

NEWS BRIEFS

Southwest Parkway bridge to close

The Southwest Parkway bridge over Texas Highway 6 will be closed from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. as construction crews repair a gap in the bridge. Traffic on the southbound lanes of Hwy. 6 will be diverted to the frontage road. The contractor will replace a nine-mile section of the bridge to re-align the gap. Work is expected to finish on the \$50,000 project by the end of the month.

State files nursing home lawsuits

AUSTIN (AP) — The state attorney general's office filed lawsuits Monday against two Central Texas nursing homes, accusing them of deficiencies in resident care. The lawsuits were filed against Bryan Nursing Home in Georgetown and Hearne Healthcare Center in Hearne. In each, Attorney General Morales asked for the maximum penalty of \$10,000 per violation. The lawsuit against the Georgetown center alleges that an invalid patient was not assessed for equipment needs and fell after suffering at least two falls in a six-week period. The suit states the patient developed a subdural hematoma from the falls. The lawsuit against the Hearne center alleged that staff members failed to respond properly to one patient's diminished bowel function, and improperly medicated another patient at times.

World's oldest person dies of natural causes

PARIS, France (AP) — She took her last breath at 85 and still rode a bicycle at 100. She liked her port wine, her olive oil, her chocolate and her cigarettes, and she released a cloud at 121. No wonder Jeanne Calment, at the time the world's oldest person until her death Monday, said she was never bored. She lived through France's Third and Fourth Republics, and into its Fifth. She was 14 when the Eiffel Tower was completed in 1889. "She was a little bit the grandchild of all of us," President Jacques Chirac said. Calment died of natural causes at her retirement home where she lived for 12 years. Though blind, deaf and in a wheelchair, she remained spirited and mentally sharp to the end. "It was clear to those who attended her 121st birthday — in February 1996 — when she released a cloud, *Time's* *Mistress*. It featured her reminiscing to a score of rap tunes."

Local businesses adjust to UPS strike

BY HELEN CLANCY
THE BATTALION

As members of the Teamsters union picketed Monday outside the United Parcel Service office in Bryan, local businesses were already feeling the pinch of the first nationwide walkout against the carrier.

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David Holbert, a textbook manager for Rother's Bookstore, said shipments of books to his store will be delayed because of the strike.

"We're already going to be delayed a day just because of today," he said. "But I suspect if it ends within the next day or two that it's really not going to pose that big of a problem."

Holbert said Rother's can sustain the effects of the strike if it does not last for more than a week.

"I don't really foresee it lasting very long," Holbert said. "But we do get a lot of our stuff [via] UPS. That's our main carrier besides our big freight companies."

Some UPS customers are dealing with the strike by turning to other carriers for delivery service.

John Stanislav, manager of the University Mail Service, said the United States Postal Service will "take up the slack" for UPS' campus deliveries. The University Mail Service distributes Postal Service deliveries to campus addresses.

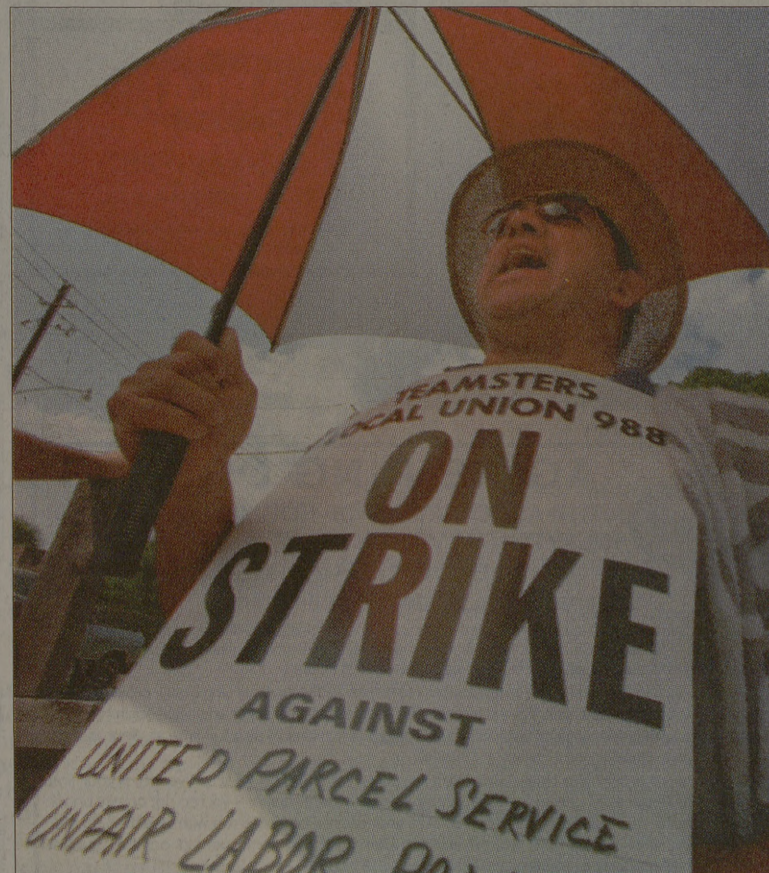
"We haven't seen any changes yet, but we do suspect people will start to use other methods of transporting packages," he said.

Kathy Jinkins, Scott & White marketing representative, said the clinic relies on UPS for some of its deliveries. However, she said, supplies will continue to reach the clinic through alternative means.

"We have not noticed a shortage yet," she said. "But, it may trickle down over time."

Jinkins said the clinic will not be affected immediately by the strike because vendors based in Dallas and Houston can truck supplies to the clinic, if needed.

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PHOTOGRAPH: Stew Milne
Frank Lara Jr., a UPS truck driver for 20 years, yells at "scabs" who cross the picket line to deliver packages Monday afternoon outside the Bryan UPS distribution center.

Clinton rules out federal intervention

ATLANTA (AP) — The first nationwide strike against United Parcel Service brought most of the company's big brown trucks to a halt Monday, forcing thousands of American businesses to scramble for other ways to send packages.

President Clinton virtually ruled out federal intervention in the dispute between the nation's biggest package delivery service and the 185,000 striking Teamsters, and no new talks were scheduled. The main sticking points were pay, pensions and the use of part-time employees.

The walkout against UPS — which ships 12 million parcels a day, or 80 percent of the nation's package deliveries — immediately affected people on both the

sending and receiving ends.

"Our customer reactions have been varied, from 'That's OK, we're ordering this for Christmas,' to 'I need this shipped to my vacation destination and I'll only be there a few days,'" said Anna Schryver, a spokeswoman for Lands' End, the Wisconsin-based outdoor goods retailer.

"Those are the people who are going to be most disappointed."

UPS' chief rival, the Postal Service, was hard-pressed to handle the overflow business, imposing a limit of four parcels per window customer.

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A&M will test student election 'ranking system'

BY ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Student Government is working to implement an election "ranking system" that would include run-off elections in the student body general elections.

The ranking system will be used for the fall freshmen elections on a conditional basis, and the process will be included in election revisions submitted to the Student Senate in the fall.

In the general elections, students would choose a first-choice candidate, then rank the remaining candidates by preference. After the votes have been tallied, the candidate with the least number of first-choice

votes would be dropped from the election.

The students who voted for the dropped candidate would have their votes given to their second-choice candidates.

Votes would be redistributed according to rank until one candidate wins the election.

Amey Magee, the Student Senate Rules and Regulations chair and a senior psychology major, said the ranking system would be more representative of student body opinion, because every student who voted in the general election would also cast votes in the run-off election.

"We're not getting rid of run-off elections," Magee said. "We're making it all in one process."

Please see ELECTION on Page 2.

MSC to apologize for ad

BY JENARA KOCKS
THE BATTALION

Some A&M students and staff said that an MSC Open House advertisement in Monday's Battalion was degrading to African-Americans.

Dr. Stephen Biles, associate director of the MSC, said he was out of town when the ad was created and did not approve it.

He said he is supposed to be the last person to look at MSC ads.

"It missed a step in our review procedure," Biles said.

Biles said the ad does not represent the views of MSC students and staff, and he is sorry that it offended people.

"We hope whoever sees it will understand and accept our apology," Biles said.

The ad shows a picture of an African-American male with three golf balls in his mouth. It reads, "Sing? Dance? Stuff golf balls in your mouth? Register to entertain us at MSC Open House. It'll make you popular."

Biles said he does not know where the picture in the ad came from or who created the ad, because several people on the MSC public relations staff design ads for MSC events.

He said his office received about eight complaints about the ad.

"There is no way to defend this ad," Biles said. "It was just a regretful error in judgment."

Lisa Colbert, a senior zoology major, said the ad

did not describe Open House, and the MSC should have used a different ad to promote Open House.

"I think they should have taken it back to the drawing board," Colbert said.

Rodney P. McClendon, coordinator of student retention and development for the Department of Multicultural Services, said his department received calls from people who said they were offended by the ad.

"We think the ad is inappropriate and insensitive," McClendon said. "The ad is reflective of a time period in America when African-Americans had to sing, dance and entertain in order to be accepted into certain halls of society. We hope that is not the case at Texas A&M."

McClendon said the ad suggests that his department needs to work harder to make people aware of issues that might offend others.

"One of our goals is diversity education," McClendon said.

Fliers distributed in the Blocker Building Monday afternoon had on them a picture of the ad and the question, "Is this how Texas A&M views African-Americans?"

Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president of student affairs, said he thought the ad was "outrageous."

"I hope whoever put in this type of ad has already apologized," Southerland said, "or if they haven't, I will ask them to."

Biles said the MSC will run a formal apology ad in Wednesday's issue of *The Battalion*.

TODAY IN BATTALION

LIFESTYLES

Senior-palooza: Students are appointed in Perry Ferrell's Jesus Christi festival.

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OPINION

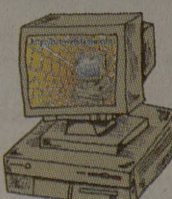
Clinton: Witnessing a prisoner's execution reveals a changing viewpoint of the death penalty.

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ONLINE

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

Listen to the Battalion radio show online.



PHOTOGRAPH: Tim Moog

Mortar Man

Jack Wesseldine, a worker for the RSI company, removes mortar from a wall near the Chemistry fountains Monday afternoon.

Gov. Bush kicks off tour to promote tax proposal

AUSTIN (AP) — Top state Democrats helped Republican Gov. George W. Bush kick off his 17-city tour of Texas to promote the proposed school property tax break on Saturday's ballot.

Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and House Speaker Pete Laney are not traveling with Bush, but they joined him at a Capitol news conference as he started out Monday.

"A billion dollars in property relief ... is certainly not anything to sneeze at," said Bullock.

Early voting ends Tuesday on the proposed constitutional amendment, which would raise the exemption from local school taxes on primary home-steads. The current minimum exemption is \$5,000. The amendment would raise the minimum exemption to \$15,000.

That means a home assessed at \$100,000 would be taxable on up to \$85,000 of its value instead of \$95,000. Additional exemptions extended by school districts also could decrease the taxable amount.

Bullock called the election "as much a referendum on Texans' participation in their government, in my opinion, as it is on property tax relief." Laney said he also was concerned about turnout.

Secretary of State Tony Garza, the state's chief elections officer, is not making a turnout prediction, said his spokesperson, Lisa Glass. Turnout for constitutional amendment elections usually is around 15 percent and has dipped as low as 7.5 percent, she said.

Bush said if the turnout is low, it will be because August is an unusual time for an election. The date was chosen to give school districts time to plan their budgets.

"People are still on vacation. People really aren't focused on constitutional matters or political matters," said Bush.

But, he added, "I don't think it will fail."

Under the plan, homeowners' savings would amount to their local school property tax rates multiplied by 100, which Bush said would average \$142 per home. The state is paying the \$1 billion cost of the cut. Renters and business property owners would not get the break.



Bullock