

The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY

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College Station, Texas



aggielife

• The ancient practice of meditation has gained a modern following.

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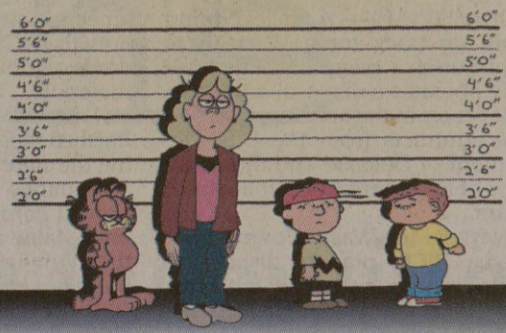
Battalion Radio

Tune in to 90.9 KAMU-FM at 1:57 p.m. for the City of College Station's schedule changes in observance of July 4.

opinion

• Classic comic strips should look to today's society for new story ideas.

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Renovations raise questions

City of College Station plans changes to former church building

BY CARRIE BENNETT
The Battalion

The property at 303 Boyett in College Station that was built in the 1930s has been undergoing renovations that will transform the building into a barbecue and steak restaurant, which is scheduled for completion in August.

The structure, which had been moved from its original location at 202 College Main, was historically a parsonage for the First Baptist Church and has been vacant for a number of years.

Benito Flores-Meath, Class of '83, said the renovations did not follow a College Station ordinance

and would ruin a potentially historic landmark.

The ordinance states a structure must be at least 50 years old, be reflected as a high or medium priority by the Northgate Historic Resources Survey, or have been designated as a historic site by the National Register of Historic Places.

Flores-Meath said a survey conducted by the city, consisting half of A&M students and faculty and half of College Station citizens, found this Northgate zone to be rated as medium to high priority. He said renovating this building is in direct violation of nine out of 10 guidelines under this city ordinance.

"What bothers me is not even so much the fact about the historical aspects of it, but the fact that the city was in direct violation of their own laws," he said.

Flores-Meath said he thinks the council members who voted on this renovation were not properly informed before hand on all the rules and guidelines.

"Many times we are portrayed in a very negative way," he said. "I am not trying to accuse anyone of any wrongdoing. I'm just interested in the preservation of historically significant places in the city."

Michael Wheeler, a College Station resident who regularly attends

City Council meetings, said he thinks that since the city is under certain guidelines they should not make any exceptions.

"If citizens try to point out that that they [the city] are doing something wrong, the city just doesn't listen," Wheeler said. "Once something goes wrong, they just say 'oops, we made a mistake.'"

Wheeler said more than the historical value, he is concerned that the renovations are being paid for in part by money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"I don't see why taxpayers money are going to go towards this restaurant," he said. "The owner

SEE HISTORIC ON PAGE 2.



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

The property at 303 Boyett in College Station, a former parsonage, is being renovated as a restaurant despite protests that it is a historic landmark.

Taking position



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

James Benavides, a senior journalism major, holds the "snake creeping" form while practicing Yang-style Tai Chi, a simplified, 24-step version of the ancient Chinese art, at Research Park Wednesday afternoon.

BISD administrator rethinks resignation

BY RYAN WEST
The Battalion

In a closed session following a meeting of the Bryan Independent School District's Board of Trustees meeting, Bryan High School Principal Joe Kopec rescinded his resignation.

The session followed an open discussion in which parents and faculty expressed their concern over the resignation of Kopec.

The discussion ended when Kopec and several board members requested the Trustees meet for a closed executive session.

Kopec, principal of Bryan High School since 1996, submitted his resignation two weeks ago, shortly after he had renewed his contract for the following year.

David Stasny, president of the Board of Trustees, told the audience that the board was not permitted to discuss business concerning any personnel, referring to Kopec, without holding an executive meeting first.

However, as parents and faculty spoke in the meeting before the closed session, although they were not permitted to mention Kopec's name, their concern for the loss of the principal was clear.



KOPEC

Brett Cumpton, one of the architects working on the high school, expressed his concerns about the recent changes.

"I've been at Bryan High on a daily basis for the past year," he said, "and as one of the architects, I've been working there for the last three or four years."

"I've seen some really great things going on there despite all of the construction and changes. But, I think everyone was looking forward to a little stability, at this point, and I hope you take that into consideration before making another change [Kopec's resignation]."

Ron Rolett, one of several parents who voiced concerns, said he was concerned about the resignation because his daughter will be entering the high school this fall.

"Given the fact that we are consolidating two new groups of students [from differing middle schools] into the new facility, I'm concerned about any other changes [Kopec's resignation] they will have to endure at this time," he said.

Rolett said Kopec was a thoughtful and helpful principal who knew the students' names and was involved in the entire process of bringing the schools together.

"I want the person who has brought us to this point to stay," he said. "Dr. Kopec is too good for the community and our kids to let him go."

College Station to celebrate 4th of July with fireworks

BY SUZANNE BRABECK
The Battalion

The College Station Noon Lions Club will kick off the 39th annual "I Love America Celebration" Sunday at 6 p.m. on the grounds surrounding the George Bush Presidential Library Complex in observance of Independence Day.

The College Station chapter of the club was started in 1950 and hosts this free function as a "thank you" to the community for its support of their fund raisers throughout the year.

Masters of Ceremonies this year are television station KBTX's Brenda Simms and Dave South, of KAMU-FM.

Brian Brumfield, a member of the Lions Club and a committee member for the Fourth of July celebration, said they are expecting an increase in the number of attendees from last year's 5,000 attendees.

There will be live musical performances by local artists including Cathy Ross, Karen Chavez, the Bluenote All-stars and Invisible Cindy, and will be broadcast simultaneously on Mix 104.7 FM.

Brumfield said the fireworks show, which begins at 9:40 p.m., is the only major fireworks production in the area.

He said spectators should bring lawn chairs because there is no seating available.

Watermelon slices and water, distributed via an Army water wagon, will be provided free of charge to guard attendees against the heat. Soft drinks, bottled water and sausage dogs will be available beginning at 6:30 p.m. to coincide with the start of several children's games.

In addition to the fireworks display, the hours of operation of the George Bush Presidential Library have been extended until 8:30 p.m. The library will be decorated for the event and admission will be free of charge.

Parking for the event will be available at Research Park. There will be signs posted for further instructions. If it rains, parking will be available at Reed Arena or Olsen Field.

George Bush Drive will be closed before and during the fireworks display for safety precautions.

WHO?: The College Station Noon Lions Club

WHAT?: Hosting the 39th annual "I Love America Celebration"

WHERE?: On the grounds of the George Bush Presidential Library Complex

WHEN?: Sunday at 6 p.m.

WHY?: In observance of the Fourth of July

GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

Safety first

Caution advised for many holiday activities

BY RYAN WEST
The Battalion

Independence Day is a time of food, friends, parties and fireworks, but like any other holiday, it is also a time to exercise precaution on the roads, using fireworks, swimming in lakes or pools or even cooking out in the backyard.

Whether planning a barbecue or picnic, one should take the necessary precautions to prevent food-borne illnesses.

Gary Acuff, an associate professor of food science and technology, said the most common cooking mistakes involve cross-contamination and undercooking.

"Don't reuse a platter that's been used for raw meat, and use utensils, such as spatulas and tongs, whenever you can," Acuff said. "Even if you've washed your hands, you never know if you've gotten everything out from under your fingernails."

Acuff advised people to use a meat thermometer to check temperature.

"Hamburgers should reach around 160 degrees, but the temperature on steaks differs," he said. "As far as chicken goes, it's safe at 160 degrees, but people generally like it a little higher for taste."

Acuff said people should be careful not to leave food at room temperature for more than two to three hours and to try and transfer any picnic food in a cooler.

Along with picnics, another Fourth of July tradition that should be approached with caution is the use of fireworks.

The College Station Fire Department also warns students to keep fireworks outside of the city limits. Those caught with fireworks within 5,000 feet of the city limits face a misdemeanor charge, punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000.

Bart Humphreys, public information officer for the College Station Fire Department, said people who choose to use fireworks need to take necessary precautions.

SEE SAFETY ON PAGE 2.