



# The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY

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College Station, Texas

## aggielife

• Explore the history of the ancient Eastern art of henna, or mehndi, an alternative to tattoos.

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## today's issue

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## Thursday's issue

Flag waving controversy still wages on over the dubious history of the stars and bars.

## sports

• New coaches, new arena mark 1998-1999 A&M men's and women's basketball seasons.

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# Crossroads

## Relocation of tracks to be reviewed

BY AMANDA SMITH  
The Battalion

The Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization (BCSMPO) will consider a proposal to relocate the railroad tracks which travel through College Station 24 times daily paralleling Wellborn Road and dividing the Texas A&M campus at today's meeting.

BCSMPO, an organization established independently of the municipal governments communities, will meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Brazos Center in Bryan.

Michael Parks, BCSMPO director, said the relocation of the tracks is tentative and contingent upon the needs of the community and Union Pacific Railroad.

"I am for whatever the community wants," Parks said. "If the community decides it does not want to relocate the tracks, then I do not think we should relocate the tracks. A study needs to be done, but we need local commitment to conduct a study."

Funding for the study would come from one of two matching grants which must be matched by local funds.

Parks said Union Pacific has already committed \$100,000 to the Texas Transportation Institute, the organization expected to conduct the initial part of the study.

Union Pacific has planned to double the railroad tracks running through Bryan-College Station, increasing traffic from 24 to 45 trains per day.

Doug Williams, an associate director of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS), said the Texas A&M community advocates the relocation of the railroad tracks paralleling Wellborn Road.

"From a University perspective, we definitely want to see the tracks relocated," Williams said. "[Additional tracks] would have a detrimental impact on the Texas A&M community."

Williams said the anticipated increase in bus, vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the West Campus area is not conducive to Union Pacific Railroad's anticipated expansion of its College Station railroad.

Eddy Handley, assistant vice president of Union Pacific Railroad, was not available for comment on the company's plans.

## Garage fire



Officer Lee Elkins of University Police Department and Lt. Rodney Zalbony of the College Station Fire Department inspect the vehicle next to a burned truck for damage. The unattended truck was parked on the first level of the Northside Parking Garage and caught fire after 2 p.m. Tuesday. The cause of the fire is not known.

CARINO CASAS/THE BATTALION

# Buffet to offer world's foods

• Banquet will feature cuisine from 30 campus organizations.

BY EMILY R. SNOOKS  
The Battalion

Students will have an opportunity to taste cuisine from throughout the world at the International Week International Buffet tonight from 7 to 10 on the second floor of the MSC.

Sharla Albright, senior secretary of International Programs for Students, said the International Buffet is the most widely attended event of International Week. International students from 30 campus organizations will have booths set up offering cuisine from their native countries. The food is homemade by students using original recipes from their native countries. Entertainment will be provided by children, who will perform cultural dances, and three cultural bands who will perform.

Derrick Weingartner, international student adviser, said International Week was not always a five-day event. The first celebration, International Day, was 20 years ago. In one day, international students presented a cultural display, a talent show and the international buffet.

Weingartner said the International Buffet is unique because it allows students a chance to share aspects of their cultures with others.

"The purpose is to give our international Aggies a chance to share different areas of the world with fellow Ags who haven't had an opportunity to experience other cultures of the world," he said. "It's also so unique because one can taste food they would eat if they went to an international student's home in their native country."

Albright said the buffet will be an experience everyone can enjoy. "It's fantastic cuisine and delightful entertainment," she said.

Tickets for the International Buffet are available at the door and at the MSC box office for \$8.

SEE RELATED STORY ON PAGE 6.

## Saving the word



CARINO CASAS/THE BATTALION

(L to R) Blair Whitakerr, a freshman general studies major, Kristin McCune, a freshman business major, Ann Dodson, a freshman business major, Leah Muriel, a sophomore business major and Lynsey Alford, a junior elementary education major, greet unidentified students as part of Howdy Week. All this week students in the Howdy Ags organization will walk across campus to promote the use of A&M's traditional greeting.

# COSGA addresses alcohol policies

BY AMANDA PALM  
The Battalion

Texas A&M delegates for the 19th annual Conference On Student Government Association (COSGA) exchanged ideas about student apathy and campus alcohol policies with delegates from 111 schools throughout the nation.

Jill Wenger, director for COSGA and a senior business management major, said members of COSGA at A&M organized the conference and facilitated the roundtable discussions.

Todd Strosnider, a member of COSGA and a senior speech communication major, served as a facilitator and said discussion of various universities' alcohol policies was a major issue.

Jeremy Harman, programming executive for COSGA and a junior finance major, said the alcohol policy was a concern of all universities at the conference.

"There has been so much national attention given to binge drinking recently, so the conference wanted to be sure to take the issue seriously," Harman said. "This was a big issue for all schools. We even made a point to have a variety of nighttime activities for delegates so there wouldn't be a focus on drinking at the conference."

Harman said there were 16 workshops

during the conference, 13 of which were presented by visiting schools and professional organizations.

**"The point was not to show off A&M's student government; it was to exchange ideas."**

— Jeremy Harman

Programming executive for COSGA

"I think everyone learned a lot at the conference," he said. "The point was not to show off A&M's student government; it was to exchange ideas and learn how other schools deal with the similar issues."

Wenger has been involved with COSGA for four years and said this conference was the most successful one she has participated in.

"The speakers were dynamic, and the synergy in the group was unreal," she said. "The conference was a fantastic success."

# Aggies to experience homelessness

BY AMANDA PALM  
The Battalion

Aggie Habitat for Humanity will give students an opportunity to experience homelessness by hosting Shack-a-Thon March 3-5.

Shack-a-Thon begins today with shack construction near Rudder Fountain. Participants will spend two nights in the shacks and will tear them down Friday afternoon.

The Residence Hall Association (RHA), Alpha Phi Omega (APO), representatives of the Class of 2000, Freshman Leaders In Progress (FLIP) and the Conference On Freshman Leadership Organizations (COFLO) will participate in the event.

MSC Town Hall, which hosts concerts and other entertainment, will provide music during the two-day Shack-a-Thon.

Stephen Fisher, Shack-a-Thon chair and a management information systems major, said organizations bid to participate in the event because it is a fund-raiser.

"Each organization is responsible for building its own shack and can use any materials they can drag to campus," Fisher said.

Participants are not required to stay in the shacks for the entire two days. Students can sign up for shifts and come and go throughout the event.

SEE HABITAT ON PAGE 2.



**habitat for humanity**

Organizations participating in the Shack-a-Thon

- Residence Hall Association
- Alpha Phi Omega
- Class of 2000
- Freshman Leaders In Progress
- Conference On Freshman Leadership Organizations

JP BEATO/THE BATTALION