



The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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College Station, Texas



aggielife

• The popularity of cigars among college students increases despite the health hazards they pose.

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Reminder:

Today is the last day to vote in the student representatives' run-off elections.

sports

• Multi-talented freshman athlete has found niche as javelin thrower for Texas A&M.

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Railroad study approved

BY AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

Talk of double-tracking the rail line that parallels Wellborn Road prompted the Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization (BCSMPO) policy committee to approve research on the railroad Wednesday.

The first part of the study would be the BCSMPO, in conjunction with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), research methods for providing local matching funds to coordinate with a federal grant program to fund the possible relocation of the tracks along Wellborn Road.

Michael Parks, BCSMPO director, said coordination with TTI will provide further insight into the economic feasibility of the project.

"It is paramount that we understand how it affects the community economically, socially and aesthetically," Parks said. "If the costs far outweigh the ben-

efits, then we stop, pack up our tent and go home."

The BCSMPO, composed of the cities of Bryan and College Station, Texas A&M and Brazos County, began reviewing the current status of the Union Pacific Railroad line in February 1998.

Union Pacific Railroad has committed \$100,000 to TTI for the study.

The BCSMPO policy committee approved the creation of a rail advisory committee, which will include seven citizens living in Brazos County, representing Bryan, College Station and A&M.

Dr. Jerry Gaston, the vice president for administration of A&M, said the committee will provide an outlet for citizen feedback.

"The responsibility of this group is to make sure we turn over any and all legal options to get the money we can for this community," Gaston said. "We wouldn't be doing our duty if we didn't do that."

Today, 24 trains travel along the railroad that parallels Wellborn Road. Trains traveling along the Union Pacific line average 20 mph, in comparison to some trains traveling at an average of 60 mph along rural routes.

At the BCSMPO meeting last month, Eddy Handley, the assistant vice president of Union Pacific Railroad, said the Bryan-College Station community is likely to see an increase in train traffic within the next five years.

In response to more train, car and pedestrian traffic along Wellborn Road, the Texas A&M Board of Regents approved development of an underground pedestrian passageway. The proposed crossing would run under the Wellborn Road/Union Pacific Railroad Corridor connecting main campus and West Campus.

The crossing would be integrated into the new Kyle Field entry plaza and the new West Campus Parking Garage, which was approved by the



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

Board of Regents in March.

Students interested in applying for a position on the rail advisory committee can contact the BCSMPO at 260-5298 or online at www.bcsmpo.org. Applications must be submitted to the BCSMPO, located at 4001 E. 29th, by April 14 at 5 p.m.

Staff spaces in garage in jeopardy

BY MEGAN E. WRIGHT
The Battalion

The Student Senate passed a bill last night calling for the removal of 70 staff parking spaces from the Southside Parking Garage.

The bill proposed that the staff spaces should be relocated to Parking Area 25, also known as Adam's Band Hall Lot, which is currently a student resident lot.

Sen. Peter Schulte, a junior business major, said the bill will add 70 spaces for student use in the garage.

"The purpose of this legislation is to make sure that parking spaces in the garage are utilized 24 hours a day and that 30-minute parking spaces be added where they are desperately needed," Schulte said.

If the bill is approved by Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS), PA 25 would become a staff parking lot, and 10 to 15 spaces in that lot would become 30-minute spaces in Fall 1999.

"This would add 70 spaces for students because the staff who use the parking garage utilize it from 8 [a.m.] to 5 [p.m.] during the week, leaving those spaces empty after hours," Schulte said. "This allows for night and weekend parking for Southside residence hall students."

In other business, a bill was passed recommending that graduate classes after 3 p.m. be canceled on April 21 in observance of Muster. Currently, it is recommended that undergraduate classes after 3 p.m. be canceled on the day of Muster.

David Byrd, chair of the External Affairs Committee and an agricultural education graduate student, authored the bill and said professors should observe traditions such as Muster.

"Professors need to realize that the tradition of Muster applies to all students of A&M, regardless of

SEE PARKING ON PAGE 2.

CEO cites secrets of successful people

BY RACHEL HOLLAND
The Battalion

The CEO of Equilon Transportation said in an MSC Executive Series lecture last night that people with visions and ideas and who take action distinguish themselves as successful people.

Dr. Mark Williams, who negotiated the joining of Shell Oil Company, Texas Inc. and Saudi Refining Inc. to form J.S. Equilon Enterprises, said these features are important to reaching any definition of success.

"Vision, ideas and action are distinguishing features of people who are going to move on in life," he said.

Williams said the most ambitious visions of contributing talents and resources to society will take people the furthest.

"Having a vision is the power to ask yourself the question, 'Am I doing everything that I can do at every moment to contribute?'" he said.

Williams said successful people visualize simple ideas.

"The best ideas are crisp and true," he said. "They can usually be written on the back of a napkin."

He said the political strategies of President Clinton, Nelson Mandela and Bill Gates are examples of simple and powerful ideas.

Williams said action orientation is a difficult but important concept to master in a time when people are warned against making errors.

"A bias toward action distinguishes successful people," he said. "You can



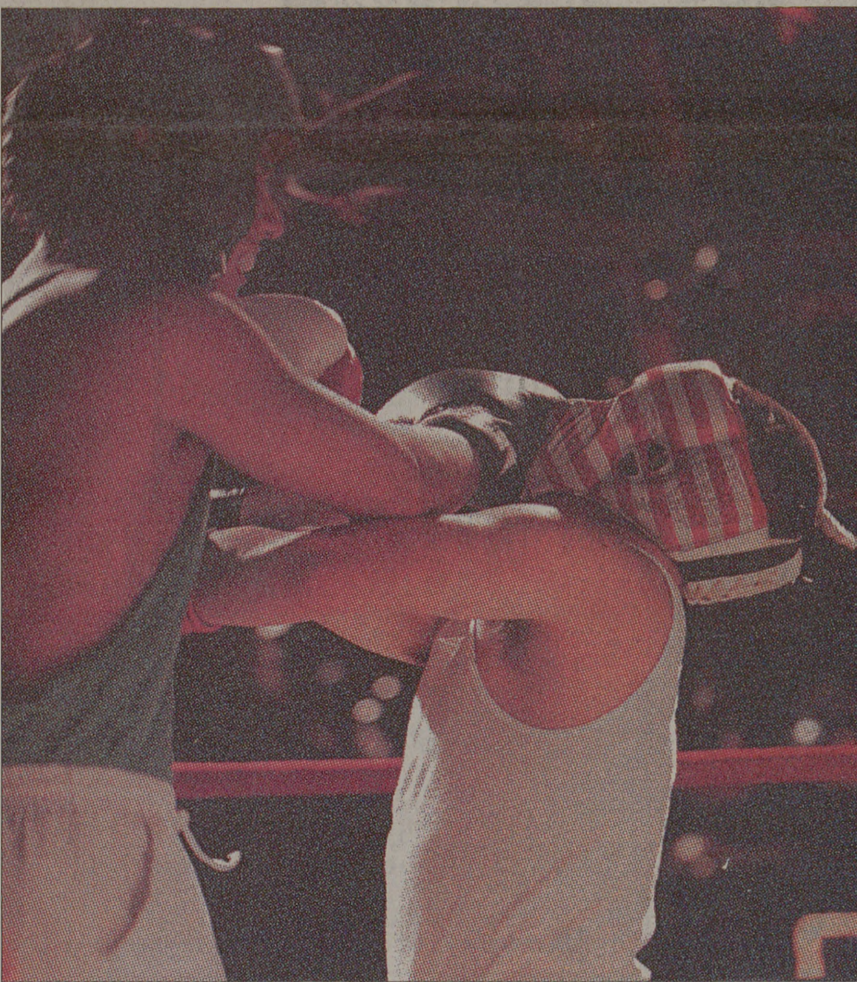
MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Dr. Mark Williams, CEO of Equilon Transportation speaks Wednesday as part of the MSC Executive Series.

have a vision and an idea, but if you can't make something happen, you are dead in the water."

In a question-and-answer session after the lecture, Williams said he defines his own personal success in two ways: being an adequate father and being a positive force for change in the business world.

It's a 'bout' time



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Boxers clash Wednesday night at Rodeo 2000 at Kappa Sigma Fraternity's third annual Fight Night. Proceeds benefitted the American Parkinson's Disease Association.

Sociologist discusses hate crime in the U.S.

BY AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

Sociologist Gary Norman of the Montrose Counseling Center of Houston said Wednesday that the hate crimes committed against individuals of minority groups within the United States resemble the ethnic cleansing occurring in Kosovo and the violence committed during the Holocaust.

"The Holocaust was in essence hate crime committed against people based on their ethnicity and their religion," Norman said.

Ethnic cleansing is trying to erase a whole group of people. If people were assaulted and harassed every day, that would be the beginning of cleansing. They

are. If we go back to the Holocaust, it (ethnic cleansing) was happening subtly. To some degree, that is what is happening here, and it's building an atmosphere of intolerance."

Norman addressed the Texas A&M community as part of a discussion sponsored by Gender Issues Education Services in conjunction with Gay Awareness Week.

In defining hate crimes, Norman cited the FBI's revised 1997 definition: "crime motivated by bias based on race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation."

"It is not fun to talk about," Norman said. "We have this sense of security and safety we feel the need to carry around with us all the time."



TERRY ROBERSON/THE BATTALION

Gary Norman, of the Montrose Counseling Center, speaks about hate crimes Wednesday night.

When Norman questioned the audience, students mentioned incidents of discrimination against ethnic minorities and women in addition to incidents of violence committed against homosexuals.

In 1993, a group of students and

SEE HATE CRIME ON PAGE 6.

Community prepares for vote to determine fate of Munson

BY CARRIE BENNETT
The Battalion

Campaigning will soon begin for both sides on the issue of the Munson Avenue barricades for the May 1 special election.

Kayla Glover, resident of the College Hills neighborhood through which Munson Avenue runs, leads Friends of Our Community, an organization supporting the permanent removal of the barricades. Glover said the members of the group have been planning their campaign at meetings during the past few months.

"Saturday morning we will put 500 signs out all over town for the 'Open Munson Campaign,'" Glover said.

She said the members of Friends

of Our Community will call people and get permission to place signs in yards around the area.

"Signs and mailers will be the majority of our advertising," she said. "We will try to do some television ads, but we need more funds first."

Glover said the main objective of the campaign is to encourage people to vote.

Shawn Carlson, a College Hills resident and a member of Citizens for Neighborhood Integrity, the organization in favor of barricading Munson Avenue, said she hopes to show voters that blocking streets and zoning to preserve neighborhoods is not a new idea.

"Next week sometime, we will begin with mailers and signs in order to convey our message," Carl-

son said.

She said the traffic congestion on Munson Avenue can be dangerous to small children and the elderly, who may not have fast reflexes. The congestion will cause property values to decrease, which will disrupt the tax base of the city, she said.

Sharon Knutson, a member of Friends of Our Community, said she thinks controversy over the Munson Avenue issue will continue regardless of the outcome of the election.

"This is an on-going struggle," she said, "and I don't think the election will be the end of this issue."

Knutson said campaign plans include phone calls and providing transportation for voters to the polls May 1.

VOTE

Student voting for the run-off elections began yesterday and concludes at 5 p.m. today.

Run-off candidates include Will Hurd and Brandon Neff for student body president, James Leiskau and Ricky Wood for junior yell/leader, Amy Todd and Collin Poage for Class of 2001 president, Courtney Lindsey and Kristin Kruse for Class of 2001 vice president and Katy Gilstrap and James Tiller for Class of 2002 historian.

Voting locations are the Commons Lobby, the MSC, Sterling C. Evans Library, Blocker Kleberg, Wehner, Zachry, Sbisá and Duncan Dining Halls, the Student Recreation Center and the George Bush School of Government and Public Service.