

Southerland recovers at home

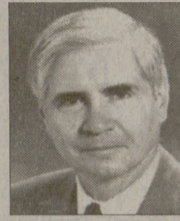
By ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. J. Malon Southerland was released from St. Joseph Regional Health Center Tuesday morning after being admitted Saturday.

Southerland said he called 911 and was admitted to the emergency room Saturday morning after suffering persistent dizziness and low blood pressure.

"I had a spell, and it wouldn't go away, and my blood pressure fluctuated," he said.

Southerland, resting at home Tuesday evening, said he is feeling fine, but doctors believe he may suffer from an irregular heartbeat. More tests will be



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necessary before a final diagnosis can be made.

"I may have some form of electrical function that causes me to have a fast heartbeat," Southerland said.

Rumors that he had a heart attack are false, Southerland said.

"I did not have a heart attack," he said. "The doctor told me that's the only thing he knew for sure."

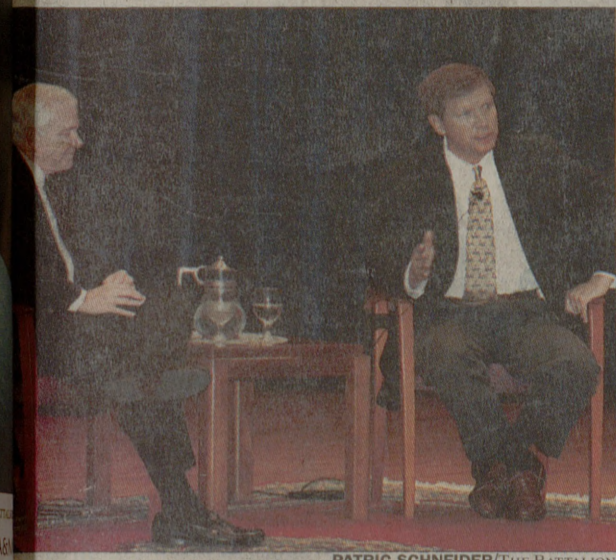
Southerland will undergo further tests

Thursday and will stay out of his office until doctors recommend that he return.

"I'd like to go back to work as soon as they tell me I can," Southerland said. "I did a little work at the house today, but the doctor said not to do anything tomorrow."

Southerland expressed gratitude for the outpouring of affection from the

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PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION

Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., and Rep. John Kasich, R-Ohio, met Tuesday night before a full auditorium to discuss the 2000 presidential election and its ongoing saga. They covered topics ranging from the looming decision of the presidency to the slim Republican control of both houses of Congress.

Politicians predict few big changes

By SOMMER BUNCE
The Battalion

Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., and Rep. John Kasich, R-Ohio, met Tuesday night before a full auditorium to discuss the 2000 presidential election and its ongoing saga. They covered topics ranging from the looming decision of the presidency to the slim Republican control of both houses of Congress.

Robert M. Gates, dean of the George Bush School of Government and Public Service, invited the politicians to speak months ago, long before he realized the discussion would occur before the election which seems to have taken on a life of its own was decided.

The closeness of the presidential election and ensuing court battles will not undermine the ability of the 43rd president to perform his job, Kasich said. However, the gridlocked Congress will be less able to make major changes with legislation.

"There will be a lot of stalemates and a call for no sacrifices from both sides of the line," said Kasich, who has been a representative for 18 years. "We will be locked in for about two years, until the next congressional elections, and we won't see a lot of big things done, but the silver lining is that maybe we don't need a lot of big government as the new century begins."

The gridlock will cause the inability to create major legislation, but smaller bills will be passed and Medicare and welfare checks will be signed, Kasich said. The government will not stop because of bipartisan struggles, he added.

The controversy between Democrats and Republicans in Congress is healthy, Kerrey said. The time when two parties do not argue about major policy changes is the time when the country needs to worry, he said.

A veteran of the Vietnam War who has been in government service for 16 years, Kerrey said the ballot misunderstandings and the thousands of discarded military votes are acceptable because the law made certain votes ineligible.

"These laws are big, and those of us that understand that see where the uncertainty comes from," he said. "I think we politicize this the wrong way — this is simply the law. Don't get teary-eyed by the voters in Florida. If I don't fill out my ballot correctly — if I mark too many times or do anything incorrectly — then my vote is illegal and it doesn't count."

The Electoral College was created by America's founders to safeguard the democratic process, Kasich said. By the very nature of an election, a candidate is forced to appeal across America and not just to a few key states, he said.

"We're going to have a president there's going to be a certification, and once it's said and done, I don't think the country is going to be too concerned over how he may or may not have been the commander in chief," Kasich said. "No election is perfect, since man designed [it]. The thing to do now is to see to the end of the process and gain closure."

Kerrey and Kasich, who will accept faculty positions as endowed chairs in the Bush School today, visited political science and Bush School classes Tuesday.

"This is a remarkable opportunity to hear first-hand what these elections mean from people who are in Washington and who have been in Washington for decades," Bush School Dean Gates said. "Every citizen receives the consequences and the implications of this election."

Santa's little helper



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Erica Garza, a third-year veterinary student, calms her pet Daschund, Jake, while he sits with Santa, played by Bobby Williams, a first-year veterinary student. Local pet owners visited the Veterinary

Medicine School Tuesday night to have their pictures taken with Santa as part of a fundraiser for the student chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Minority enrollment scrutinized

Black Aggies seek end to ignorance

By ARATI BHATTACHARYA
The Battalion

Coming from a predominantly black high school, Rasheeda James said she knew Texas A&M had a reputation for being a white, conservative University and that things would not be easy for her. However, finding the words "black nigger" written on the back window of her car her freshman year was not the welcome James had in mind.

An African-American freshman forum was held Tuesday night to allow freshmen to discuss fears and anxieties on a predominantly white campus.

"The panel is a chance for black freshmen to meet each other and socialize," said Metra Simpson, organizer of the event and a senior management information systems major. "They have to understand they have a voice and can make a difference on campus."

Simpson said the forum was her way to give African-American students a chance to speak about their concerns, considering the low enrollment of African-Americans at A&M.

African-American upperclassmen discussed their experiences while interacting with the audience at the laid-back forum.

"When I was a freshman, black students would congregate together to study on the fourth floor of the annex or chill during late night hours in the Commons," said Maco Faniel, a junior speech communication major. "I don't see that anymore. I fear the lack of cohesiveness among us black students. What's going to happen when we upperclassmen graduate?" James, a senior finance major, said she experienced a culture shock when she arrived at A&M.

"My world was 'blackness' in high school," James told

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Aid factor in attendance decision

By ARATI BHATTACHARYA
The Battalion

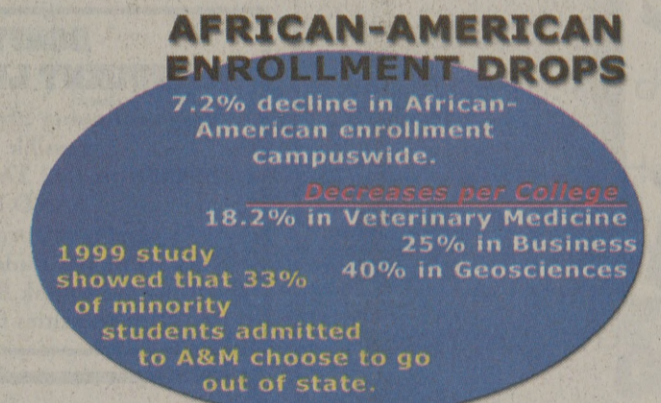
Most of the African-American students attending a diversity forum hosted by the Black Awareness Committee Tuesday night said they came to Texas A&M for one reason — financial aid.

According to a 2000 study conducted by the A&M Race and Ethnic Studies Institute, financial aid is not drawing in many African-American students, leaving a visible decline in African-American enrollment rates at A&M.

Jay Arekere, a member of the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute, said a 1999 sample recorded more than 19,000 minority students graduating from Texas high schools; only 3,000 of them applied to A&M.

"A&M doesn't do much [minority] recruiting, because we already have such a large applicant pool," Arekere said. "But

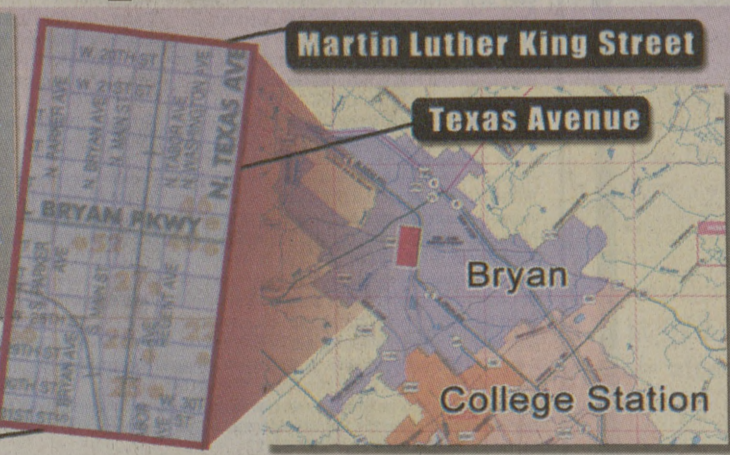
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BRANDON HENDERSON/THE BATTALION

Bryan to prohibit alcohol use in public areas downtown

Bryan city ordinance prohibits alcohol on streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian ways in this area



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

By BRYAN BLANTON
The Battalion

If residents "pop a top again" in downtown Bryan, they could be convicted of a misdemeanor, according to the ordinance passed Tuesday night at the Bryan City Council meeting. The ordinance prohibits consumption of alcoholic beverages in downtown Bryan.

The ordinance is modeled after similar ordinances in other Texas cities, such as Austin's Sixth Street area ordinance. Bryan hopes to reduce litter

and create a welcoming family environment for downtown visitors.

"The ordinance is designed basically to make sure the downtown area of Bryan is attractive for families and tourists," said Bryan City Attorney Michael Cosentino. "There have been problems with people congregating outside of bars in the downtown area, basically drinking on the street and causing disruptions to people using the downtown area."

The ordinance allows consumption of alcoholic beverages

at sidewalk cafes and events, such as Fiestas Patrias, that have special events permits from the city. In both circumstances, an organization or business may be required to request permits before serving alcoholic beverages, and a controlled setting may be required.

"I am anticipating an increased number of sidewalk cafes in downtown Bryan in the future," said Bryan City Mayor Lonnie Stabler.

Among the disadvantages

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Gore asks for speedy recount

(AP) — Al Gore sought a speedy hand recount of Florida's contested ballots Tuesday to ensure "no question, no cloud" hangs over the nation's 43rd president. A judge rejected his timetable, Democratic lawyers vowed to appeal and Republicans demanded. "It's time to wrap this up."

As the campaign played out in five separate courtrooms, the vice president sought to accelerate the proceedings to avoid further testing of the public's patience three weeks after Election Day.

"Seven days, starting tomorrow, for a full and accurate count of all the votes," the vice president said shortly after his lawyers asked Circuit Judge N. Sanders Sauls to order the recount of 13,000 questionable ballots in two Democratic counties.

The judge instead scheduled a Saturday hearing and ordered the ballots — along with one or two voting machines — sent to Tallahassee in case he agrees that a recount is needed. Bush's lawyers objected to Gore's timetable, saying they needed time to prepare their case against him.

Gore's advisers were disappointed by the ruling, believing Gore needs good news from the courts in the next two or three days to keep public opinion from turning heavily against him. According to senior legal advisers, Gore lawyers were looking "at all legal options" to find the quickest way to get a favorable court ruling, including going directly to the state Supreme Court.

Sauls is working against a Dec. 12 deadline for states to assign presidential electors.

"We could count until everybody is slap-happy, but if no one is on the same page, I don't know what's being accomplished," Sauls said, explaining why he wanted one broad-ranging hearing before considering Gore's recount request.

The political morass stretched to the U.S. Supreme Court, with Bush's lawyers asking the nine justices to bring "legal finality" to the election by overturning Florida's top court and ending any further recounts. The case has the "potential to change the outcome of the presidential election in Florida, and thus the nation," Bush lawyers said in legal papers.

Gore's legal team argued in its high court brief that the issue "does not belong in federal court." They want the justices to back the Florida Supreme Court, a Democratic-leaning body that extended the deadline for recounts. U.S. Supreme Court oral arguments are set for Friday.

The vice president made his case for the second day in a row for further recounts, announcing the shift in legal strategy during a brief exchange with reporters in Washington.

"What is wrong with counting the votes?" Gore asked.

Bush's team quickly noted that the southern Florida ballots had already been tabulated by machine. "He proposes yet another count and another deadline," Bush spokeswoman Karen Hughes said in Austin, Texas. "Common sense does not allow it."

GOP vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney, appearing on NBC, said he believes "that it's time to wrap this up. That we've had the election, we've had the count, we've had the recount. Now we've had the certification of George W. Bush as winner in Florida,

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