



The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY

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College Station, Texas

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• 1999 Aggie football recruiting class draws national attention ranking among the top 5.

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Friday's issue

A&M baseball and softball teams kick off respective seasons with weekend openers.

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• Death penalty debate wages on with concerns over racial discrimination and ethical dilemmas playing out.

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Senate passes 170-hour cap bill

BY MEGAN WRIGHT
The Battalion

17 meeting. "By passing the bill in the Student Senate, the legislation won't be directly affected," Wagner said. "This will show our stance and hopefully persuade the Legislature to authorize a bill of their own. When it is passed we are

register early as student workers. With the passage of the bill by the Faculty Senate, resident advisers will be allowed to register early with other student workers this April.

"This policy will go into effect for Fall 1999 registration," Ferguson said.

"For all the work that they [RAs] do for students, I think it is the least we can do."

— Rob Ferguson
Student senator

A resolution to the 170-hour cap rule, resident adviser registration and student government elections are among the bills passed by the Texas A&M Student Senate last night.

Concerning the 170-hour cap rule passed by the Texas Legislature this last summer, three senators authored a bill and a resolution to present to the state Legislature. Chad Wagner, a freshman political science major, was one of the authors of the bill and resolution.

"The resolution basically states the A&M student body's position on the 170-hour cap rule," Wagner said. "It shows our support for writing an amendment to the current legislation. As far as I know, no amendments or adjustments have been written by legislators yet. Because the resolution was passed, it is going to help our argument when we present the bill."

The bill, which calls for the rewording of the rule to count completed hours and not attempted hours and would have the cap pertain only to students enrolling for the first time in a state-funded public university as of Fall 1999, was not passed in the senate. It was referred to a committee for further research and adjustment and will be presented to the senate during the Feb.

going to contact other universities and hopefully get a unified stance from all state-funded schools in Texas. This has to go beyond Texas A&M if we are going to fix this problem."

A resident adviser compensation bill was adopted during the meeting.

Student senator Rob Ferguson, a sophomore political science major, said the purpose of the bill is to compensate for the lack of benefits the resident advisers receive. According to information presented last night, the definition of a student worker at Texas A&M is stated as a student who works a minimum of twelve hours per week between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Resident advisers work at least 21 hours per week and are not allowed to

"It will affect about 150 RAs. For all the work that they do for students, I think it is the least we can do."

Two bills being implemented this spring during student body elections were passed during the meeting. The educated voter bill will implement a supplemental candidate guide to be distributed with each ballot handed out during the elections. Courtney Eschbach, a student senator and freshman political science major, said the booklets will contain information about the candidates and their goals for office.

"This will allow the voter to know more about the candidate than just their name," Eschbach said. "It is just a trial basis for this spring and next

fall's freshmen elections. After that, the senate will review the policy and modify, if it was necessary."

The second bill passed affecting this semester's election concerns new regulations for off-campus campaigning. The new regulations limit signs to be posted on public property to be no larger than 11 by 17 inches. Off-campus campaigning will be restricted to organization meetings, radio programs, car paintings, signs and traditional campaign material including T-shirts, buttons and stickers.

Four resolutions showing Senate support were also passed. A resolution concerning the pilot program of placing Career Center advisers in various advising offices in selected colleges was adopted as well as support for the Colombia earthquake relief efforts and the tax-free textbook bill being reviewed on by administration.

Three bills, including the setting of election dates, a proposed addition of a bachelor of science degree in biology and the suggestions for the 170-hour cap rule were referred to various committees and will reappear during the next meeting.

Election Commissioner Dawn McGill, and 10 new senators were sworn into office during the meeting. Four senate vacancies remain, applications are due in the Student Government Office Feb. 12.

Weekday sundae



ERIC NEWMAN/THE BATTALION

Laree Vinson, a junior animal science major, makes a butterscotch sundae in the Rosenthal Meat and Dairy Center Wednesday. The Center plans to sell homemade ice cream this summer.

Students may be unaware of alcohol penalties

BY ANDREA BROCKMAN
The Battalion

Ramifications of alcohol offenses, particularly minor in possession (MIP), contributing or selling to minors, driving while intoxicated (DWI) and driving under the influence (DUI), can be unclear to students.

Rick D. Powell, a student's attorney in the Department of Student Life, said laws and amendments to laws were passed to increase the penalties for alcohol offenses in Feb. 1997.

Powell said some offenders still do not realize the serious trouble they may be in.

"An MIP ticket used to result in a fine and an alcohol education class," he said. "Because of the new law, a minor now also may face

community service and a thirty-day license suspension on the first offense."

Powell said the third MIP becomes a Class "B" misdemeanor with a maximum of a \$2,000 fine and six months in jail.

He said minors should be careful in the presence of alcohol.

"You might just be trying to be helpful by carrying a case of beer," Powell said, "but if you get caught, you will get an MIP whether you are drinking or not."

Among the new laws is driving under the influence of alcohol by a minor, a Class "C" misdemeanor with a first offense punishable by a maximum \$500 fine, between 20 to 30 hours of community service, a possible 60-day license suspension

and an alcohol awareness class.

Powell said to receive a DUI the offender must be a minor, and his blood alcohol content (BAC) does not have to exceed the legal limit.

"Even if the minor only drank half a beer, he is subject to a DUI," he said. "However, if the BAC is above the legal limit of .10, he will receive a DWI."

A DWI is a Class "B" misdemeanor in which the person is operating a motor vehicle with either a BAC of more than .100 or does not

Drinking Offenses and Penalties

MIPs

• First offense may result in a fine, attendance of an alcohol education class, community service, license suspension.

DWIs

• First offense may result in a \$2,000 fine, jail time, suspension of license.

DUIs

• First offense punishable by a maximum fine of \$500, community service, suspension of license, required attendance of alcohol education class.

have normal use of mental or physical faculties due to alcohol, a controlled substance, a drug, a combination of two or more of those substances or any other substance into the body.

Powell said there have

SEE ALCOHOL ON PAGE 2.

Suit over law school goes into mediation

BY NONI SRIDHARA
The Battalion

District Court Judge Suzanne Covington in Austin sent the Texas A&M-South Texas College of Law lawsuit into mediation with representatives from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Tuesday.

Last summer, A&M proposed the addition of a law program to the University by affiliating with the South Texas College of Law. Once this proposal was rejected, A&M and the South Texas College of Law joined forces to sue the coordinating board. In rebuttal to this action, the coordinating board filed a lawsuit claiming the affiliation

was illegal.

Jim Ashlock, executive director of University Relations, said the judge told the parties involved she preferred not to make any rulings at the present time.

"She said if one side won the case, then the other side would probably just appeal it," Ashlock said, "so we needed mediation to take the case out of the court."

Ashlock said A&M is supportive of this ruling.

"We need to get back to our normal relationship with the Higher Education Coordinating Board," he said.

Don Tomlinson, professor in the Department of Journalism, said he was delighted to hear of the ruling.

"I see this mediation as a win-win situation," he said.

Tomlinson said in a mediation you will never have one side win and another side lose.

"Both sides end up satisfied because the whole case is over," he said, "but they have not fully achieved what they wanted to achieve originally."

Tomlinson said if the mediation proves to be unsuccessful, then they will have to report this to the judge, and they will proceed with an actual trial.

"All parties involved have to be willing to make a compromise," he said.

SEE LAWSUIT ON PAGE 2.

Students learn about living with disabilities

BY AMANDA PALM
The Battalion

Texas A&M students experienced what living with a disability is like during Disabilities Awareness Day at the MSC yesterday.

Students listened to disabled peers talk about their lives at a panel discussion and participated in Access Challenge to learn first hand about having a disability.

Sarah Whitlock, a junior psychology major who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, was a member of the panel. She said she wanted to participate to share her personal experience about living with cerebral palsy.

"It's not that you are disabled, you're differently abled," she said. "There is more to me than just a machine, and I want people to realize that."

David Pearson, a junior finance major, said he was impressed with the panel members.

"The panel had such good atti-



TERRY ROBERSON/THE BATTALION

L to R: Derek Speakmon, a junior history major, and Kelly Shepard, a junior accounting major, watch as Steven Schmidt, a freshman general studies major, listen to a cassette that simulates the audio capabilities of a hearing-impaired person.

tudes and focused on how much their families supported and encouraged them," he said. "Those who are not disabled complain about little things like walking to class, not realizing how easy they have it. The panel members were an inspiration."

SEE DISABILITY ON PAGE 2.

Huntsville chaplain to speak at forum

BY BETH MILLER
The Battalion

The death penalty will be discussed tonight at a forum hosted by the Just Peace Institute, a community-wide organization addressing social and environmental issues.

The discussion at 7:30 p.m. at Friends Congregational Church in College Station will present the audience with a two-person panel of experts on the death penalty.

Dr. Daniel McGee, professor of religion at Baylor University, and Father John Gallagher, professor of moral theology at St. Thomas University in Houston, have written about and researched the death penalty and will answer questions from the audience.

The Rev. Carroll Pickett, a for-

mer death-house chaplain for the Huntsville Unit, will speak to the group about his experiences serving more than 145 death-row inmates. Pickett worked in Huntsville when death row inmates were executed at midnight rather than the current 6 p.m. execution time. He met with inmates during the days of their executions and fulfilled special requests for them including spiritual guidance and arranging for them to partake in final communication with family members.

After Pickett's address, the panel members will give brief speeches from religious points of view. A question-and-answer session will follow.

Phyllis Frederiksen, member of the Just Peace Institute, said Texas A&M students, faculty, staff and

SEE FORUM ON PAGE 2.

A&M students contribute to Colorado hospital design

BY APRIL YOUNG
The Battalion

Graduate assistant Kristy Walvoord and 14 upper-level design students will leave today for Colorado to participate in designing a women's and children's pavilion at Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs.

John Castorina of FDS International in Irving, Texas, invited Professor George J. Mann, Ronald L. Skaggs, Endowed Professor of Health Facilities Design, and the students to design the new 200,000-square-foot women's and children's pavilion.

Castorina said the project will expose the students to professional service firms and give them an opportunity to present their ideas.

"As a former student of Texas A&M University," Castorina said in a press release, "I do understand the significance of student participation with real projects, as well as exposure to professional

service firms and an introduction into the 'Aggie Network.' The fresh uninhibited ideas that are often created by students, at times, reminds and educates professionals on the limitless opportunities that may be forgotten due to perceived constraints."

In Colorado Springs, the students will listen to staff needs and meet with the fire marshal to discuss the accommodations that the design should provide. The group will return to College Station Feb. 7 to begin work on the designs.

The undergraduate students will focus mainly on the outside structure and basic floor plans, while Kristy Walvoord, winner of the 1998-1999 American Institute of Architects/American Hospital Association Graduate Fellow award in health facilities planning and design, will look into plans for women's services offered at the pavilion.

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