

INSIDE
lifestyles

Northgate offers Internet shopping

Towery:
OPAS brings unforgettable 'Blue Suede Shoes' ballet to B-CS.

See Page 3

sports

Aggie Soccer Team set to start season in first home game.

See Page 13

online

http://bat-web.tamu.edu

Look up with state, national and world news through the AP Wire, a 24-hour Internet news service.

BRIEFS

Fire destroys vacant building

A fire engulfed an unoccupied building behind the Texas A&M Veterinary School Wednesday afternoon. The College Station Fire Department arrived at the fire around 4 p.m. and the fire was under control within minutes. Although the cause of the fire has not been confirmed, the fire department said the blaze may have started as a grass fire. No injuries were reported and damages are unknown. University officials said a 911 call was made, but fire fighters had trouble locating the area because the building did not have a phone or an address. Officials said the University is working with 911 to help prevent a problem in the future. The building was one of four in a package to be sold for salvage next week by Texas A&M. The CSFD is investigating the fire. Results will be known later next week.

Students attend Aggie I-Camp

Incoming international students learned about Texas A&M and its traditions at the 4th annual International Camp Aug. 23 in the MSC. More than 150 students from the Middle East, Europe, Mexico, Asia and South America attended the camp. Manuela Vasquez-Ani, an I-Camp counselor and a senior international studies major, said that for some students I-Camp is their first experience in the United States. "This was the first time to [come to America for most]," Vasquez-Ani said. "But since most countries teach in Spanish, many of the students don't speak and understand English." Sandra Medina, the communications coordinator for the A&M Department of Multicultural Services, said the camp helps international students adjust to A&M's unique culture. "Any student new to A&M from another country must adjust not only to the United States, but to our campus as well," she said. "That is why International Camp is so important." The Traditions Council introduced students to Aggie traditions such as Aggie Taps, Midnight Yell, Aggie Spirit and A&M senior rings.

Program receives leadership award

The Association of Leadership Educators awarded the Texas A&M Eisenhower Leadership Development Program the Outstanding Leadership Program Award. The program received the award for its accomplishments in helping students to develop leadership and problem-solving skills. The Eisenhower program was established by Congress in 1992 and is supported by the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Business, Agriculture and Engineering.

By Rachel George
Staff Writer

College Station can add a virtual shopping center to its list of attractions. Holly Hess, a WebRight Inc. sales representative and Class of '97, helped create a website featuring such Northgate businesses as the Dixie Chicken and CD Warehouse. Browsers can choose from one of the four categories on the site: "Night Life," "Community," "Shopping" and "Eating." These links offer drink and lunch specials, sales at Northgate and special events in the community. Each category has other links that browsers can visit. Other features on the site include "Aggie Trivia," a "T-Sip Joke of the Day" and an electronic post office where browsers can send postcards via e-mail. There is also a coupon

page and a registration center for prizes from the businesses. The site also is equipped with a map of the area, with highlighted areas designating available parking spaces. Hess said the website will highlight all aspects of the Northgate area, not just the nightlife. "After I left A&M and began working for WebRight, an idea came up for a virtual shopping center, and I thought of Northgate," she said. "Northgate is an important part of the College Station community, and unfortunately the different shops, except for the bars, are often overlooked." The Northgate Merchants Association, along with WebRight Inc., is responsible for contacting shop owners and soliciting their business. WebRight Inc. charges the businesses an advertising fee. Todd McDaniel, the Northgate Coordina-

tor, said that the site will improve business along Northgate. "It is a commercial activity, but at the same time, from a public standpoint, it introduces newcomers to the area," he said. Juanita Galindo, manager of Campus Photo, said she hopes the site will be beneficial to the store. "Our main expectation [of the site] was to let students know where we are located," she said. "We want students to keep coming back to us, and it looks like everyone has access to the 'net.'" The address for the virtual shopping center is www.aggiland.com. Browsers can post their opinions and suggestions on the site. The site has 15 businesses on it. Merchants who are interested in adding their business to the site can contact WebRight at (713) 461-3919.



BRAD GRAEBER/THE BATTALION

Getting it together



BRANDON BOLLOM/THE BATTALION

Tracy Younggren (left) and Andy Wheeler, junior biomedical science majors, construct a loft Thursday afternoon for their dorm room in A-Battery of the corps.

A&M employees begin charity campaign

By Marissa Alanis
Staff writer

Texas A&M and Texas A&M University System employees kicked off the 4th annual State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) Tuesday morning at a breakfast in the Clayton W. Williams Jr. Alumni Center with expectations to exceed last year's contributions of \$178,373. During the campaign, which runs from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31, employees can make contributions to one of 276 charitable agencies that address issues such as the environment, the sick and needy, animal welfare, world hunger and spiritual needs. Texas A&M and System employees want to raise about \$300,000 in pledges. Bob Fleischer, local SECC campaign manager and executive director of the United Way, said this year's donations should surpass last year's campaign totals. "I've seen some real enthusiasm [for the campaign] that I think will be contagious as well," Fleischer said. In the past, United Way, along with the 20 agencies affiliated with it, received about two-thirds of the money contributed to the campaign, making it the largest recipient group of the campaign.

Fleischer said the United Way receives such a large part of the contribution because most people identify closely with the 20 agencies under the United Way umbrella in the Bryan-College Station area. "The logic of it is that most people prefer that their contribution be kept at home," he said. Contributions can be made by cash, check, bank draft or the payroll deduction method.

"I think the real competition is how well we can support agencies that provide human services."

BOB FLEISCHER
LOCAL SECC CAMPAIGN MANAGER

Jan Winniford, associate vice president for student affairs, said there has been an increase in participation and money since the introduction of the payroll deduction method a few years ago. Mary Miller, associate vice president for administration and the SECC employee committee chair for Bryan-College Station, said the

payroll deduction method makes it easier to give money to the campaign. "You can have as little as \$2 a month deducted," Miller said. "But over a year, that translates to \$24, which is a nice gift to give." During last year's SECC campaign, Texas Tech and its Health Center combined to raise the highest amount of pledges, totaling \$306,299. A&M and the System, along with pledges received from the Association of Former Students, the 12th Man Foundation and the Texas A&M Foundation, followed closely with \$239,772 in pledges raised. Fleischer said higher campaign participation could allow A&M to surpass Texas Tech's totals, but that SECC should not become a competitive race between institutions. "It's not a competitive situation at all," Fleischer said. "I think the real competition is how well we can support agencies that provide human services. That's the bottom line." Winniford said there is a value of care and enhanced awareness for fellow human beings in the A&M community, which help explain the success of the campaign. "I like to think there's something special about A&M that brings out the willingness in people to give back to our communities to those who are less fortunate," she said.

Thousands march in protest of Proposition 209

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Thousands of people protesting Proposition 209 marched across the Golden Gate Bridge today as the anti-affirmative action initiative took effect in California. "I don't think we've undone the negative effects of slavery," said Jean Mont-Eton, 68, who had to ask her daughter for "the day off" from babysitting two grandchildren so she could march. "I still think we need affirmative action." Earl Anceston, a 72-year-old official with the San Mateo Central Labor Council, agreed. "I don't think we're ready to get rid of affirmative action," he said. "I don't like the 'good old boys' network." The demonstrators, led by Mayor Willie Brown, marched four and five abreast along a walkway on the bridge. The march was peaceful and traffic on the bridge wasn't affected.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who organized the march, appeared at the bridge after the march began. Proposition 209, which passed with 54 percent of the vote last November, bans race or gender preferences in public hiring, contracting and education. The measure had been tied up in the courts. But on Tuesday, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused to further block implementation of the measure while it is appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. "I feel like we as black people will not have representation," said Etna Goshay, 56, who traveled all night with a church group from Moreno Valley in Southern California. "I feel like nothing has been accomplished." Proposition 209 has no legal effect in the private sector, so businesses can continue to recruit and train minorities and women.

Scientists grow hybrid bluebonnet

By Joey Jeanette Schlueter
Staff writer

To some Texans, the bluebonnet is the beloved state flower that grows wild in the spring along highways and in backyards. But Texans may see it a little differently now. The Texas Agriculture Experiment Station (TAES) created a long-stemmed bluebonnet that was patented July 15. The flower, nicknamed "Texas Sapphire," was displayed this week at a U.S. Patent Office news conference to commemorate the issuance of the 10,000th plant patent. Dr. Tim Davis and Dr. Wayne Mackay, the TAES horticulturists who created the flower, said they thought of the idea for the long-stemmed bluebonnet when they saw large bluebonnets in the Big Bend area several years ago. Mackay said experiments with the state flower include producing longer stems and changing its color. TAES scientists have developed long-stemmed white bonnets called "Texas Ice" and long-stemmed pink bonnets called "Texas Sunsets." "There is no telling what will happen next," Mackay said. "These flowers are just the beginning." Davis said the bluebonnets offer a special variety of flowers that can be commercialized. "These bluebonnets have florist quality," Davis said, "because there are practically no blue flowers available in the cut-flower market."

The horticulturists used seeds collected from large bluebonnets found in the Big Bend area and bred them with a variety of other flower seeds to produce a long-stemmed version for commercial use that can withstand shipping and handling. The University System began licensing nurseries for greenhouse production of the flowers so the long-stemmed flowers can be made available to florists. A trial collection of the bonnets was displayed at the 1997 Rose Bowl Parade. Davis, the director of the A&M Research and Extension Center in Dallas, said he hopes Texas bluebonnets will become popular beyond the state's boundaries. "As the flower gains some acceptance, it will pick up in markets in many other places, especially the blue, because it is unique," he said. Texas Land Commissioner Gary Mauro said at a July news conference in Austin that the long-stemmed bluebonnet was a new venture for the Texas floral market. "The flower itself represents the very spirit of Texas," Mauro said. "It was developed in this state, promoted in this state and will certainly flourish in this state."

Kathleen Davis, a communications specialist in A&M's Department of Agriculture, said, "Move over, yellow rose — the way to a Texas heart may soon be a bouquet of long-stemmed bluebonnets." The University System will grant non-exclusive licenses to Texas nurseries for greenhouse production. Royalties to Texas A&M will be based on the number of flowers sold. The System wants to control the movement of the bluebonnet seeds to protect the flowers from international competition.