

# THE BATTALION

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## Nickel takes gold in student body elections

By COLLEEN KAVANAGH  
Staff writer

Garnering 65 percent of the runoff votes, Laurie Nickel, a senior business analysis major, became the second female student body president in A&M history last Thursday. Murray Van Eman, the student election commissioner and a senior animal science major, announced the results in front of the Lawrence Sullivan stadium. Voter turnout for the runoff increased by 379 people from last year, Van Eman said. The first female student body president was Brooke Leslie, who served from 1995. Nickel said Leslie has had a huge influence in her life. She was student body president at the first school she attended. "I started school here," she said. "My only hope is to do half the job she did

and live up to the standards she set." Nickel said that administrators and faculty warned her that because she is a woman, it might be difficult to be elected.

**"It's a humbling feeling to have students' trust by virtue of their vote."**

Laurie Nickel  
SBP elect

"The thing that I was proud of," she said, "is not a single student said anything

about it. To me, that shows that A&M is growing out of stereotypes.

"One day, when I was giving a campus tour, a mother asked me if things would be harder here for her daughter. I couldn't believe she asked that. I've been blessed with so much since I have been here. I truly believe that if you work hard, you can accomplish many things."

Nickel said when she heard her name announced, the greatest part of the experience was seeing her friends' faces.

"I want to make people proud," she said. "It's a humbling feeling to have students' trust by virtue of their vote. I was also relieved to know what I'd be doing for the next year."

Fifty staff members organized the campaign at night and campaigned the next day. In addition, Nickel had a database of 600 students who supported her efforts but didn't have the time to meet

every night, she said.

"My biggest goal was not to win a popularity contest," she said. "I wanted people to know who I was. Campaigning took a lot of time because I sat down with people and listened to their ideas and concerns for this university."

The first thing Nickel will do is pick her Executive Council and then she will plan a time line for her platform.

"Right now Curtis (Childers) and I are in a transition period," she said. "We are meeting with administrators and all of the committees that he sits on."

Yell leader election results were also announced Thursday night.

Pat Patillo, a junior business administration major, will be joining incumbent yell leaders Sam Bluntzer and Brandon Neff as 1998-99 senior yell leaders, and Jeff Bailey and John Bloss will be the junior yell leaders.



BRANDON BOLLOM/THE BATTALION  
Julie Johnson congratulates her roommate, Laurie Nickel, on winning the SBP runoff Thursday night.

### Go Fish



JAKE SCHRICKLING/THE BATTALION

Hipp Lewis, Class of '96, plays fetch with Hagen, a chocolate labrador retriever, at Research Park Sunday.

## Holidazed and confused

### United Nations marks numerous calendar dates

GENEVA (AP) — The United Nations is celebrating the International Year of the Ocean, the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Second U.N. Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, the Third Disarmament Decade and the Fourth U.N. Development Decade.

And don't forget these special U.N. occasions: World Book and Copyright Day, the International Day of Tolerance, World Television Day and International Civil Aviation Day. That's just a sample of the 44 dates earmarked for observances this year.

At a time when the United Nations is trying to become leaner, cheaper and more relevant, the number of special commemorations declared by the General Assembly is spiraling upward.

Nobody can put an overall price on the events because the vast U.N. secretariat absorbs the cost of some, while others are split among various U.N. agencies.

For this year's World Health Day, marked April 7, the World Health Organization distributed tens of thousands of posters and educational kits on safe motherhood to highlight the risks of pregnancy and illegal abortions in developing countries.

The central budget was \$100,000, and supporters say it was worth every cent.

"We can sit in Geneva and make standards and norms, but getting information out into the field can be very difficult," said Christopher Powell of WHO. "Something like a poster gets the message across and lasts for years."

But in some target countries there was limited enthusiasm.

"Millions of rupees are spent each year on World Health Day, government departments release expensive advertisements in newspapers, but the readers do not care," said Alok Mukhopadhyaya at the Voluntary Health Association of India.

"If this enthusiasm of policymakers and U.N. officials comes to an end with a cocktail and dinner and some ritual meetings, then it has no meaning," said Mukhopadhyaya.

In Thailand, 300 medical officials took part in a government program on safe motherhood, but the campaign didn't filter through to the average Thai.

"The idea is good, but I don't see any

publicity," said Simit Ngamcote, who drives a motorized rickshaw. For him, last year's World Health Day — with the theme Healthy Cities — had no practical impact on the stinking pollution he breathes 12 hours a day.

Other Days with a health theme include World TB Day and World No-Tobacco Day, meant to encourage people to quit smoking. The best-known is World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, which has helped increase understanding of the problems faced by people living and dying with the virus.

The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 prompted the General Assembly to push through a whole series of days with environmental themes, such as on deserts and on drought, without much planning.

Thus, World Day for Water falls on March 22 and World Meteorological Day

**"We can sit in Geneva and make standards and norms, but getting information out into the field can be very difficult."**

Christopher Powell  
World Health Organization

comes on March 23. The latter's theme this year was ... water.

Some events are motivated by politics. For nearly 20 years, Nov. 29 has been the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. June 4 is the International Day of Innocent Child Victims of Aggression in condemnation of what the General Assembly calls Israeli "acts of aggression" toward Palestinian and Lebanese children.

Many special days are marked by low-key speeches and diplomatic discussions at U.N. headquarters.

For instance, selected "poor" Swiss people were invited to the U.N. European headquarters in Geneva on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Oct. 17, to read out human rights declarations.

## Anti-tobacco plan on task, officials say

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brushing off an industry boycott and threats of lawsuits, Clinton administration officials and members of Congress say they are confident they'll pass tough anti-tobacco legislation by the end of this year.

"We will get bipartisan legislation this year," Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala declared on Sunday. There's no question about it because it's our public health."

Major tobacco companies last week announced they would not go along with to-

bacco legislation being debated in Congress, saying the original goal of reducing teen smoking had been subverted into a money grab that would drive the industry into bankruptcy.

Industry leaders stressed Sunday that they would unleash their huge lobbying power to stop the legislation and would go to court to challenge provisions that limit advertising of tobacco products and require companies to pay billions in penalties if teen smoking reduction goals are not met.

"The first thing we would do, if the present legislation passes, is go to court and have it declared unconstitutional," tobacco industry attorney J. Philip Carlton said on "Fox News Sunday."

Carlton and other industry spokespersons raised the specter of organized crime and drug dealers running black market sales to teen-agers if Congress forces cigarette prices up and the possibility that the industry would move jobs overseas. "You're talking about approximately 2 million American jobs," Carlton said.

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Look up with state and national news through The Wire, AP's 24-hour online news service.

## Jones to decide on possible appeal

WASHINGTON (AP) — Paula Jones, who's been in seclusion since a federal judge dismissed her sexual harassment lawsuit against President Clinton on April 1, is planning to emerge this week to announce whether she will appeal the decision.

Jones will likely reveal her decision on Thursday, spokesperson Susan Carpenter McMillan said Sunday, calling the timing "99 percent sure."

Carpenter McMillan declined to say whether she would appeal. Jones was expected to announce the decision herself, either in the Los Angeles area, where she lives, or in Dallas, where her attorneys are located.

This would be Jones' first public comments on the case since Judge Susan Webber Wright threw out all three sexual harassment charges against Clinton.

Jones, 31, claimed that Clinton propositioned her in an Arkansas hotel room in 1991 when she was a

state worker. Clinton maintains he doesn't recall ever meeting her and has firmly denied anything improper happened.

In her ruling, Wright said that whatever went on in the Arkansas hotel room between Mrs. Jones and Clinton, who was then governor, she had failed to prove she was harmed emotionally or in her career as she contended.

Jones' legal team and advisers described her as disappointed, shocked and tearful after the dismissal, which halted the lawsuit she set in motion four years ago and which prompted similar allegations against Clinton from other women.

But Jones has remained silent, pent up in the Long Beach, Calif., apartment she shares with her husband, Stephen, and their two preschool children.

Several days after the ruling, Jones' husband, who provides the family's only income, was fired from his job as a ticket agent for Northwest Airlines.

## Muster Awareness Week

Committee to get ready for event in Reed Arena on April 21

By AMANDA SMITH  
Staff writer

Today marks the beginning of a week designed to reflect upon the past celebrations of Muster and to look ahead to its first appearance in Reed Arena.

Muster Awareness Week, which runs April 13 to 18, was designed by the Muster committee to add meaning to the tradition.

**"Reed Arena is a beautiful facility. We are happy to increase the seating for the number of students."**

Angela Wallace  
Sub chair of programs committee

Muster is scheduled April 21 at 7 p.m. in Reed Arena.

Angela Wallace, a sub chair of the programs committee and a senior psychology major, said the Muster committee members are excited about holding the

event in Reed Arena.

"We are responsible for everything that happens in Reed Arena," Wallace said. "Reed Arena is a beautiful facility. We are happy to increase the seating for the number of students."

Muster is organized by a 40-member committee of the Student Government Association. Awareness, programs, speaker selection, roll call and families, special events and endowment committees work together to organize Muster.

Lisa Eubanks, a Muster committee member and a sophomore English major, said the Muster committee has grown since its beginning at Texas A&M.

"It is one of the most amazing things to see the committee members work so diligently," Eubanks said. "I have looked back as far as the 1940s. Then, the Muster committees consisted of about five or six people."

Reed Arena seats 12,500 people, 5,000 more than G. Rollie White Coliseum.

"We are elated about being able to have Muster in Reed Arena because there is a greater opportunity for students to see and watch," Eubanks said.

Wallace said the meaning of Muster will not change in its new location.

"Although Muster is going to a different place, the core feelings and the traditions will be the same," Wallace said.