

THE BATTALION

106 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Thursday • September 15, 1999

College Station, Texas

Volume 106 • Issue 13 • 18 Pages

Jail bird Hurd



BRADLEY ATCHISON/THE BATTALION

Officer Rick Vessell, of the College Station Police Department, "arrests" Student Body President Will Hurd as part of the March of Dimes fundraiser. Hurd will be held in a cell at the College Station Red Lobster until a "bail" of \$500 is raised.

Court denies union

A&M, law school fight to keep affiliation

BY AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

The Texas Supreme Court denied a position for a stay which would allow Texas A&M and the South Texas College of Law to indefinitely continue their affiliation agreement beginning Sept. 28.

Texas A&M and the South Texas College of Law will challenge the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Nov. 3 in the 3rd U.S. Court of Appeals, in hopes of maintaining the affiliation agreement signed between the higher education institutions in January 1998.

Sheila Hansel, public relations manager of the South

Texas College of Law, said the denial of the stay will only nominally affect the institutions.

"We get to keep doing the academic arrangements, like faculty exchanges," Hansel said.

"Texas A&M can't make appointments to the Board [at South Texas]. We will be in compliance on the 28th."

A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen was not available for comment yesterday on the denial of the stay.

After the affiliation agreement was signed between A&M and the South Texas College of Law, the coordinating board said A&M should have consult-

ed the board before signing the affiliation agreement with the South Texas College of Law.

The coordinating board is responsible for oversight in the distribution of diplomas by state-funded higher education institutions, including both schools.

Hansel said the affiliation agreement is advantageous for both schools.

"The affiliation allows for Texas A&M to claim a law program without adding a separate law program and faculty, and with the benefit of a 75-year-old law school," Hansel said. "We get the affiliation with the giant Texas A&M University."

Guide: A&M campus

3rd least gay-friendly

BY STUART HUTSON
The Battalion

"Alternative lifestyle is not an alternative," at Texas A&M, according to *The Princeton Review Guide: The Best 331 Colleges, 2000 Edition*, which ranked A&M as the third least gay-friendly campus nationwide.

The catalog is an annual publication that ranks students at 331 colleges nationwide on college-related topics based upon surveys from more than 59,000 students who were randomly surveyed.

Students were asked whether or not students, faculty and administrators treat all persons equally regardless of their sexual orientations.

Duke University is reportedly the least gay friendly, followed by the University of Notre Dame.

Jordan Davis, secretary of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Aggies (GLBTA) and a sophomore English and political science major, said a predominate conservative attitude is what brings many people to A&M, but it is also what keeps some students from feeling included.

"A&M is unique in that it requires an emotional investment which brings its students together in with a bond that extends far beyond school spirit," Davis said. "I think that everyone should be disturbed when some students are kept from being a part of this bond because of prejudice."

Jackie Mohrfeld, a senior mechanical engineering major, said much of the discrimination comes from what she calls "the good old boy attitude" of many of A&M students, including herself. She said the attitude reflects the conservative values predominant at A&M.

"Even the word 'gay' is a word you would use if you didn't like something," she said. "You might say, 'line dancing is gay,' if you don't like line dancing."

The catalog also ranked A&M 11th among universities holding strong conservative values in a category titled "Future Rotarians and Daughters of the American Revolution."

David Kessler, a member of GLBTA and a senior English and history major, said gay people have always encountered difficulties at A&M including being tormented by fellow Aggies and being ignored by the administration.

"Part of the problem is always going to be

Top ten least gay friendly universities in the nation as ranked by *The Princeton Review*

1. Duke University
2. University of Notre Dame
3. Texas A&M University
4. Truman State University
5. Grove City College
6. Hampton University
7. Wheaton College
8. Westminster College
9. Miami University
10. Johns Hopkins University

ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

the inherent attitude about gays at A&M," Kessler said. "But it seems that the administration does not want to do anything to dispel this attitude, despite the fact that it claims to be an inclusive university."

Kessler said the University's administration has ignored the gay rights since 1976 when the predecessor to GLBTA, Gay Student Services, requested to be recognized as an official student organization.

The University denied the request, resulting in a legal battle, which ended in 1985 when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal to a decision from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordering A&M to recognize the student group.

Kessler said A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen's recent refusal to include a sexual orientation statement in the non-discrimination policy of the Student Rules Handbook as an example of the administration's refusal to help its gay population.

"The inclusion of the statement would be a pro-active step that would show the University as an institution that will not tolerate sexual orientation discrimination," he said.

Kessler added that Duke University, which

SEE CAMPUS ON PAGE 2.

Friends of the NRA

gather for auction

BY CHRIS MENCZER
The Battalion

Nearly 600 second-amendment supporters, including State Senator Irv Ogden and Brazos County Sheriff Chris Kirk, attended the seventh annual Friends of NRA (National Rifle Association) banquet and auction last night at the Brazos Center in Bryan.

SEE RELATED EDITORIAL ON PAGE 17.

At the auction, Friends of NRA members auctioned off guns, art, jewelry, hardware, knives, all-terrain vehicles and gift certificates.

Friends of NRA, while part of the NRA foundation, is an apolitical, non-profit, educational organization. Last year's banquet and auction raised more than \$30,000, which ranked second in Texas and sixth nationally.

Officials are optimistic that this year's event will garner more than the expected goal of \$40,000.

Proceeds of the auction are to be

donated to "Eddie Eagle," the NRA's national education program designed to teach children to stay away from guns; Refuse to be a Victim, which is a women's self-defense program; the 4-H Club skeet range; and the Boys Club of America.

Jack Lester, secretary-treasurer of Friends of NRA, said the turnout marks a noticeable increase in attendance from last year's event, which did not surprise event officials due to recent clamor for stricter gun-control laws.

Larry Tatom, guest speaker and NRA field representative for South Texas, said participation increases when talk of gun control legislation heights.

"The more legislation is passed to restrict [gun-ownership] rights, the more people turn out," he said.

Tatom, Class of '76, has been a guest speaker for the A&M Young Republicans and was active in the Aggieland chapter for the NRA, the first collegiate chapter of the NRA nationwide.

John Lilly, Brazos Valley Friends of NRA chair, said Friends of NRA is ded-



CHAD ADAMS/THE BATTALION

Dr. Gene Howard, an ordained Baptist minister and a preacher, recites his original patriotic poetry at the Friends of the NRA fundraiser dinner.

icated to educational, not political ends.

"We are not the NRA," Lilly said. "We are a sister organization. We are 100 percent non-political. We support gun education at a grassroots level."

"If people are educated and trained, you are not going to have accidents," he said.

"You are not going to have tragedies."

Lilly said between \$15,000 and \$20,000 of merchandise was auctioned off at the banquet.

Sbisa to close temporarily

BY ERIKA DOERR
The Battalion

The doors to Sbisa Dining Hall, an 87-year-old building on Northside, will close its doors Dec. 15 for the renovation of the food court, kitchen, nearby pizza parlor and seating areas and for the integration of a new marketplace concept.

It will be reopened for partial business in the fall of 2000.

Cindy Zawieja, associate director of dining services and project manager for Sbisa, said the renovation aims to get away from stereotypical cafeteria foods and modernize to appeal to the needs of students and faculty.

"What the students and faculty won't see is all the work — about \$5 million worth — on the entire infrastructure of Sbisa, such as the electrical wiring, the plumbing, a badly needed new roof and the air conditioning," she said.

Zawieja said the marketplace concept will include freestanding stations, such as a cook-your-own food area, a carving station and an entree station. There will be an internationally-branded food court as well serving foods such as Italian, Mexican, Chinese, baked goods, hamburgers and french fries.

"I feel that by offering Outbound [Dining] meals and having cash facilities available to students, we will have



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

Changes to Sbisa

- Sbisa will close Dec. 15
- The food court, kitchen, pizza parlor and seating will be renovated.
- The new market will serve a variety of foods, including Mexican, Italian and Chinese and baked goods.

more dining options," she said. "Students want flexibility, and by renovating Sbisa, we are changing food services for the future. This is an impressive, state-of-the-art concept with a beautiful architectural design."

Ron Beard, director of dining services, said alternative dining centers will be provided for students. He said partial renovations were done during the 1997 and 1998 summers, and Sbisa has had numerous additions since its construction was completed in 1912.

"There will be many [other] places on campus for students who regularly eat at Sbisa [to eat at during renovations]," Beard said. "During impact times, around 11:30 [a.m.] to 1:30 [p.m.] for lunch and 5:30 to 7:30 [p.m.] for dinner, transportation will be available for students who would like to eat in [the] Commons Dining [Center]. Portable trailers will be on the north side of campus offering Outbound [Dining] and samplings of supplies from the Underground Market, which will also be closed due to renovations."

SEE SBISA ON PAGE 2.

Ensuring diversity

Scholarship foundation targets minorities

BY AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

One-hundred forty-five students are attending Texas A&M this fall, because of new Foundation Excellence Award Scholarships (FEA), awarded primarily to minorities through the privately-funded Texas A&M Foundation.

Of the 145 FEA recipients selected from a pool of more than 1,000 applicants, 55 percent are Hispanic, 30 percent are African-Americans, 13 percent are white, 1 percent is Asian and 1 percent is Native American, according to a report from the Texas A&M Foundation.

Following the 1996 Hopwood decision handed down from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, all public universities in Texas were banned from considering race in admissions and awarding financial aid through grants and scholarships, leaving the private sector to distribute minority scholarships.

Molly Georgiades, the Excellence Awards coordinator for the Texas A&M Foundation, said the scholar-

ships were created partially in response to the Hopwood decision.

"It was started sort of as a response to Hopwood," she said. "The University can do what they can in terms of scholarships. The foundation explored these scholarships as an option."

Last week, Texas Attorney General John Cornyn retracted the Hopwood decision.

The University of Texas Board of Regents has appealed the decision to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in hopes that the court will overturn the decision.

Georgiades said the scholarships will provide another means to recruit students to A&M through assistance from the private sector.

"The reality is that for a lot of kids, scholarships determine where they go," Georgiades said, noting the need to evaluate the scholarships before pursuing a similar project for fall of 2000.

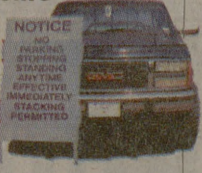
Jake James Herrera, a freshman computer engineering major, said

SEE DIVERSITY ON PAGE 2.

INSIDE

aggielife

Parking, parking everywhere spaces are available on campus — but not for students.



Page 3

sports

Cowboys' Lett suspended for seven games
Defensive tackle punished for violating substance abuse policy.

Page 13

opinion

Big Brother is back in business
Electronic surveillance reminiscent of past injustices.



Page 17

The Battalion Online

Check out *The Battalion* on the Web at battalion.tamu.edu.