



# The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY

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College Station, Texas



## aggielife

• *There's something about movies: Shakespeare in Love, Saving Private Ryan receive accolades.*

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## Friday's issue

Aggies get taste of wrestlemania; WCW hits the mat in Reed Arena this weekend.

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## sports

• *In women's basketball Texas Tech, Iowa State lead race for NCAA tournament bid.*



## Closed Chambers

### Brazos Valley Chamber of Commerce revokes memberships of Planned Parenthood, BVCL, Hope Pregnancy Center

BY MEREDITH HIGHT  
The Battalion

Since Planned Parenthood announced it was building a new clinic in Bryan that would offer abortion services, the issue has sparked controversy in the community—a controversy that has now moved to the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce.

When a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Planned Parenthood facility was approved by an 11-10 vote by the chamber, the Brazos Valley Coalition for Life began a fax campaign to halt the ceremony.

The campaign resulted in 10 out of the 1,400 chamber members faxing the chamber, requesting a reconsideration of the vote.

Planned Parenthood withdrew the request for the ceremony, but shortly after the decision, the chamber passed a resolution to cancel the memberships of Planned Parent-

hood, Brazos Valley Coalition for Life and Hope Pregnancy Center.

Planned Parenthood and Hope Pregnancy Center are now in the process of appealing the cancellation of their membership in the chamber.

Hope Pregnancy Center declined to comment on its appeal to the chamber. BVCL did not appeal the ruling, preferring to focus on helping women understand that options other than abortion are available.

Lauren Donohue, executive director of BVCL, said she believes chamber members made the decision that was best for the community.

"Planned Parenthood and abortion are very controversial, and surveys have been done showing that 70 percent of the community is against the clinic," she said. "A lot of the members of the chamber are pro-life and couldn't go against their conscience."

The chamber's resolution, which cancelled the membership of all three organizations, read, "The chamber of commerce is neither pro-life nor pro-choice. We exist solely for the purpose of being pro-Bryan-College Station."

**"I think these members are voting what they think is best for the chamber."**

— Celia Goode-Haddock  
Chamber of Commerce

Celia Goode-Haddock, chair of the chamber of commerce, said she believes voters had the chamber's best interest in mind when they voted.

"I think these members are voting what they think is best for the chamber, not whether they are pro-life or pro-choice," she said.

Susan Nenny, spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood, said that the exclusion of Planned Parenthood from a local chamber of commerce has never before occurred.

Planned Parenthood had been a member of the chamber for four years before the decision.

"We hope to resolve this very positively," Nenny said. "We were proud to be a member of the chamber. We offer a broad range of services that are a basic part of life in Bryan.

"We're as vital an agency as anyone, and we're optimistic we will solve this."

Nenny said Planned Parenthood made no effort to lobby the chamber about the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

SEE CHAMBERS ON PAGE 2.

## Fire Fightin' Ags



KATHERINE STEMPIEN/THE BATTALION

Jeff David and Vicky Blanco, both senior environmental design majors, suit up to fight a fire at the A&M volunteer fire department for their Elements of Interior Architecture class.

## Mending Munson

### Fate of barricades handed to voters on May ballot

BY CARRIE BENNETT  
The Battalion

The College Station City Council passed the agenda item calling for a special election to determine the closure status on Munson Avenue, and the election has been scheduled for May 1.

Organizations in support of each side of the issue have been formed to campaign prior to the May election.

Kayla Glover, resident of the College Hills neighborhood, which houses Munson Avenue, will lead the group Friends of Our Community, the members of which are in support of permanent removal of the barricades.

"We will run a full-fledged campaign with advertising on TV, radio and in newspapers," Glover said. "Our main objective is getting people to vote."

Mike McMichen, a member of Friends of Our Community, said traffic demands on Munson Avenue have decreased since the completion of the Texas Avenue construction, and he believes there is no reason for the closure.

"We are really pushing for the city council to take the barricades down now to get traffic counts on Munson, since the construction on Texas is done," McMichen said.

McMichen said students of the local campus of Blinn Junior College once used Munson Avenue as an alternative route when the college was split into two campuses, but it was consolidated and relocated.

Connie Hooks, city secretary for College Station, said the barricades will remain until a decision is reached on May 1.

Stephen Miller, a member of the organization in favor of the barricades, said he believes the closure prevents traffic congestion, which preserves the quality of the neighborhood.

SEE MUNSON ON PAGE 2.



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

Barricades were placed on Munson Avenue June 15, 1998. A special election will determine whether or not the barricades will be removed.

## Faculty Senate approves portion of 60-60-60 bill

BY AMANDA PALM  
The Battalion

Texas A&M Faculty Senate approved a portion of the recommended 60-60-60 Q-Drop bill yesterday.

The senate approved the recommendation to increase the number of Q-drops allotted to undergraduate students from three to four, but did not approve changing the Q-drop deadline from the 50th to the 60th class day. The bill will be sent to President Bowen for final approval.

The proposed change to the Q-drop system will give undergraduate students two Q-drops to use before completing 60 semester hours and two more to be used before finishing another 60 hours.

If the two primary Q-drops are not used before the completion of 60 hours, they will be omitted from the allotment.

Diane Kaplan, the Faculty Senate speaker, said the first 60 hours completed apply to hours acquired at any accredited college or university and do not have to be acquired solely at Texas A&M University.

Naomi Fackler, a senator representing the College of Veterinary Medicine, said the current Q-drop deadline offers enough

**"Fifty days is plenty of time. It is much longer than most schools offer."**

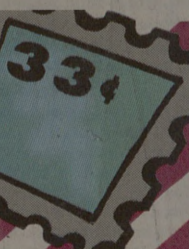
— Naomi Fackler  
Faculty Senate

time for students to decide whether or not to drop a class.

"Fifty class days is plenty of time," Fackler said. "It is much longer than most schools offer."

The senate approved a recommendation not to place grade distributions on the Internet. Grade distributions are available to students through Student Counseling Services.

## GOING POSTAL



## Postage pains increase as new price sticks

BY LISA HILL  
The Battalion

On Jan. 10 the United States Postal Service raised the price of stamps and introduced the 33-cent stamp.

Trip Jacks, Postal Business Center manager at the College Station Post Office, said it serves as the Postal Service's first cost increase in nearly four years.

Jacks said the increase affects one ounce, first-class letters. He said after the first ounce, each additional ounce has been reduced from 23 to 22 cents. He said no change has been made to international rates.

Jacks said the extra money will fund technology advances for post

offices throughout the country.

"The money is not going toward parties, or frivolous activities — it's going into more advanced equipment," he said, "like delivery confirmation, which allows efficient tracking of mail and better customer service."

Jacks said the overall reaction has been positive, and the public has been generally understanding.

Tom McGrath, postmaster for the College Station Post Office, agrees with the rate increase and has not experienced any negative reaction by the public.

"The increase is absolutely necessary due to rising costs," he said.

McGrath said the increase in postage has triggered a rise in sales

of one-cent stamps.

"The demand has been tremendous for one-cent stamps, but we have planned in advance, so there haven't been any problems," McGrath said.

According to information provided by Jacks, the U.S. Postal Service prepared by printing billions of one-cent stamps to add to current postage.

However, students say the increase has caused problems.

Lori Vaccaro, a senior finance major, says she never knew how much of a hassle one penny could cause.

"I recently mailed my bills with 32-cent stamps," Vaccaro said. "Now they will probably be re-

turned and what was a four to five cent shortage will turn into \$20 to \$30 in late fees, it's just a hassle."

Letters with 32-cent postage will be marked "postage due" and most likely returned.

According to information provided by Jacks, nation-wide post offices have generic stamps, which are kept in stock to be sold in the event of a rate increase.

The newly-implemented first-class mail "H" stamp, bearing a picture of Uncle Sam's hat, is one of the generic stamps and is being sold until 33-cent stamps are printed. The "H" stamps and one-cent stamps, for people who do not wish to purchase the new stamps, are available at local post offices.

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