

Grades available online

Students have access to marks on Bonfire

BY BRIAN RUFF
The Battalion

With midterm grades currently in the mail, students are finding it easier to warn their parents about their midterms before the scores arrive.

As of January 2000, midterm and final grades have been posted on the Bonfire system, an interactive computer program presented by Computer Information Services (CIS) and the Office of the Registrar.

"The Bonfire system is a great way to check my [grade-point ratio]," said DeeAnn Borrer, a freshman kinesiology major, who found out about the system while at Fish Camp.

Prior to the addition of the system, students had access to their grades only via telephone.

"The system provides an accurate and easily accessible way of displaying a student's grades," said Larry Molota, associate director of CIS.

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— Larry Molota
Associate director of CIS

The new system has some added bonuses, such as allowing students to print the screen and not limiting the time the system can be used.

However, with the sensitive issue of grades come worries about grade tampering within the system.

"Logs are maintained on grade changes before and after the changes are made, so if anything comes up, we have records of the change," Molota said.

The Bonfire system is for students and advisers only, and most of the screens on the Bonfire system are for viewing only and cannot be changed.

"The professors aren't using the Bonfire screen," Molota said. "If they must have information on a student, there are particular steps that they must go through to get access to the information."

Molota said a professor must have a valid reason for requesting the information. An authorization starts at the department level, and is then routed to the student whose grades are being checked.

Another feature available on the Bonfire screen is the degree audit function, which allows students to view which requirements they need to meet degree requirements. Many advisers use the program when consulting students about degree requirements.

Muster memorial



Taryn Elliott, a senior psychology major, looks at the new Muster statue located in front of the Academic Building. The statue is the gift of the Class of '95 and will be dedicated on Saturday, immediately following the football game.

KEVIN BURNS/THE BATTALION

Auto repairmen's work in question

Body shops talk about practices

BY ARATI BHATTACHARYA
The Battalion

For Renee Edmiston, nothing is more frustrating than paying exorbitant amounts of money for car parts and replacement jobs that are unnecessary.

"Mechanics in this town are screwing over college kids," said Edmiston, a junior environmental design major. "Just because we're away from home and really need our cars — but have no guidance — they're taking advantage of us."

The auto repair industry is often criticized for overcharging customers and highlighting trivial details for profitable reasons.

Marvin Taylor, a mechanic at Radiators & More of Bryan-College Station, said some auto shops cheat people.

"They're flat-out crooks," Taylor said. "They know they're ripping the kids off. I've seen more rip-off shops [in B-CS] than ever, and they do it in unimaginable ways."

Houston wouldn't even do that, and they're known nationwide for being scammers."

Edmiston said her first encounter with an overpriced mechanic was in March when she needed her brakes serviced. She said Just Brakes in Bryan quoted a price of \$800.

"They said it was necessary to do it all now, and it couldn't be done for cheaper anywhere else," she said. "They wanted me to replace parts that needed to be changed after 100,000 miles, when my car only had 50,000 miles on it and didn't need the replacement yet."

Edmiston said she later got the entire brake job done at C&L Tires for \$100.

Lee Stroud, manager at Just Brakes, said the industry sets the prices, and the auto shop charges based on the nature of the repair job.

"If the job was done for \$100, they may have patched up the symptom, but the problem is definitely not fixed," he said. Stroud said Just Brakes has the best warranty in the business.

The Better Business Bureau of Brazos Valley (BBB) lists Just Brakes in Bryan with an unsatisfactory record of unresolved complaints. To have a satisfactory record, a company must promptly address complaints, stay within proper regulations and have no questionable activity.

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— Marvin Taylor
Mechanic, Radiators & More

Taylor said local auto shops overcharge their customers because college students have to get the problem fixed, and it is easy to take advantage of the situation.

"I know of three to four shops that bring cars to me for a diagnostic test and take them back to their shops to overprice the customer," Taylor said. "That's plain old wrong. You can make an honest living fixing them right."

Just Brakes was not the end of Edmiston's car saga. When her air conditioner went out this summer, she took the car to B&B Automotive Services, which she said quoted a price of \$1,200. She refused to pay and instead bought the parts herself in Houston at wholesale.

"They were marking the prices up at least 50 percent, beyond means of profit."

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Beutel raising HIV awareness for women

BY ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

Jennifer was only 16 years old and pregnant with her second daughter when she found out she was HIV-positive.

"I was worried, but more than that I thought, 'why did it have to happen to my baby?' and that's what hurt me the most," she said.

Jennifer, who only gave her first name, spoke to students at a forum sponsored by the A.P. Beutel Health Center to give students a woman's perspective on living with HIV.

Margaret Griffith, health education coordinator at Beutel, said there is a common misconception that AIDS is a men's disease. "It's also a women's disease, and women

sometimes have to deal with different issues — like children," she said.

Jennifer, now 24, and her 6-year-old daughter take a battery of medications to treat the disease. Jennifer takes 12 pills daily, and her daughter takes three liquid medicines.

"My day is medicine and kids," she said. "In the morning we take our medicine, and I get them ready for school."

The need to be there for her children helped keep at bay the feelings of depression that often accompany news that one is HIV-positive, Jennifer said.

"I can't let it get to me," she said. "There is depression, but then I think, 'I have all this to live for. If I'm not there to take care of my kids, who will?'"

Although her daughter is generally healthy and energetic like the other students in her kindergarten class, Jennifer said, typical childhood colds can be especially harmful because of her weakened immune system.

She recounted an incident when her daughter was in the Head Start program and accidentally scraped her head and required stitches. She said that when word got out that the little girl was HIV-positive, some parents removed their children from the program.

"It's really sad how dumb people can be," Jennifer said.

Kristen Jay, a senior community health major who attended the presentation, said Jennifer's story added an important human element to AIDS education programs.

"It was kind of heartbreaking to hear their stories, especially the children, but I think it's just amazing how brave they are," Jay said.

HIV awareness is still low among many college students, Griffith said.

"They can get pretty complacent about HIV and think it can't happen to them," Griffith said.

Free HIV testing will be available today from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in 141 Memorial Student Center (MSC) as part of the Health Fair. Beutel offers free testing Thursday afternoons from 12:30 until 3:45. Griffith said anyone who has engaged in unprotected sex or other risky behavior such as intravenous drug use, should get tested.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 40,000 Americans are infected with HIV each year, and half are under 25.

Not enough rain

The year's drought too great to be fully alleviated by storms

DALLAS (AP) — Heavy rains in some parts of Texas have not been enough to erase this year's drought, but the recent soakings could lessen the chances of a similar drought next year. "I'm cautiously optimistic," Skip Ely, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Fort Worth, said Tuesday.

Recent rains have started to saturate the soil, and with the decreased water demand of winter months, reservoirs should start to fill, he said.

But according to government experts, the central part of the state needs as much as a foot of rain to begin emerging from the drought. It would take 10-12 inches of rain in North Texas in the next several days to begin alleviating this year's drought, Ely said.

Travis Miller, a drought researcher with the Texas Agriculture Extension Service, said recent rains have not come close to ending this year's statewide drought.

"We've got a ways to go as far as filling soil (moisture) profiles," Miller said. The good news is that most reservoir levels already have stopped falling, said

Leonard Olson, a spokesman for the Texas Water Development Board.

"It has been sufficient to stop the decline but it is still the second lowest we've been in 23 years of collecting data," he said.

Since July, reservoirs statewide have lost 4.5 million acre feet of water, said Ruben Solis, also of the Texas Water Development Board.

"I'm cautiously optimistic."

— Skip Ely
meteorologist for National Weather Service in Fort Worth

The recent storms appear to be reversing the trend.

In San Antonio, the Edwards Aquifer has risen 12 feet to 655 feet in the last 30 days, said Geary Schindel, chief technical officer for the Edwards Aquifer Authority.

The aquifer still is 7.5 feet below normal for this time of year, he said.

The relief comes as thunderstorms moving across the state spawned torna-

does, flooded roads and stranded motorists and students.

On Monday, the storms brought pingpong ball-sized hail and at least two tornadoes to the Panhandle and one in the Concho Valley.

Five counties northwest of San Antonio were flooded with as much as 6 1/2 inches of rain Sunday and Monday.

While rain is easing the drought, it is not welcomed by all, especially by cotton farmers in West Texas.

Cotton farmer Tommy Fondren of Lorenzo said the hard rain knocks cotton bolls to the ground and renders them worthless. The moisture also can discolor the cotton with unsightly spots.

"It's not a good thing for harvest," he said.

This year's drought has wrought \$1.1 billion in damage on state agriculture, hitting West Texas cotton especially hard, the state Agricultural Extension Service reported last week.

Economists at Texas A&M University estimate that cotton losses alone have reached \$485 million as fields, particularly those without irrigation systems, withered under the summer's record spell of heat and lack of rain.

Bryan City Council OKs patrol increase

Water supply increase needed

BY ARATI BHATTACHARYA
The Battalion

The Bryan City Council on Tuesday granted police officers permission to increase patrolling and attempted to increase the city's water supply and standards.

Under the Safe and Sober Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (S&S STEP) the council adopted, Bryan Mayor Lonnie Stabler will sign a "Texas Traffic Safety Program Grant Agreement" in conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The program will be authorized from October until Sept. 30, 2001. A similar program recently approved by the College Station Council allows city patrols to further regulate

reckless driving behavior at selected busy intersections.

A 50-foot street between Dale and Chigger streets was also motioned to be abandoned and vacated. Stabler was further authorized to perform quit claim deeds to the neighboring adjacent property owners, which will compensate residents for the street closure.

The council gave considerable attention to the city's water philosophy. Jeannie Wigginton, a member of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) and AWAA National Microbial Disinfection Advisory Group, said Bryan has superior water but further steps can be taken.

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BONFIRE OPTION 813

— Enter student ID, PIN, and semester

— Use F for final grades and M for midterm grades

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