



The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY

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College Station, Texas

opinion

• *The rebel flag is a reminder of both good and bad of the American South.*

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today's issue

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Swimming and Diving 5

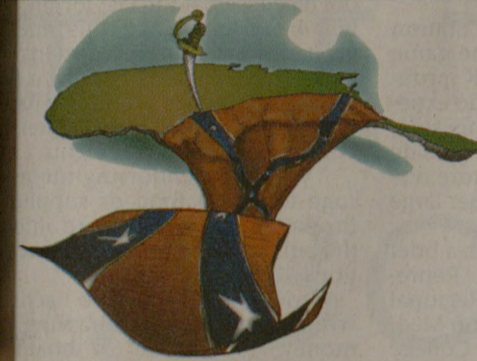
Friday's issue

Texas A&M softball team hosts Aggie Invitational II at Aggie Softball Complex.

aggielife

• *Texas A&M's veterinary school houses and treats all injured creatures both great and small.*

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Tracking down a solution

Double track may be built in B-CS

BY AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

Eddy Handley, assistant vice president of Union Pacific Railroad, urged city officials, retailers and residents of the Bryan-College Station community to prepare for an increase in train traffic. "We are going to run more trains," Handley said. "We are looking about five years down the road, and there are going to be a lot more trains. I am not advocating one route over another, but it is preferable for us to relocate, and I am willing to go anywhere you [as a community] can go." Handley said Union Pacific Railroad's consideration to build a second track would double the number of trains daily. Trains traveling along the Union Pacific line average 20 mph, in comparison to some trains averaging 60 mph along rural routes. "Double tracking does not raise the speed limit, but it does increase the capacity of Union Pacific," Handley said. "I don't know who will be here in 2025, but Union Pacific will be here. We are going to be the strongest and the best railroad in the country." In response to the increased traffic in the community, the Bryan-College Station Municipal Planning Organization (BCSMPO), formed of the Cities of Bryan and College Station, Brazos County and Texas A&M, approved a partnership study with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to determine pros and cons of the existing railroad, BCSMPO director Michael Parks said.



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

Parks said Union Pacific has committed \$100,000 to TTI for the study. BCSMPO began researching the possible relocation of the rail line in February 1998. Presently, 24 trains travel along the railroad parallel to Wellborn Road. Citizens of the Bryan-College Station community interested in participating in a five-member oversight committee in consideration of the possible relocation of Union Pacific rail lines can contact the BCSMPO at (409) 260-5298.

Student Senate rejects garage

BY CARRIE BENNETT
The Battalion

The Student Senate passed a bill rejecting the proposed West Campus Parking Garage, which had been approved by the senators four years ago, and will send the recommendation to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. The proposed garage would increase parking from the 932 spaces available at Parking Area 56 to 3,781 spaces with 50-percent visitor spaces and 50-percent contract spaces. Senator Lauren M. Guerra, a sophomore speech communications major, said the senators approved the parking garage under the impression that the fee increase implemented four years ago would pay for the garage, and there would not be another fee increase to support the garage in the future. Guerra, a co-chairs of the parking committee and one of the seven authors of the West Campus Parking

Garage bill, said she is not against the parking garage or the location of the proposed garage, but more research needs to be conducted to determine whether or not the proposed site is the optimum location. "The location of the garage needs to be looked at further," Guerra said. "The possibility of double tracking the railroad and the relocation of vehicles during the construction of the garage needs to be considered." She said the committee wants to make sure there will be an adequate number of spaces if the garage is built. Guerra said other proposed locations were rejected because of utilization. "One site mainly catered to the academic traffic from 10 [a.m.] until 4 [p.m.], and the use of the site would not be feasible," Guerra said. "Another site was rejected because there is an endangered flower blooming in the ravine."

SEE GARAGE ON PAGE 2.

Recruitment committee to host potential students

BY RICHARD PADDACK
The Battalion

The Aggie Recruitment Committee (ARC) will host its third annual Whoopin' Weekend Thursday through Sunday with 249 prospective A&M students participating from high schools throughout Texas. The conference will target high school sophomores, juniors and seniors interested in attending A&M. It will also focus on students who have been accepted to A&M. A press release said the main objective of the weekend is to allow the students who attend to become better acquainted with college life, particularly at A&M, by having them participate in college activities and traditions. Activities will include a Midnight Yell Practice, a morning class with their conference discussion group leaders, dinner at Sbis Dining Hall, a tour of the George Bush Library and a mixer. Thirty of the visitors will stay with students in dorms on the quadrangle, and the others will stay in various dorms on campus.

Beth Ableson, ARC chair and a junior elementary education major, said the weekend will be a good opportunity to demonstrate programs and traditions A&M offers students. Ableson said this year will be ARC's fourth year to host a recruiting conference, but the first year it was called Howdy Weekend. Howdy Weekend hosted 25 high school students, and Whoopin' Weekend caters to 250 students. Marc Wolf, activities sub-chair and a junior finance major, said conference attendance is on a first-come-first-serve basis, and there is a 250-student cap for participation. Elizabeth Ortiz, Whoopin' Weekend co-chair and a senior biomedical science major, said conference recruitment begins during each winter break. ARC members return to their high schools to share information about A&M. "This weekend enables prospective freshmen the opportunity to experience what Aggieland is all about first hand," Ortiz said. "There's no better recruiter for A&M than the University itself."

Role model



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Michael Hodnett, a junior biology major, sculpts a model of Sul Ross Wednesday. Hodnett said he is practicing sculpting Sul Ross so that he may win the right to reproduce the statue.

International Buffet draws hundreds

BY EMILY R. SNOOKS
The Battalion

Twenty-eight cultural student organizations served a variety of ethnic foods to a packed house at the International Buffet last night at the MSC. Eager patrons were waiting at every entrance when the doors opened at 7 p.m. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and families enjoyed food from throughout the globe. Students from each organization prepared and served traditional dishes from their native countries. Students decorated their booths and dressed in clothing representing various cultures. Entertainment was provided with culturally diverse performances by elementary, high school and college students from the Bryan-College Station area.

Daniel Ramirez, a member of the Puerto Rican Student Association and a senior biology major, said he has participated in the International Buffet for the past three years. Ramirez said the event usually produces a large turnout. "This year the buffet was definitely talked about more," he said. "Every year, it's like a big culture shock for all those who come." Popular items among the crowd included Indonesian skewered chicken, Panamanian empanadas and Japanese green tea ice cream. Lisa Carter, a member of the Caribbean Student Association and a senior economics major, said her group's seasoned beef patties were its most popular items and all were eaten 45 minutes after the doors opened. Before the event, the students and their food were judged based on pre-



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Sidney Liang, a senior management information systems major, serves Hong Kong fruit salad at the International Buffet Wednesday. Liang, a member of the International Student Association, said the buffet is a great way to introduce students to different cultures, taste, hospitality and decoration. Dona Hafill, director of judging and awards, said the winners will be announced at the International Week closing ceremony and party Friday night. Awards will also be given to winners of the cultural display and Friday night's talent show.

Renovation 'rocks' Reed McDonald

BY RACHEL HOLLAND
The Battalion

Reed McDonald is undergoing cosmetic surgery, having the red-coated, rock trim replaced with brown paint. The renovation, which began in December, is funded through deferred maintenance for 1999 and involves removing the rocks and sanding the surface for the new coating. Melissa McConnell, planner estimator with Physical Plant, said the renovation is necessary because the original coating was falling off and peeling. McConnell said a brown coating was selected because it would make the building more attractive. "We selected a color slight-

ly darker than the bricks on Reed McDonald," she said. "It also matches the other buildings on campus." McConnell said the \$185,000 project is being conducted by Mid-Continental Restoration Company and should be completed by June. "They are probably 75-percent done with the work," she said. "With the progress that has been made, it will probably be done sooner than June." Timothy Donathen, assistant vice chancellor for Facilities Planning and Construction, said the red coating and rocks were implemented as part of the original construction of Reed McDonald. The construction, costing \$1,460,000, was completed in 1967, making the red coating 32 years old.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Ron Webb, an employee with Mid-Continental Restoration Company, prepares the surface of the Reed McDonald building for painting.