



# The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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College Station, Texas



## aggielife

• "Tubularman" creator Boomer Cardinale returns to Texas A&M with his comic strip.

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## today's issue

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## Voter's guide

Read about the 1999 candidates and their stances on the issues facing Texas A&M.

## opinion

• Columnist questions the safety of buses used by Texas A&M's transportation system.

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## Students to choose class gift

BY MEGAN E. WRIGHT  
The Battalion

Members of the Class of 1999 will vote on the class gift during the student body elections today and tomorrow.

Cindy Brown, chair of the class gift committee and a senior political science major, said the class gift committee decided on the following six choices for the class gift:

- A plaza near the Academic Building, Harrington Education Classroom Center and Cushing Memorial Library to celebrate and encourage diversity at A&M
- An endowment to the Hagler Center
- A Class of '99 pavilion at the proposed student leadership conference center near FM 2818
- Repatriation of the plaques around the O.R. Simpson Drill Field to commemorate World War I soldiers
- A donation to the Muster endowment
- A diamond-endowed-century-club membership through the Association of Former Students, in which a donation would be made, and the Association would disperse the money to organizations in need of assistance.

Nicki Smith, a member of the class gift committee and a senior biomedical science major, said the committee began soliciting ideas

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## Student falls to his death

BY AMANDA STIRPE  
The Battalion

William E. Berry Jr., a freshman agricultural engineering major from Hewett, Texas, committed suicide yesterday by jumping from the fourth floor of the Northside Parking Garage onto New Street at 4:44 p.m.

Bob Wiatt, director of University Police Department (UPD), said Berry, a resident of Crocker Hall, drove his truck to the fourth floor of the parking garage and left his high school ring and a note to his parents informing them of his intent to kill himself. Berry also left a note in his residence hall room explaining his suicide.

Wiatt said Berry climbed onto the railing of the garage where he sat until UPD officers arrived immediately after a 4:26 p.m. call informed them of Berry sitting on the ledge.

Wiatt said the two officers that responded engaged in a conversation with Berry in which he told the officers that he was jumping because of grade problems.

Dr. Wade Birch, director of Student Counseling Services, was called to the scene but was unable to make it there in time.

Following the fall, Berry was taken immediately to St. Joseph Regional Health Center where he was pronounced dead at 5:30 p.m.

Wiatt said Berry was most likely dead before he was taken to the hospital.

Wiatt said students in the vicinity were kept away from

the area.

Student Counseling Services representatives were available to talk to Crocker Hall residents. Cindy Cook, a Student Counseling Services employee, said they talked to students about normal reactions and were there if the students wanted to talk.

Kevin Boehm, Berry's Resident Adviser and a junior biomedical science major, said he cannot believe the incident happened.

"I did not see any signs at all of him being depressed," Boehm said. "I saw him yesterday and asked him how he was doing, and he smiled and said he was fine."

Boehm said Berry was a positive person who was respected by everyone in the hall.

"His friends said they saw no indicators," Boehm said. "Several of them saw him this morning and also at 1 p.m. and said he was fine."

Boehm said he wishes Berry would have sought help.

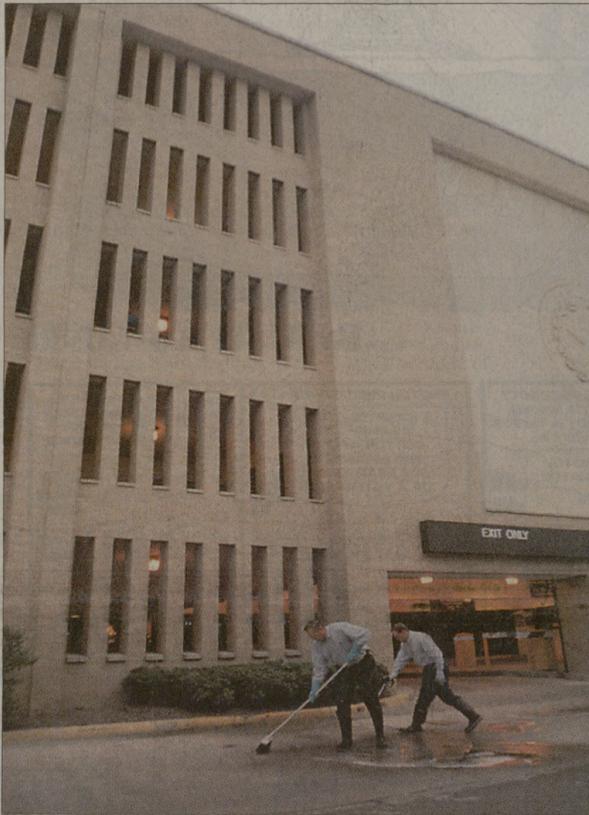
Another Resident Adviser in Crocker said Berry's death is a huge shock that has not set in. He said Berry was an enthusiastic Aggie who had a lot of friends.

Scott Hermann, a resident of Crocker Hall and a sophomore business major, said no one expected Berry's suicide.

"We're all trying to figure out what's going on," Hermann said. "There is a lot of silence."

In addition to Berry's death, a similar incident on the fourth

SEE FALL ON PAGE 2.



CARINO CASAS/THE BATTALION

Two members of the Environmental Health and Safety Department clean the section of New Street in front of the Northside Parking Garage where William E. Berry Jr. fell to his death yesterday afternoon.

## Students aim to stop drunken driving

BY BETH MILLER  
The Battalion

Texas A&M students who choose to become intoxicated at Northgate will have an option other than stumbling home on foot or driving a car under the influence of alcohol when Caring Aggies "R" Protecting Over Our Lives (CARPOOL) begins operation in Fall 1999.

Applications for potential drivers are not available, but there will be an informational meeting tonight at 7 in 110 Koldus.

Jeff Schiefenbein, a director of CARPOOL and a junior marketing major, said his inspiration for founding the organization came when he attended a mandatory Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) victim-impact panel after receiving a citation for Driving While Intoxicated (DWI). He said a woman on the panel told of her daughter who had been killed by a drunk driver when she was in high school.

"I realized that not only was I risking that, but I know a lot of people who drink and drive," he said.

Schiefenbein said his first consideration was purchasing a cell phone and making himself available to his friends. However, he later decided to expand the idea and form an organization to assist all A&M students.

Schiefenbein said he spent this past winter break researching programs similar to CARPOOL and has recruited other directors and team leaders throughout the semester.

Drivers will be available by telephone Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. He said the directors have begun negotiations with businesses in the community to sponsor the program. Insurance consultants have been advising the group about establishing liability and other necessary procedures.

Schiefenbein said the drivers will participate in training programs concerning first aid, alcohol awareness, risk management, team building and basic operation techniques of the program.

Mark Cordes, a CARPOOL director and a freshman mechanical engineering major, said Schiefenbein selected a director from each classification so the program would have more potential to be continued in the future. Cordes said he would like to establish a strong program at A&M and advise other schools about founding a similar organization.

"Other schools offer rides, but there are no other schools I am aware of that have student drivers," Cordes said, "and no other program that is as big as we want to have."

Cordes said the directors are conferring with local car dealerships to have cars donated to the program, and thinks the negotiations will be successful.

"I really think we will get the donated cars, but in the case that we didn't, people would drive their own cars," he said.

Cordes said each student who uses the program will be picked up by a team of one male and one female student to ensure safety of the drivers and the passengers. He said two women picking up an intoxicated male student may put them in a dangerous position, and two men picking up a female student may make her uncomfortable.

Cordes said the group will keep a log of the nightly activities as a precaution. He said the biggest concerns people will have are liability and risks involved, and the directors will try to prevent as many problems as possible.

## Candidates evaluate platform priorities

Editor's note: With the upcoming student body elections, the editorial board of *The Battalion* has selected three topics which it feels are among the biggest issues facing the Texas A&M campus. The seven candidates for student body president as identified by the election commission were asked about diversity, student safety and fee increases. Each day, an article will be dedicated to one of these issues and Wednesday, each candidate will discuss their top platform priority. This is the third of four installments.

BY EMILY SNOOKS  
AND NONI SRIDHARA  
The Battalion

Each student body president candidate has an overall vision for Texas A&M, and each would like to leave a lasting impact on the University.

Brandon Clarke said his central platform idea is to institutionalize the presidency.

Clarke said as student body president he would form a presidential cabinet or team because the responsibility is too great for one person.

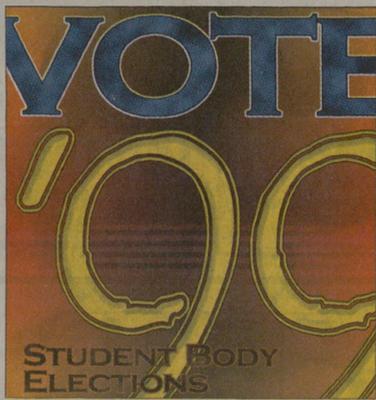
He said he would like to have all the major student organizations represented in a cabinet to help the president make more sound decisions. The cabinet members would be elected by the organizations they represent.

Clarke said as president he could not make decisions alone.

"The power of the presidency is too great for one person to represent the average student because there is no average student," he said. "We are all different, and we deserve to have our needs and wants heard."

T.J. Edwards said he wants the student body to have more access to technological programs. "As far as where we are with the Vision 2020 plan and where we are headed, I think computers are a very important issue," Edwards said.

He said he thinks the Student Senate should emphasize interaction with its constituents. Edwards said he wants to promote communication over the Internet so constituents are able to access their senators quickly and express



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their concerns.

Edwards said he wants to create an "Aggie Bucks Circle" before he leaves office, which would entail increasing the number of locations where AggieBucks are accepted and even include a separate AggieBucks card to reduce the amount of use of students' I.D. cards.

Edwards said he would like to create a student advisory board to offer input in faculty selection.

Brandon Neff said, if elected student body president, he would like to see more daily services for the student body. Neff said one improvement he would like to see on campus is covering all bus stops. He said many students are unhappy with the current bus system.

"The current system is not a very conducive thing to students," he said. "Many times you have students bearing the bad weather while waiting for the bus, or sometimes you have students who wait inside and then have to run outside to meet up with the bus."

Neff said he wants to work toward implementing pro-rated parking in non-contract parking-garage spaces on campus.

"Right now, you pay the same whether you park there for five minutes or an hour," he said. "We need to establish a system where you pay

for what you get."

He said he would like to have the Underground food choices available in the MSC.

"The students I have talked with so far, feel there are not enough eating options in the MSC and would like more choices available," he said. "The Underground is a successful operation, and I do not see any reason for us not to bring those choices over to the central part of campus."

Jason Royster said he wants A&M to become more diverse.

"I know there are other universities around the country which are much more diversified and culturally aware, so we need to step up to the next level," he said.

Royster said he would like to eliminate printing fees from open-access labs.

"I do not think it is necessary for the University to be charging these fees," he said. "We pay enough already."

Will Hurd said his main goal as president is to improve A&M's image within the state. He said A&M needs to take a pro-active approach to the recruitment and interaction of Aggies throughout the state and country.

Hurd said A&M can increase aspects of the pool of potential Aggies by mentoring and recruiting students beginning at the intermediate-school level.

"Having potential students feel like they can identify with A&M before they even get here is a step in continuing to make A&M one of the greatest institutions in the world," he said.

Kendall Kelly said she has two main goals for the student body — she wants to establish smoothie and coffee shops on campus and form a freshman-outreach program. Kelly said a lot of students have demanded the shops.

Proposed locations for the shops include the Commons Lobby, Sbis Dining Hall, Langford and Rumours Coffee House and Deli.

Kelly said her program will prepare freshman students to aid them in adapting to college life.

"A freshman-outreach program is needed because not all freshman attend Fish Camp," she said. "We need to give them more oppor-

SEE CANDIDATES ON PAGE 2.