

NEWS BRIEFS

Former student will serve in Peace Corps

Stephen Williams, a 1997 graduate of Texas A&M, will serve in the Peace Corps as a crop production specialist in the Dominican Republic. Williams, who graduated with a degree in horticulture, will help agricultural extension agencies design plan projects. He leaves for training July 28.

A&M receives family medicine field award

The Texas A&M University Health Science Center College of Medicine awarded the Bronze Achievement Award for having a higher percentage of graduates enter the family medicine field than other medical schools in the state. The award is given based on a school's highest average of graduates entering the field from 1994 to 1995. The college's average was 17 percent.

Professor to study Tejano culture roots

Armando Alonzo, a Texas A&M associate professor of history, won a Foundation Fellowship for his research on the roots of Tejano culture. The 20 winners of the annual fellowship each receive one year of research funding. Alonzo will travel to towns in the Grande Valley and try to reconstruct life in colonial times by researching historical documents, such as birth, marriage, death, land, tax and criminal records. Afterwards, he will research official colonial records in Mexico City with Mexican historians.

Astros, city, county address stadium cost

HOUSTON (AP) — An agreement addressing cost overruns for a new \$50 million downtown Houston baseball stadium still on the drawing boards was announced Wednesday by Mayor Bob Lanier and Harris County Judge Robert Eckels. The deal involving the city, county and Houston Astros owner Drayton McLane was signed late Tuesday and appears to defuse another threat by McLane to entertain offers to sell the National League club, a move that almost certainly would have taken the team away from Houston. If no ballpark financing plan was in place by Tuesday, the Astros legally could have left the city although McLane had the deadline could have been extended if an agreement was close. A referendum last November provided \$180 million in public financing, more than two-thirds of what is needed for the stadium.

TODAY IN THE BATTALION

LIFESTYLES

Liquor in Aggieland: A look at the popularity of distilled spirits in College Station.

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OPINION

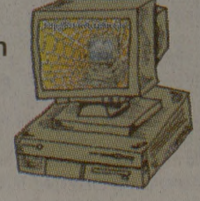
One: O.J. Simpson makes a comeback to media; has no place in American society.

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ONLINE

<http://bat-web.tamu.edu>

Listen to The Battalion radio broadcast.



New hazing rumors cannot be checked

By ERICA ROY
 THE BATTALION

The Brazos County Attorney said 27 former students named during University disciplinary hearings cannot be investigated for hazing incidents until victims are found. The two-panel hearing board for nine former Fish Drill Team advisers gave the names to the University Police Department and Jim Kuboviak, the county attorney, after the students were named in hazing incidents unrelated to the Drill Team cases. However, Kuboviak said no specific accusations or information from victims have been reported. "Nobody has reported any other

incident of hazing to match up with the names given to us by the hearing board," he said. "Right now, we've been given 27 cases with no crimes or no leads and no victims." Also, some of the possible incidents have passed the two-year statute of limitations to file hazing charges. Kuboviak said Student Conflict Resolution Services gave the names to the UPD and his office because they are obligated to report possible hazing cases. Kuboviak said now the situation is "nothing other than someone pointing a finger." "There's nothing to investigate," he said. "We wouldn't know where to start."

Regents to consider campus construction, scholarship allocation

The Texas A&M Board of Regents will approve or deny preliminary plans for a West Campus parking garage next week. The regents, who meet at West Texas A&M in Canyon next Thursday and Friday, will also vote on construction bids for a tennis complex that will replace tennis facilities near Kyle Field. Those courts are being removed to make room for football practice fields as part of the Kyle Field expansion project. Terri Parker, director of communications for the A&M System, said the Board will consider preliminary plans for the parking garage. If the plans are approved, the regents will decide how much money to grant for more detailed plans. Vergel Gay, the project manager for the West Campus parking garage, said the \$26 million garage would have 3,700 parking spaces and would be located across from the Student Recreation Center. The Board is also scheduled to ration \$2.5 million given to the System by the Texas Legislature for need-based scholarships. The money was a surprise allocation last session, Parker said, and A&M students should be eligible for \$867,298, or about 35 percent of the total. "It's a real positive item that provides money that they (the Regents) weren't expecting until the Legislature approved it," Parker said. The money will be available to undergraduate students and will be awarded based on financial need. Eligibility requirements will be set by A&M officials. Parker said the Legislature may have allocated the money to combat expected minority enrollment drops at state universities following the Hopwood decision. A&M has seen a decline in minority applications for next school year. "The Legislature was probably looking for some other ways to provide some additional financial assistance to students who needed it," Parker said.

John LeBas, Erica Roy and Joey Jeanette Schlueter contributed to this story.

MSC Political Forum

Lobbyist lectures on ethics, finance reform

By JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER
 THE BATTALION

Everyone knows money can buy just about anything these days — especially government officials, said Suzy Woodford, executive director and lobbyist of the non-profit group Common Cause Texas. Woodford said at a MSC Political Forum lecture yesterday that campaign financing must be reformed and conflicts of interest must be eliminated in order for government to work effectively. "Money buys access to the government these days," Woodford said. "There's a need to reform legislative policies so there are no loopholes." Woodford, who co-authored a revision of the Public Information Act in 1995, said government meetings and documents are possible because of taxpayers, and people should have access to them. "We believe the information belongs to the pub-

lic," she said, "and the public should be informed on what the decision of an issue was based on." Campaign finance reform is a focus of Common Cause Texas. Woodford said lobbying efforts worked to outlaw labor unions' and corporations' contributions to candidates. Candidates must report expenditures and may not use campaign money for personal use. No limit exists on how much individuals can contribute or candidates can accept. Woodford said she hopes that U.S. Congressional hearings on campaign finance reform that began this week will help solve what she says is a problem with individual contributions. "They (individuals) know money buys them access," she said. "During [Mark] White's, [Bill] Clements' and [Ann] Richard's terms as governor, big donations meant big appointments, including the University of Texas Board of Regents."

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PHOTOGRAPH: Shannon Castle

Playful Pooch Ben Callison, a junior architecture major, plays with Kenya, a German Shepherd puppy, in Research Park Wednesday.

FBI questions Texas man in '63 church bombing

Investigators reopened case last week based on new information received by the Justice Department

ATHENS, Texas (AP) — Bobby Frank Cherry repudiated his past ties to a violent cell of the Ku Klux Klan on Wednesday, and continued to deny his involvement in a 1963 church bombing that killed four black girls in Birmingham, Ala. At a news conference called to answer questions about the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, Cherry said he was home with his cancer-stricken wife the night before the bombing, along with two other women who were caring for her. His attorney, Gil Hargrave, said the women had provided an affidavit testifying to Cherry's presence. The FBI last week said it has reopened its investigation, and Cherry, who is 67 and now

lives in a lakeside trailer park in Malakoff, about 10 miles from the east Texas town of Athens, said he has been questioned.

"I have never been through that church in my life."
Bobby Frank Cherry
Questioned in FBI investigation

During the morning briefing, Cherry's son, Tom, said he was with his father the morning of the bombing at a shop in Bir-

ingham "making Rebel flags, signs, things of that sort." The FBI has repeatedly questioned Cherry about the church bombing, but he was never charged. Only one man, Robert Chambliss, was convicted, and the case was closed. But authorities always believed more people were involved. Last week, the FBI announced it reopened the case based on new information received by the Justice Department six months ago. They would not elaborate. Cherry said that until recently, he'd never even visited the church where 20 people also were injured. A 1965 FBI memorandum indicated the

agency had three eyewitnesses who saw Chambliss and three other men at the church around 2 a.m., about eight hours before the bomb exploded during Sunday services on Sept. 15, 1963. Then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover ordered the information withheld from Alabama prosecutors, claiming the chance of a conviction was remote. Cherry and other one-time Klansmen Herman Frank Cash and Thomas E. Blanton, Jr. were all questioned about the bombing but denied involvement. "I hadn't 'til today, 34 years later, set foot on that ground, that sidewalk, been around that church," Cherry said. "I have never been through that church in my life."

Agents search for Versace's murderer

Authorities are not sure if prime suspect is still in Florida

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Hundreds of FBI agents watched the airport and handed out photos in gay bars and hotels Wednesday in a hunt for the alleged prostitute-turned-serial killer suspected of gunning down Gianni Versace. Andrew Phillip Cunanan dumped a stolen truck in a parking garage, perhaps hopped in a taxi and vanished after the most brazen slaying linked to him so far: walking up behind the fashion designer on the steps of his mansion Tuesday morning and shooting him twice in the back of the head. As many as 400 FBI agents scoured a 250-mile stretch of the Atlantic Coast. But authorities conceded they couldn't be sure if Cunanan was still in Florida.

They offered no motive for the slaying and would not say how Cunanan and the designer came to cross paths. Cunanan, described by his mother as a high-priced gay prostitute, has eluded authorities since May, after police identified him as the suspect in a three-week killing spree that left four bodies through Minnesota, Illinois and New Jersey. "He's not your run-of-the-mill spree or serial killer," said Lt. Dale Barsness, head of the Minneapolis police homicide unit. "He's of above-average intelligence, speaks at least four if not more foreign languages very fluently. He's very intelligent, very cunning, a con man." Police at the Miami airport shifted

from routine duties to the Cunanan hunt and were given fliers with his picture. FBI agents roamed beachfront hotels and gay bars, passing out photos of the darkly handsome 27-year-old suspect and asking clerks and bartenders for their help. "It's a very large manhunt, an intense manhunt," said Paul Philip, agent in charge of the FBI's Miami office. "Most of the leads we are concentrating on are Florida leads." Hundreds of reporters and curiosity-seekers gathered in front of Versace's Mediterranean-style villa in Miami Beach's trendy South Beach section. The steps where the 50-year-old Versace died were covered with flowers, candles, cards and a silver cross.

Commander bounced from Mir repair job

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian space officials declared the commander of the Mir space station unfit for a grueling repair job and said Wednesday that a U.S. astronaut would begin training to replace him.

NASA officials said it was premature to say astronaut Michael Foale would participate in the delicate mission into a sealed-off module that was punctured last month in a collision with a cargo ship. "He can do some basic things, but no official simulations or the actual spacewalk. None of that's been approved by NASA yet," spokeswoman Catherine Watson said from Russia's Mission Control outside Moscow. She said a decision likely would be made within a few days. While Russian officials insisted that Foale would begin training and was "clearly delighted" by the prospect, they also said they wouldn't decide until next week whether he would actually participate in the repair mission.

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