

## Students plan for Aggie Bonfire 2000

### Preparations take place despite University officials' admonitions, mandate

BRADY CREEL & MEREDITH HIGHT  
The Battalion

Texas A&M University administrators' requests to put preparations for Aggie Bonfire 2000 on hold have not prevented some students from making plans for the tradition to continue. Students were asked by various University officials to refrain from planning bonfire or naming any leadership positions until A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen has reviewed the report to be released Tuesday from the Special Commission investigating the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

"I've said there is to be no leadership appointed for a Bonfire 2000 until after the report and a decision by Bowen," said Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president of student affairs, in an interview Friday with *The Battalion*.

However, new "crew chiefs" — bonfire leaders for "non-reg." or non-Corps of Cadets residence halls — are in place.

"Every dorm that I know of that is relatively actively involved in bonfire has chosen new crew chiefs," a source requesting anonymity said.

The new crew chiefs are often initiated on "Pot Passing Night," typically held shortly after bonfire burns. Due to the collapse, the ceremony was not held until about a month after the collapse.

The source said the "Pot Passing Night" involves hazing.

"There's insane drinking and physical abuse," the source said. "There's stuff every dorm does. It's pretty bad, but it depends on which dorm. There are also events after that night, with just those five [four crew chiefs and one yellow pot]. That's worse stuff."

"The universal method of receiving physical hazing in bonfire is getting licked [struck] by an ax handle. Sometimes its once, sometimes its twice. Sometimes its hundreds of times in a night or a semester."

Some appointed crew chiefs are going by different titles, like "tradition chairs" or "tradition officers," according to another source who requested anonymity.

"I know this for a fact. Every dorm has to come up with some way to elect bonfire crew

chiefs or co-chiefs, but they can't call them that. They have this rule that you can't call and quote them, and so they had to come up with something to call 'em," said another source.

**"I have said there is to be no leadership appointed for Bonfire 2000 until after the report and the decision by Bowen."**

— Dr. J. Malon Southerland  
Vice president of student affairs

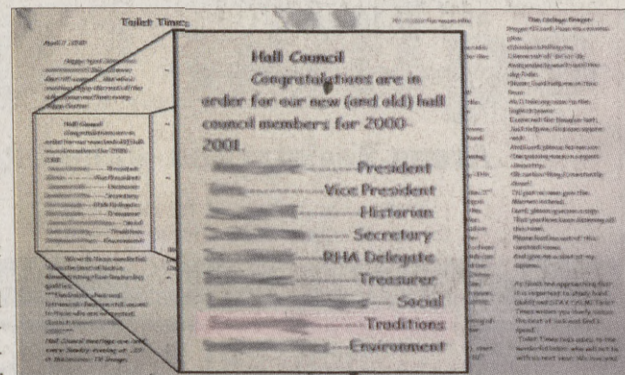
Several sources have confirmed that the redpots have not had any active role in planning for Bonfire 2000.

"The redpots are totally inactive right now. They have really done nothing," the first anonymous source said. "Each dorm functions independently. Right now, the redpots don't control anything over us."

Southerland said he would not respond to any anonymous reports of students participating in any activities for a future bonfire without specific information.

"This is the first time I've heard of any activity for Bonfire 2000," he said in Friday's interview. "I would use that information in every appropriate manner."

Southerland declined to comment on the consequences these students would face if they were identified as participating in bonfire activities without University approval. However, he said that action would be taken if students were found to be



THE BATTALION

In an April 7 residence hall newsletter, the newly elected hall council listed. The positions listed for the 2000-2001 hall council includes the Traditions seat, which according to a sources who wishes to remain anonymous is representative of the 2000 Aggie Bonfire crew chief.

participating in bonfire activities, but that he "could not define that without specific information."

"Yes, I would be concerned. Yes, I would like any information [you can] provide. I have

See CREW CHIEFS on Page 7.

### "Ahoy Matey"



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

"Popeye," an 11 year old black headed caique, perches on the hand of junior animal science major **Patty Schlotzman** at the Wildlife and Exotic Animal Center on Monday. **Popeye**, who was born blind, visits local schools and helps children learn how animals and even humans adapt to disabilities.

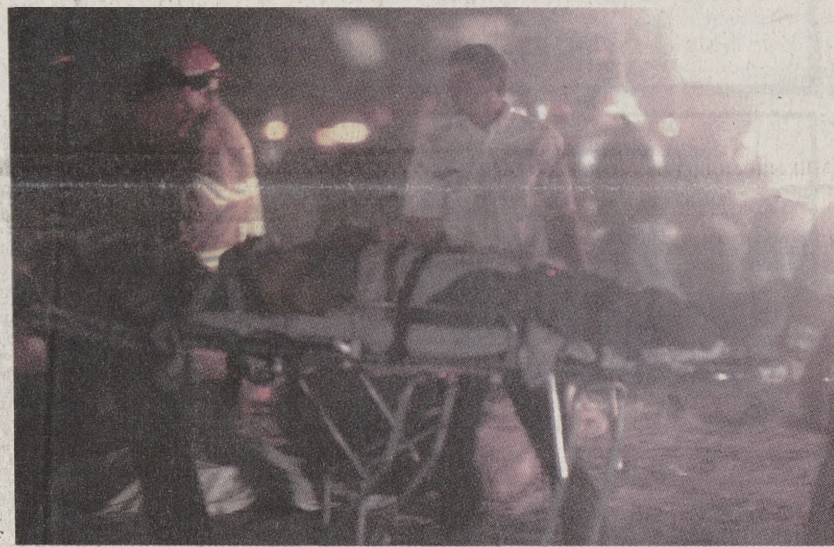
## Internal report details response

BY MAUREEN KANE & BLAINE DIONNE  
The Battalion

A report documenting the rescue and recovery operation following the collapse of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse does not state a cause that ultimately caused the stack to fall, but does pinpoint both effective and ineffective steps taken by various teams handling the collapse.

Thomas Goehl, a battalion chief of the College Station Fire Department (CSFD) and incident commander the night the stack fell, was a contributing member to the Bonfire Report Committee.

"The joint report was put together for other public agencies so they could learn from our experience," Goehl said. "This report gives an equal representation from all agencies of what happened. The report is



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A firefighter (left) and an emergency medical technician carry away a student injured in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire Collapse.

for anyone who asks for it."

The report was compiled in March by a joint committee composed of members from the CSFD, Bryan Fire Department, Texas Task Force 1 — Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Texas A&M University Medical Services.

The report consists of 12 sections, including information on the

actual collapse of bonfire, the first phase of the operation, an after-action review and an aftermath analysis of the collapse.

According to the report, witnesses said construction was proceeding as it had in previous weeks when, "the uppermost tier shifted to the

See REPORT on Page 2.

## Bonfire report set for release

BY ROLANDO GARCIA  
The Battalion

With bonfire investigators set to release their findings Tuesday, investigators said they are confident the report will provide the answers the Texas A&M community has been waiting for.

"I'm totally satisfied the report is complete

### Students march in support of bonfire

BY BRADY CREEL  
The Battalion

As the Special Commission on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse prepare to deliver its findings and the media spotlight once again turns to the campus of Texas A&M University, Aggies will embody their unity of spirit and join together at the Commission's meeting in Reed Arena.

John Schuster, president of Moore Hall and a sophomore general studies major, said the idea came about this past weekend when

See MARCH on Page 7.

and detailed and thorough. After tomorrow, you will know what caused bonfire to fall," said Leo Linbeck Jr., chairperson of the Special Commission on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire.

The commission will hold a meeting at 1 p.m. in Reed Arena to present a summary of the investigation's findings. A press conference will follow the meeting. In addition to hard copies of the report available for the media, copies of the report will be accessible on the commission's Website.

University officials have also been busy preparing for the report and its aftermath.

Texas A&M Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. J. Malon Southerland said he has been conducting "informational sessions" with small groups of students, including one with redpots, brownpots and others in 1999 bonfire leadership roles.

"My intent was to give them a personal heads-up to how we thought May 2 was going to go, just a conversation of what we know so far," Southerland said. "The junior [redpots] are a group with whom I'm communicating. I'm listening to them, and they deserve to be informed on what the process is going to be."

In particular, Southerland added, students were warned about talking to the media.

"It's reasonable to assume there'll be heavy

### AGGIE 99 BONFIRE

- The Special Commission on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire will release their findings today at 1 p.m. in Reed Arena  
- The report will then be released via the web at:

<http://www.tamu.edu/bonfire-commission>

Look for tomorrow's special bonfire edition of **THE BATTALION** detailing the Commission's findings

GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

media coverage, and you have to decide your comfort zone, if you're comfortable talking to reporters about this. It's a personal decision."

Southerland added the University will announce plans for the decision-making process that will culminate in a final decision by A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen on whether the bonfire tradition will continue.

Also to be revealed are details for a forum scheduled for Thursday where students can voice their opinions on the future of bonfire.

"The important thing is the report and the process of having input, and then the president will make a decision. Other things that happen will be on the periphery," Southerland said. "Students may have meetings, but it's moot until you know if there's going to be a bonfire. Whatever they've done is among themselves."

## A&M student arrested in burglaries

BY BRANDIE LIFFICK  
The Battalion

Two College Station residents and one Texas A&M student were arrested Sunday morning on charges of participating in a rash of car break-ins over the weekend in the Bryan-College Station area.

Joshua Jones, Dennis Olsen and freshman general studies major Adam Patrick Baker have been indicated in a string of burglaries that left a total of 38 cars broken into, with 21 break-ins reported in College Station and 17 in Bryan. Police from both cities said that the burglars generally broke the passenger side windows to gain access to the car.

The majority of the College Station burglaries occurred in the area of Spring Loop and Vineyard Court.

Kabrina Scott, public information advisor to the College Station Police Department (CSPD), said that plain clothes surveillance officers observed the three suspects at the 800 block of Marion Pugh Drive trying door handles to see if they were locked. "The suspects then left the area, and were stopped by the officers," said Scott.

Police are still investigating the suspects' possible involvement in the weekend break-ins. They have been connected with three of

See THEFT on Page 2.

### INSIDE

#### Sports

• Aggies drop series to UT  
Baseball closes weekend with 4-2 win at Olsen.  
Page 15

#### Aggielife

• Conversations with the Batt: Todd Phillips  
Page 3

#### Opinion

• A tale of two cities  
Page 19

#### Batt Radio

• Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for details on Frampton's Aggie ring donation.

#### Batt Online

• Check out *The Battalion* online at [battalion.tamu.edu](http://battalion.tamu.edu)