

TODAY

HIGH 96°
LOW 75°

TOMORROW

HIGH 96°
LOW 76°

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THE BATTALION

Opinion:
University neglects liberal arts program.

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY • COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

Burn Ban



Over 150 acres were lost to fire at this site outside of College Station on Highway 60.

PHOTO BY JAKE SCHRIKING/THE BATTALION

Lack of rainfall, recent flames prompt area stricter regulations regarding outdoor fires

By SARAH GOLDSTON
Staff Writer

The Brazos County Commissioners Court established a more stringent fire ban Tuesday after 150 acres of land burned outside of College Station Monday.

"It took us two hours to get the fire under control," Joe Ondrasek, fire chief for Brazos County Precinct 4, said.

Ondrasek said firefighters arrived on the scene at 2:55 p.m. and left the scene at 11 p.m.

The fire was caused when the property owner burned trash outside, he said.

"The owner was issued a warning, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. If it is determined the owner was reckless, further action will be taken and the person may be charged with a misdemeanor," Ondrasek said.

Susan Gandy, administrative assis-

tant for the county judge, said the new ban is more specific about who can issue citations. It also specifies which court the offenders will report to.

"Under the new ban, anyone who lights a fire in a rural area will be charged," Gandy said.

County Sheriff Chris Kirk said any large fire in a rural area could be a potential wildfire. He said the new ban will help.

"There were problems with the statute in the burn-ban setup, but it was remedied with the passing of the new ban," Kirk said.

Under the new ban, officers can issue citations punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine, Ondrasek said.

"There should be no type of burning at all in the county under the conditions we are experiencing," Ondrasek said. "I would encourage people to watch any discarded hot item or sparks created by cutting with steel."

With the drought conditions over most of Texas, Ondrasek said resi-

dents of the Brazos Valley need to use fireworks with caution on the Fourth of July.

"Aerial fireworks are banned for the Fourth. I want to remind those who will use fireworks to use them with a great deal of caution," Ondrasek said. "They should stay away from tall grass when igniting the fireworks and have a water supply and a phone close by if a fire should occur. The best thing would be to not use fireworks at all, but if you do, use them safely and appropriately."

Gandy said fireworks that have fins or rudders are banned. Pyrotechnic devices, such as sky rockets, also are banned.

Regional Forester Ernie Smith said due to extreme drought conditions in over 100 counties, burn bans prohibit open burning of fireworks.

"Fire officials are encouraging citizens to attend community events to enjoy fireworks displays provided by professionals," Smith said.

Court upholds parental consent rider

Planned Parenthood loses battle over right of minors to obtain prescription medications

AMBER BENSON
City Editor

The Texas Supreme Court unanimously upheld rider 14 of the state appropriations bill Tuesday forbidding the use of state tax dollars to dispense prescription drugs to minors without parental consent.

Planned Parenthood of Houston sued the state of Texas over rider 14, authored by State Senator Steve Ogden,

on the grounds that it conflicts with federal law and violates the Texas Constitution. State District Judge Scott McCown declared rider

14 unconstitutional in a trial court in Travis County.

The Texas Supreme Court vacated Judge McCown's decision and dismissed the case because Planned Parenthood could not show that it was injured by rider 14.

In a concurring opinion written by Supreme Court Justice Raul Gonzalez and joined by Justice Greg Abbot, the justices said Planned Par-

enthood has no standing.

"Planned Parenthood lacks standing either in its own right or on behalf of the minors of the State of Texas," Gonzalez and Abbot wrote in their opinion. "Planned Parenthood is not the surrogate parent of Texas' minor children."

Planned Parenthood argued that it has standing to represent the interests of the minors of the state.

Under Texas law, only the parents or guardians of a minor may represent their legal interests in court.

Senator Ogden said he saw the court decision as a victory for parental rights and the state legislature.

"Parents have a right to know what their kids are doing," Ogden said, "and the legislature has the right to appropriate state tax dollars."

Although Ogden said he saw the decision as favorable, he said it would not surprise him to see the case in court again.

"This case was decided on narrow grounds," Ogden said. "It is conceivable that it could go back to court."

Planned Parenthood is not the surrogate parent of Texas' minor children."

— Raul Gonzalez and Greg Abbot
Texas Supreme Court Justices

A&M names Janis Stout new dean of faculties

STAFF AND WIRE REPORT

Janis P. Stout, professor of English, has been named dean of faculties and associate provost at Texas A&M University.

The appointment was announced by Ronald G. Douglas, executive vice president and provost, and will be effective August 1.

Stout succeeds William L. Perry, who is now executive associate provost.

Stout will play a major role in representing faculty needs and issues in the Division of Academic Affairs, Douglas said. He said she has had previ-

ous administrative experience as an associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts.

A key responsibility of the dean of faculties is to make certain that open channels of communication are maintained among the faculty and administrators, Douglas said.

Stout holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from Lamar University and a Ph.D. from Rice University. She joined the A&M faculty in 1987. Since 1994, Stout has concentrated on teaching, writing and working with graduate students.

She is a nationally known scholar on early 20th century women writers and is

the author of five scholarly books, three novels and a number of journal articles.

She recently won a national award for her scholarship.

Stout currently is working on a book about Willa Cather.

Her most recent book, published by the University of Alabama Press in April 1998, is *Through the Window, Out the Door: Women's Narratives of Departure, from Austin and Cather to Tyler, Morrison and Didion*.

Stout said that she "looks forward to working with members of the University community from all across the campus."

The Eagle has landed



STEPHANIE CORLEY/THE BATTALION

Francis Euel "Doc" Savage II, Class of '67, better known as "Elijah," attracts attention atop "The Millennium Eagle," a mobile camping unit he built which he hauls behind "The Chariot of Fire of Elijah." Savage soon will be using his mobile unit to market Israeli- and Texas-made goods to Texans.

NEWS BRIEFS

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

More vehicles hit by theft

After three burglaries the day before, the area around Spring Loop in College Station was hit again yesterday.

Five more vehicles were burgled in the area, three of which had stereo equipment taken from them.

Spring Loop is located east

of the College Station Hilton and is home to many students.

Planning office gets new name

The Office of Planning and Institutional Research at Texas A&M has renamed the Office of Institutional Studies and Planning.

Ronald G. Douglas, executive vice president and

provost, said the new name is more reflective of the work of the office and avoids any confusion of identity with the Office of the Vice President for Research.

The name change became effective June 15. Telephone numbers and the mail stop remain the same for the office, which is located in Room 302 Williams Building.

Program offers head start for new engineering majors

By PATRICK PEABODY
Staff Writer

This summer a few incoming students are participating in Phase One, a program for engineering students designed to ease the transition between high school and college.

The program allows incoming engineering majors to adapt to campus life while earning credit and improving their mathematics, computer and studying skills.

Jan Rinehart, Phase One coordinator, said the program builds friendships and lets people find study partners.

Since 1989, the Phase One program has given incoming students a sense of belonging, as well as a boost in confidence, Rinehart said.

The participating students take an English or political science course. They also take both math and engineering skills courses.

To attend this program, the students must send in an application, a high school transcript and an essay explaining why they are interested in the program.

There only are 50 slots available for the program, which takes place July 6 through August 11.

The number of applications to the program has increased over the past two years.

The Phase One program costs \$1,300 for each student.

However, sponsorship by the State Engineering and Science Recruitment Program, the Multi-Ethnic Engineering Program of Texas A&M and the National Science Foundation brings the student fee down to \$300.

The program is looking for students whose backgrounds might cause them to have trouble adjusting to college life. These students include those who attended small high schools or show promise despite average grades.

Rinehart said she finds that students who attended Phase One have a higher retention rate their first fall semester and a higher overall GPR.

Rinehart also said that it is an overall good experience for the students.

"I think it's a neat opportunity," Rinehart said, "and I think college is learning to take opportunities, and that sometimes it's hard to know which one to take, but I think the academic opportunity is what grounds you in your career choice, and makes you successful."