant director of facilities and operations in the Department of Residence Life, said the University and Residence Life hired Half Associates Inc. and Vanderweil Facility Advisors to appraise the buildings' overall condition and to give estimates for repair costs.

Mizer said Residence Life is using part of the \$1 million they budgeted for the last fiscal year for summer repairs to fix some of the problems the firm categorized as "priority one." These repairs include plumbing upgrades, modifications to handicap-accessible bathrooms, upgrading two fire-alarm systems and cleaning the heating and air-conditioning systems.

Monday - Residence Hall Blues
Tuesday - Sniping Up Campus Housing
Wednesday - Off-Campus Woes
Thursday - Future of Off-Campus Living

GRAPHIC: Tim Moog

Mizer said the Department of Residence Life's top priority is the balcony-style dorms. He said that in these five residence halls, Hughes, Fowler, Keathley, McInnis and Schuhmacher, there are enough deficiencies that more than renovations are needed. A complete restoration of all the buildings is necessary.

"We want to modernize these residence halls to make them more appealing to the students," Mizer said.

Mizer said the cost of modernizing these halls is not included in the \$26 million figure. That figure includes repairs only, not the changes the Department of Residence Life wants made to make the halls more appealing to students.

Mizer said the study was a good idea for two reasons. "We (Residence Life) thought the study was important to do because this type of study has never been done before, and so we could be good stewards of our facilities," Mizer said.

Mizer also said the study is a good long-range planning tool for on-campus housing.

Please see HOUSING on Page 2.



PHOTOGRAPH: Shannon Castle

Hot Job Members of the Temple Fire Department practice strategic firefighting skills while extinguishing a fire at Brayton Fire Field Monday.

Students, police aim to stop harassment

International residents living in Northgate area have experienced problems

BY MICHELLE NEWMAN
THE BATTALION

International students living in the Northgate area are working with the College Station Police Department to curb incidents of verbal harassment and improve safety in the area.

Lt. Irvin Todd of the CSPD said students have voiced concerns about poorly lighted streets and verbal harassment in front of bars, in parking lots and on the streets of the Northgate area.

Srini Neralla, a soil microbiology graduate student, is one of the students who has attended meetings between students and CSPD. Neralla said foul language and derogatory statements have been shouted at international students in the bar area of Northgate. Neralla said there also were cases of bottles and other items being thrown at students. Most incidents occurred on weekends, Neralla said.

Neralla said the incidents were not a result of racism.

"It is not a racial thing," Neralla said. "It is kids drinking and getting rowdy. This affects the whole community. We had to do something."

Katy Ganter, an employee at the Dixie Chicken on Northgate and a sophomore at Blinn College, said she is not aware of the problems international students say they are experiencing.

"We haven't noticed that things like that are going on," Ganter said, "but if any patron of our establishment gets too out of hand, they are taken care of."

Rabbi Peter Tarlow of the Texas A&M Hillel Foundation and chaplain for CSPD organized the meetings between the chief of police and the students. Students expressed concern over Northgate safety to Tarlow after religious services early in March.

"Because I am both chaplain of the police department and work closely with many international students, I felt I could get the students some attention on this issue," Tarlow said.

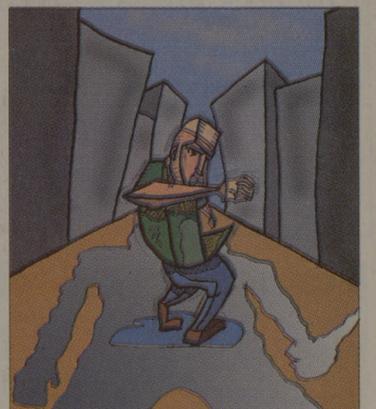
Three meetings have been held between international students and CSPD concerning the issues of verbal harassment and safety factors such as poor lighting and a lack of sidewalks.

Susan Droleskey, head of International Student Services, said the meetings have been positive and helpful.

"Students had concerns about their safety in their neighborhood," Droleskey said, "and they took the initiative to work with the police."

Droleskey said the meetings have focused on educating students on how the police department works. The students were told what information is needed to fill out a crime report.

Lt. Scott McCollum of the CSPD said



GRAPHIC: Brad Graeber

students were not reporting crimes. If a student did report a crime, he or she would not always have the information needed for a valid crime report.

The first meeting was held between two students, Tarlow and the chief of police. Another meeting was arranged to discuss the issues of safety in Northgate with a larger number of students attending.

Please see HARASSMENT on Page 2.