

• Road Rage

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Weather:

Partly cloudy with a high of 92 and a low of 69.

THURSDAY

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THE BATTALION

106 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Engineer board delays Bonfire evaluation

ANNA BISHOP
The Battalion

The Texas Board of Professional Engineers plans to take its time with further investigation into the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. The nine-member board appointed by the governor will assemble this month in Corpus Christi for its June 14 quarterly meeting. Victoria Hsu, executive board director, said investigation into the engineering of Bonfire is the agenda. The board met earlier this month to discuss and review the reports released by the Special Commission on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire. Hsu said suggestions regarding actions the board can take regarding state law violations on behalf of licensed engineers were discussed.

"The suggestions explored cannot be currently discussed," Hsu said.

Dave Dorchester, vice president of the board, said the goal of its members is to seek legislative changes to clarify the engineering board's mandate and suggest positive steps, such as briefing



agency executives on the Texas Engineering Practice Act.

The Texas Board of Professional Engineers is a result of the Engineering Practice Act passed in 1937 when a massive explosion in New London, Texas, prompted the Texas Legislature to formulate a law ensuring the practice of engi-

neering in the state to remain in the hands of licensed engineers.

Hsu said the reports released on May 3 declared the Bonfire to be a complex engineering project.

"Because commissioners called the Bonfire a 'complex engineering project,' we will look into the possibility of whether or not engineers were in violation with state law ... whether or not the project should have, by law, been performed under the guidance of a licensed engineer," Hsu said.

"We also must determine whether or not the Bonfire should be prohibited altogether, by considering it a public health hazard built without licensed engineers or engineering plans," Hsu said.

Dorchester said the ranges of consequences for violation run from an informal reprimand to revoking an engineering license.

"Right now, the number-one thing the board will do is look to the future and take whatever actions necessary to protect public universities such as A&M," Dorchester said.

"The board is trying to decide who was under jurisdiction, and eventually who was in violation, but the process will be a slow one. The Bonfire collapse is a terrible thing to deal with. We want to take our time to deal with it right and fair," Dorchester said.

A&M spokesperson Lane Stephenson said A&M would cooperate with the board and provide any desired information.

Students taken by fraud

STUART HUTSON
The Battalion

Last October, two former employees of the Applebee's Neighborhood Bar and Grill on Texas Avenue, Matthew Smith and Eric Gallup, were charged with stealing money from Texas A&M students' Aggie Bucks accounts.

"They would enter the Aggie Bucks twice, get two receipts, give one receipt back to the customer and then exchange the other receipt for cash from the register," said Carol Bailey, general manager at the Applebee's in College Station. "We found that they were doing it when one person whose account they had stolen from called to check a charge."

Smith and Gallup were arrested in April and confessed to four charges each of debit card abuse, but Bailey said the workers' theft was not the only surprising factor of the case.

Bob Piwanka, director of student financial services, said that while only about half a dozen instances of Aggie Card abuse are reported to his office each semester, there may be more that are not reported.

"The first line of defense against Aggie

"The first line of defense against Aggie Card abuse is the person using the card."

— Bob Piwanka
director of student financial services

Card abuse is the person using the card," he said. "They should guard [the card] in the same way they protect a credit or ATM card, and realize that if their card is stolen or misused, they should contact us immediately."

University Police Department (UPD) officer Sgt. Allen Baron said many thefts involving Aggie Cards may happen without the owner knowing.

"Sometimes it's just a roommate or a friend, and then sometimes a card gets stolen and used before the owner reports the card missing," Baron said.

Ronald Hale, vice chair of Norwest Bank, which manages off-campus Aggie Bucks transactions, said the card's main security features are evident.

"The picture and the signature on the back are the two foremost security features because they offer positive identification of the person," he said. "Most cases of Aggie Bucks abuse come from someone trying to use someone else's card. Cases like what happened at Applebee's are slim to none."

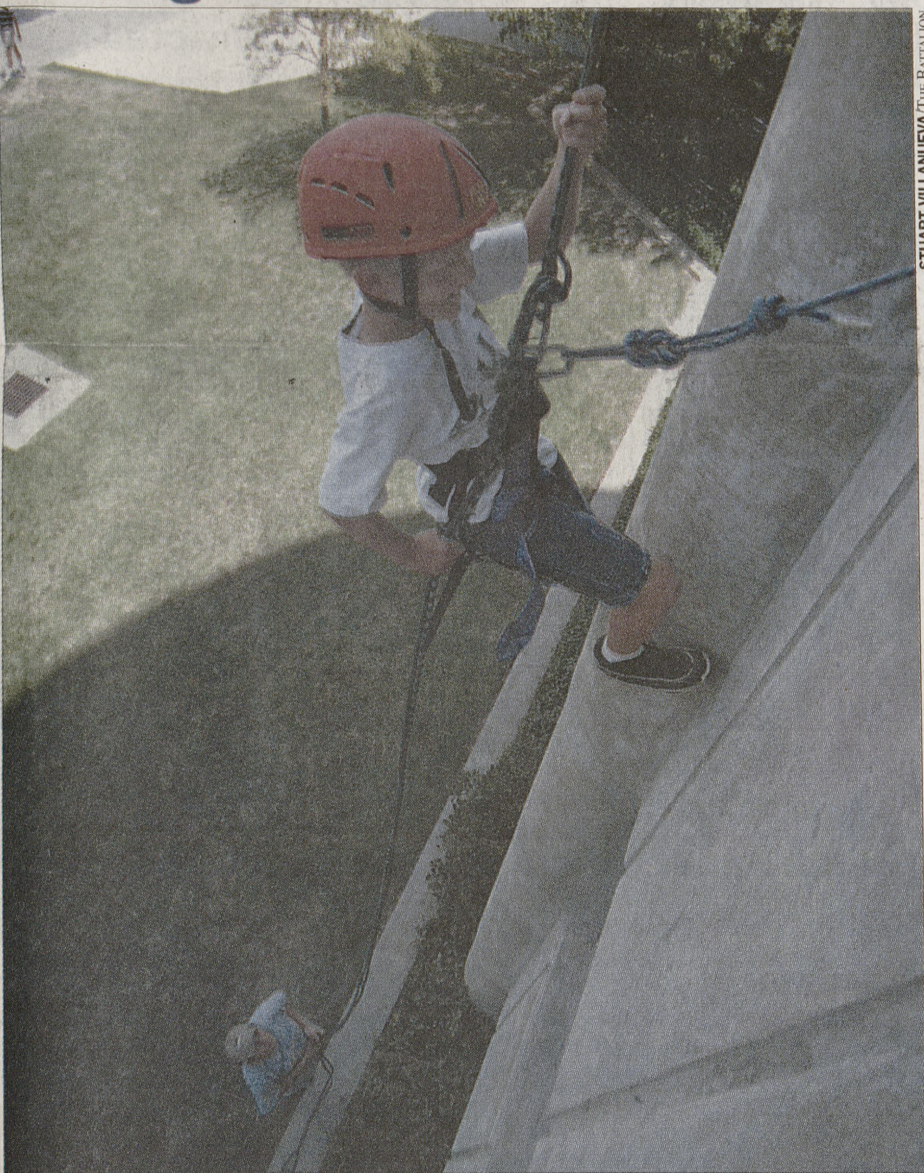
Hale said accounts and transaction records—which include when and where a card is used—are reconciled every day to ensure accuracy and to guard against misuse, but other methods are also used to add security to a participant's account.

"Most people who try to steal from another person's account can be caught the next day," he said.



Bailey said that since October, Applebee's has refunded the victims' money and now reviews transactions on a daily basis to prevent a similar incident, but

Climbing the wall



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Eight-year-old Justin Hart rappels 30 feet down the side of the Kyle Field ramp as junior counselor and A&M Consolidated student Kelli Sweat watches from below on Wednesday. Hart and other youngsters are participants in Camp Adventure, a day camp for children that allows them to experience adventure sports such as climbing, riflery and canoeing.

A&M professor earns award for chemistry

JOSEPH PLEASANT
The Battalion

Chemists from around the world gathered Wednesday to honor outstanding work in the field of chemistry. Members of the Robert Alonzo Welch Foundation awarded Dr. A. Ian Scott, Texas A&M faculty member, the Welch Foundation Award for excellence in chemistry research, which is a \$300,000 worldwide award given to outstanding chemists. Scott is the 2000 co-recipient of the Welch Award.

Dr. Emile Schweikert, chemistry department head, said this award is a great honor and tribute to the career of a research scientist. "[The award] is an outstanding recognition of one of our more prominent colleagues," Schweikert said. The Welch Foundation Award is known worldwide, and many past recipients have won the Nobel Prize in chemistry.

Scott spent 32 years decoding the structure of vitamin B-12, which is important for metabolism and the central nervous system. Richard Johnson, chair of the Welch Foundation, said "Scott's work follows the research that Welch wanted when he started the foundation."

"Dr. Scott's work over the past 40 years optimizes the work Robert Welch believed in," Johnson said. Dr. Norman Hackerman, chair of the Scientific Advisory Board, said the process of choosing a winner is difficult because of the high caliber of nominees.

"One hundred fifty or more chemists are nominated worldwide, and the foundation board narrows that number down to one person, or two as in this year," Hackerman said.

Scott appreciates this recognition for his chemistry research. "It's wonderful that the work I have done for the last 40 years is being recognized," Scott said.

Scott has not decided how he will spend the award money, he said some of it may be used to support a student fellowship.

A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen said the award also reflects positively for A&M; it's a great statement for him and our University.

This award is the only type of funding given by the foundation outside the state. The Welch Foundation has been a constant supporter of A&M through grants and funds.

Since it began in 1954, the Welch Foundation has given A&M approximately \$55 million. Bowen said the foundation is responsible for the advancement of chemistry programs throughout Texas. Bowen also said many universities in Texas have great chemistry programs because of the Welch Foundation.

Dr. Scott is the second A&M professor to win the Welch Award. Dr. F. A. Cotton was a co-recipient in 1994.



Chemistry professor Dr. A. Ian Scott was one of two professors in the world to receive the 2000 Welch Award.

Inmate loses bid for more DNA testing

HOUSTON (AP) — An inmate facing execution this week has lost a bid for more DNA testing in his case, just days after Gov. George W. Bush advocated the

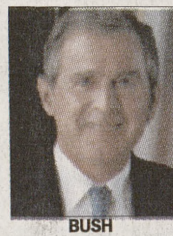
Last week, McGinn's lawyers persuaded the trial judge to recommend retesting of hair and semen. District Judge Steven Ellis referred the request to the appeals court, which rejected it Tuesday on procedural grounds.

While conceding that there was incriminating evidence against McGinn, Maurie Levin, an attorney helping with McGinn's appeals, said some items were not collected and tested properly and some evidence wasn't tested at all because the DNA technology available at the time wasn't good enough.

"It's good enough now," Levin said. "Testing could be performed that would provide conclusive proof, one way or the other, of guilt or innocence."

Levin said more appeals were planned. The Republican presidential front-

"If the DNA testing helps settle a case or erase any doubts or concerns, we would support that."



BUSH

tests to "erase any doubts" in capital murder cases.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals denied the request from Ricky Nolen McGinn, who is scheduled to be executed Thursday for the 1993 rape and killing of his 12-year-old stepdaughter, Stephanie Rae Flanary.

News in Brief

Microsoft files final legal brief

SEATTLE (AP) — Wednesday, Microsoft Corp. was filing its final legal brief in a landmark antitrust battle, offering a rebuttal to the government's revised plan to break it up. The company planned to submit more testimony that it felt was left out of the case.

The company's filing, expected not long after the financial markets were to close in the east, was expected to include revisions to the government's breakup proposal.

Microsoft has vehemently opposed a proposal by the Justice Department to split the company into two competing entities.

Microsoft also planned to issue a brief discussing its "offer of proof," filed hurriedly last Wednesday as U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson was about to close the case. That filing outlined proposed testimony from company co-founder Bill Gates and other witnesses. The government, in its revised filing two days later, called it an eleventh-hour ploy.

Microsoft had asked the judge for as long as six months to gather evidence and depose witnesses that would dispute the Justice Department's assertion that a breakup is the best way to reverse the damage done by the behavior that Jackson found to be unlawful and anticompetitive.

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