

The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY

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College Station, Texas



aggielife

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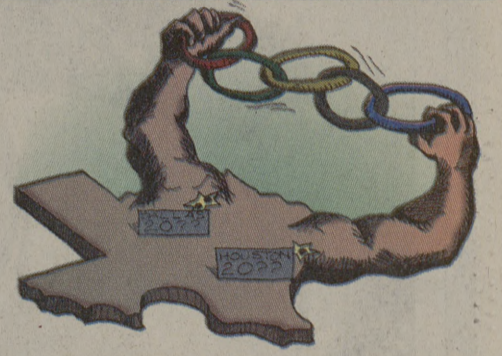
Reminder:

Today's issue is the final issue of *The Battalion* for the Summer 1999 semester. Fall publication will resume on Aug. 25.

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opinion

• Texas' unique characteristics make it ill-suited to play host to the Olympic Games.



Thompson to retire

Chancellor to take position as senior adviser

BY CARRIE BENNETT
The Battalion

After five years as chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, Dr. Barry Thompson has announced his retirement, but will hold the title of "chancellor senior advisor" until Aug. 31 and help new chancellor Gen. Howard Graves make a smooth transition.

The Board of Regents voted at their last meeting in July to make Thompson "Chancellor Emeritus" upon his official retirement Aug. 31. Thompson said since he began working for the System in 1975, he has been dedicated to improving higher education. He said he will continue to be a supporter of higher-education improvements into his retirement.

"I will be more outspoken in the future than I have been in the past," he said. "Also, I plan to be an advocate for students, student programs and help provide access for all students in Texas to higher education. I intend to continue to support those state policies that I think are important to the future of this state."

While serving as chancellor, Thompson accomplished many tasks, such as leading the establish-

ment of the Texas Higher Education Coalition, a group of leaders representing all of the higher education institutions in the state dedicated to retaining and aiding college students in their graduation efforts.

A proposal to the 75th Texas Legislature generated by the coalition resulted in \$594 million in additional funding for increased partnerships between four-year universities, community colleges and public schools. Thompson said he could not have accomplished as much as he did without the help of others on his staff.

"There are a lot of people that work with me and one single person can do very little," Thompson said. "There have been a number of significant accomplishments the people in Texas once again have trusted to the A&M System such as the fact that higher education has received the most funding its ever received in history over the last two [state legislative] sessions."

Thompson said his other accomplishments include the creation of the Texas A&M System Health Science Center, and the integration of the regional universities with Texas A&M and the eight state agencies so the System runs more smoothly.

"It's been a good ride," Thompson said.

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Sky's the limit

Exhibit presents world kites

With a tan background, red and black stripes and a circle cut out in the center, one of the Grandmaster fighter kites from the People's Republic of China is displayed as part of the Weifong International Kite Festival showcased at J. Wayne Stark Galleries until Sept. 12.

The Weifong International Kite Festival, displays international kites of various shapes, sizes and themes as well as a wide range of form and purpose. They are organized by country of origin and are accompanied by informational essays describing the kites' origins, the materials used to make them and the cultural roles kites play.

The Grandmaster kites can fly up to 3,000 feet without wind and are commonly used in competition to cut away opponents' kites with their line.

China is believed to be the

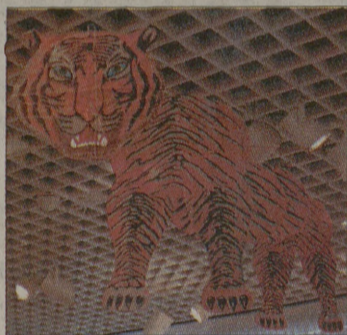
first country to mimic soaring birds with its kites and to use light materials such as bamboo and highly balanced paper. By comparison, kitemakers in the United States use more modern materials because the wind in the U.S. tends to be stronger than in China.

Folklore-themed kites representing Japan are very large and need teams of people to fly them.

The Japanese kites are much more intricately designed and are supplemented by 3-D visuals, while Malaysian Kites are more artistically shaped with prominent geometric features, while they "add music to the wind," according to its informational card.

Although the popularity of kite-flying declined in the industrial period because of high-tension wires, it now is on the rise again.

SEE KITES ON PAGE 2.



Story by Suzanne Brabeck
Photos by Guy Rogers
Photo Illustration by Guy Rogers and Mark McPherson



Good as gold

A&M professor examines potential uses of gold

BY STUART HUTSON
The Battalion

A Texas A&M professor's research on manipulating the structure and functions of gold may lead to new applications in the field of medicine and the environment.

Dr. John P. Fackler has been researching gold since the mid-'70s, and is continuing research on the properties of gold pertaining to its use in the field of medicine.

One of gold's first uses as a drug was an unsuccessful attempt to mix a form of the element with sulfur. The mixture was supposed to treat tuberculosis. Instead, what doctors found was an improvement in patients' suffering from symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

"Gold has been used as a medicine for a long time," Fackler said. "But only in the last two decades have we begun to understand why it is effective."

Fackler said gold ions have a

tendency to eliminate damaging chemicals in the body, such as oxidants and cyanide, commonly found in arthritis-afflicted cells. He

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— Dr. John P. Fackler
A&M professor

said gold may sometimes act in place of certain enzymes, ridding the cells of these chemicals.

Gold's tendency to act in place of enzymes is being explored for

use in targeting cancer cells in cancer-laser therapies and will soon be used to produce new forms of light sources.

Fackler is also studying how the luminescent properties of gold may be used to detect harmful chemicals.

He found that a certain chemical structure of gold, when exposed to ultraviolet light, glows until it comes in contact with certain chemicals, such as chlorine or bromide, which may be harmful to the environment.

Fackler said this finding may be used to create a chemical detector. The detector would be made from a strip of gold-covered paper and then be exposed to a black light.

Fackler said one of the most useful potential applications of gold as a chemical detector would be to use a water soluble-form of luminescent gold to detect water pollutants.

Police investigating Aggie junior's death

BY VERONICA SERRANO
The Battalion

Officials are investigating the death of an A&M student that occurred Tuesday morning, his 21st birthday.

Michael Duane Wagener, a junior environmental design major of Porter, was found unconscious in his apartment after police received a 911 call at 7 a.m., Sgt. Charles Fleeger of the College Station Police Department said.

Fleeger said Wagener was treated at the scene then taken to the College Station Medical Center where he was pronounced dead. He said the police department is investigating the death.

Sgt. Labam Toscano of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) said the commission is also investigating the death.

"Through a preliminary investigation and eyewitness reports,

the indication is that it [the death] was alcohol related," Toscano said. "But we can't say conclusively [if it was alcohol related] until we get the medical examination and autopsy."

He said some College Station establishments that serve alcohol have been questioned by a TABC agent.

John Miller, manager of The Dixie Chicken, said the restaurant was not questioned by the TABC.

He said the establishment's policy is to wait until 12 a.m. of a person's birthday before serving him or her alcohol.

He said bartenders will not serve alcohol to a person who appears "somewhat intoxicated" unless he or she is accompanied by a designated driver.

"We want the person to have fun responsibly," Miller said.

SEE DEATH ON PAGE 2.

Library namesake Evans turns 100

BY NONI SRIDHARA
The Battalion

The namesake of Texas A&M's main library will turn 100 years old today.

Sterling C. Evans, who graduated from A&M in 1921 with a degree in agriculture, formally celebrated his birthday early last weekend in his present hometown of Bracketville, where a giant birthday card signed by hundreds of A&M students was presented to him.

"We wanted to celebrate and capture the monumental achievements of Sterling Evans in a birthday card that was signed by as many students as possible," Fred M. Heath, dean and director of the Sterling C. Evans Library, said in a press release.

The customized card "pictorially captures Evans as 'the Man of the Century,'" and features historical moments and heroes of the 20th century, a press release said.

In recognition of his reaching the century mark, the Evans Library acquired the Kelmescott Press edition of *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* through a gift from John and Sara Lindsey of Houston.

Charlene Clark, public relations officer for Evans library, said Evans was instrumental in shaping the library even before it was officially named in honor of him in 1975.

Clark said he founded the Friends of the Library Program in 1970, which allows supporters to donate money and materials on various levels.



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M graduate student Allison Henry signs a 100th-birthday card for Sterling C. Evans last week. The card was presented to Evans during his birthday party this weekend.

"He's our [the library's] No. 1 champion," she said. "He has been very active in building support for the library and has also served as president."

William N. Stokes, author of Evans' biography which was published in 1985 and a former employee of Evans who is 90 years old, joking-

ly said he always thought Evans was a lot older than him since he met him back in the 30s. "He was around 34 or 35 when I met him and I was in my early 20s," Stokes said. "But I always thought he was 100 years old back then."

SEE EVANS ON PAGE 2.