



aggielife

• Local art galleries provide artists the chance to present their work to the public.

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Battalion Radio

Listen to 90.9 KAMU-FM at 1:57 p.m. for details on a volleyball camp being offered by the Brazos Valley Boys and Girls Club.

opinion

• Notifying parents of students' alcohol violations raises issues of responsibility and consequences.

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Task force: Tell parents of alcohol offenses

BY RYAN WEST
The Battalion

Texas A&M may notify parents of students charged with drug or alcohol offenses on campus under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

SEE RELATED COLUMNS ON PAGE 5.

The A&M task force on parental notification regarding student alcohol and drug violations made the recommendation to Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, that a student's parent or guardian be notified via a letter when he or she is caught in violation of A&M's drug and alcohol rules as outlined in the University's Student Rule handbook.

The letter would express the University's concern for the student, request

the parent's support in addressing the issue and list University's steps to address the problem through programs such as enrollment in programs like an alcoholic education workshop, assessment and basic intervention by a certified alcohol and drug counselor in the Department of Student Life's Alcohol and Drug Education Programs and possibly a referral for counseling and treatment.

Brent Paterson, director of student life and coordinator for Alcohol and Drug Education Programs, said the focus will be on the health and safety of the University community as a whole and not on the individual student in violation.

He said many people are affected by one student's poor decision.

"The most important thing is intervention early on," he said.

"The first violation is usually not the student's first time to do it. The students who are not abusive are usually not the ones getting caught."

Paterson also said the University has the right to withhold information from parents if the University has a reason to believe the student will undergo physical harm or will be forced to return home.

Gene Zdziarski, associate director of student life, said the decision is a double-edged sword, with both pros and cons.

"We know getting parents involved is effective for drug and alcohol problems," Zdziarski said. "But we also try to treat students like adults who are responsible for their own actions, so we don't want to be holding it over the students' heads."

Zdziarski said because the parental notification is for alcohol and drug vi-

olations on campus only, the University does not want parents to expect notification for off-campus offenses or any other on-campus offenses such as theft, assault, etc.

Sgt. Allan Boyett, a member of the University Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit, said parental notification will make students more responsible.

"It will make students think twice," he said. "Many students don't mind attending an alcohol (or drug) awareness class or paying a fine, but it's a different story if Mom and Dad find out."

According to the Department of Education Website, FERPA applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records.

Alcohol Offenses on Campus
Sept. 1, 1998 - June 1, 1999

- Alcohol Consumption by a Minor - 3
- Minor in Possession - 221
- Public Intoxication - 65
- Driving While Intoxicated - 40

Fired up



Trainees participate in firefighting exercises Wednesday at the Brayton Fire Training Center as part of an All-Hispanic training seminar running through the end of the week.

Commission looks to future of Brazos Valley

BY MEGAN E. WRIGHT
The Battalion

In an attempt to make the millennium celebration as inclusive as possible for all citizens of the Brazos Valley, Bryan and College Station have instituted the Brazos Valley Millennium Commission.

The theme, "Seize the Light: Celebrating the Legends, Endeavors and Dreams of the Brazos Valley," represents a look at the past, present and future of the Brazos Valley.

The commission is responsible for coordination of the various millennium activities scheduled for the Brazos Valley.

Carol Wagner, chair of the Brazos Valley Millennium Commission, said in a speech during a press conference yesterday that it is necessary to honor advancements made in the past 1,000 years.

"It is appropriate we honor and celebrate many of the advancements during the past millennium as we try to understand the present and

plan for the future," she said.

The Millennium Commission will plan and participate in a number of activities for the community including a New Year's Eve and New Year's Day celebration. The New Year's Day activities will include the burial of a time capsule containing items representing the community.

Also planned by the commission is a "Month of Art" celebration scheduled for February 2000, where each day of the month will feature an art activity.

The International Students Association (ISA) presented its plans for the Planet Northgate festival at the press conference.

Jason Royster, Planet Northgate chair and a junior political science major, said the celebration is taking shape and is going to include representatives from all types of student organizations.

"The Chamber of Commerce loved the idea because it brings all of our

SEE COMMISSION ON PAGE 2.



Journalist speaks on book's effects

BY MATT WEBER
The Battalion

A former legal writer for the Wall Street Journal told a group of Texas A&M journalism students yesterday that writing his book, *The Good Black: A True Story of Race in America*, raised several ethical questions for him, such as how his book would impact people and friendships.

The book by Paul Barrett, a former Pulitzer Prize nominee, examines race relations in America through the experiences of Barrett's African-American former college roommate.

The roommate, a Harvard-educated lawyer, filed a lawsuit against his own firm charging racial discrimination.

Barrett said he had to ask himself what effect his book might have.

"[One has to ask] to what degree is the author of a book like this responsible for the aftermath, for the outcome of the book," he said.

Barrett said that although he has known the former roommate for 16 years, he could not completely know the obstacles he had faced.

"Are there some questions, perhaps, that a white journalist could understand about a black man's experiences in this setting," he said. "I understand it well enough for newspaper purposes, but I probably really don't understand it at all."

Ed Walraven, coordinator of undergraduate advising and student affairs for A&M's Department of Journalism, said the question of friendship and conflict of interest is a legitimate concern for journalists.

SEE BOOK ON PAGE 2.



Paul Barrett of the Wall Street Journal discusses his book with a group of journalism students Wednesday in the Reed McDonald Building.

PTTS considering changes to Southside Parking Garage

BY CARRIE BENNETT
The Battalion

Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) and the Campus Access Task Force are considering changing the Southside Parking Garage from numbered contract parking to contract parking that would be operated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sherry Wine, associate director of PTTS, said physical and electronic counts have been taken in the garage, and it was found that there were as many as 300 empty spaces at 4 a.m., meaning the garage is not being used to its full capacity.

She also said more than 900 residents who live on Southside have to park on West Campus because of a lack of spaces near their residence halls.

"We will continue taking counts throughout the fall semester to see if the results are reinforced," Wine said. "If this is the case, then we would consider changing the garage to contract place instead of [assigned] space."

Wine said that early in the spring semester, she began talking with people who would be affected by the change to gather their input. She



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

PTTS officials are considering changing the Southside Parking Garage from numbered to first-come, first-served contract parking.

said PTTS and the task force have spoken with representatives from Student Government Association, Residence Life, the Physical Plant and the Department of Food Services.

Amanda Albritton, president of the Residence Hall Association, said the change sounds like a good idea.

SEE GARAGE ON PAGE 2.