

Remembering a Dream

Aggies join in celebration of the life of Dr. King

By ELIZABETH RAINES
The Battalion

The spirits of Martin Luther King Jr. and Texas A&M were alive Monday at the fifth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Walk in Bryan.

A&M students and professors were among the participants in the three-mile walk, which began on Martin Luther King Street at Sadie Thomas Park and ended at Camp Elementary School.

"I think it is important for all of us to be here because today does not just symbolize equality for African-Americans, but equality for all Americans," said Dr. Christine Stanley, an A&M education professor.

The A&M chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority co-sponsored the event. Agnes Gray, Delta Sigma Theta chairwoman, helped found the walk five years ago.

"This is a type of program that you want because it doesn't happen through talking about it," she said. "It happens through action."

Participants in the walk said A&M has come a long way in promoting and celebrating King's birthday.

Breana Bush, a senior biomedical science major, along with John Sampson, a senior English major, and Roshawn Bowers, a junior aerospace engineering major,

brought elementary school children from the Bryan-College Station area to participate in the walk.

"I think that this is a very important day to remember," Bush said. "Five years ago, A&M didn't even get this day off as a holiday, and I feel that this is something that needs to be celebrated annually, at the very least."

"I think that it is important to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. because he wanted to make everybody equal, and I am here today because I want to make everybody equal," said B.J. Marshall, a fifth grader from Cypress Grove Elementary.

Dr. Linda Parrish, an educational psychology professor, and her husband Dr. Paul Parrish, an English professor, have participated in all five of the freedom walks.

"I think it is important to be here today because MLK was a great American, and this is not a black holiday but an American holiday," Linda Parrish said. "My husband and I were very in tune in the '60s and we attended a memorial service for MLK when he died. Ever since then, we have celebrated his life together."

Today, the Memorial Student Center will begin a two-week celebration honoring Martin Luther

See MLK on Page 2.



Left: Craig Anderson Jr., 8, of Bryan and Pastor Charles Jefferson attended the Martin Luther King March from Sadie Thomas Park. Top right: Members of Delta Sigma Theta march in the parade in

Bryan Monday morning. Bottom right: Dora Shirley, a resident of Bryan for 53 years, shows her support from her porch along the parade route.

Aggie dies in wreck

By SOMMER BUNCE
The Battalion

Shannon Trae Alston, a 29-year-old graduate student, was killed in an automobile accident over the winter break when an 18-wheeler hydroplaned and struck his car.

On Dec. 26, Alston left his wife and 2-year-old daughter in their home in Rockdale, bound for College Station to research drought-resistant cotton genes in A&M's greenhouses. Alston was going to meet with Dr. Wayne Smith, his doctoral adviser, so he could get the keys to the greenhouse.

He was making the 45-minute drive between Rockdale and

College Station when the accident occurred.

Alston's widow Tracy recalled the details of that day, she described the details of how she and her husband met.

When Tracy Alston, A&M Class of '86, saw her future husband, Shannon, walk by in a country bar in Phoenix, the first thing that caught her eye was his Aggie ring.

She started a conversation with him, and nine months later the two Aggies were married.

The 1993 A&M graduate was a former member of the now-disbanded Corps of Cadets Savage 6 Flying Tigers and a doctorate student in the Department of Soil and Crop Growth. He "bled maroon," his widow said.

"He was just a good ol' boy, and he loved the lay of the land," Alston said of her husband. "He was a great dad and a great husband. He could make anything live."

Alston was pursuing his doctorate part-time under Smith. Alston's research, though in its beginning

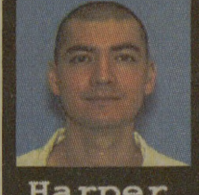
See STUDENT on Page 2.



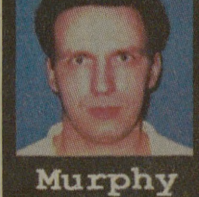
Garcia



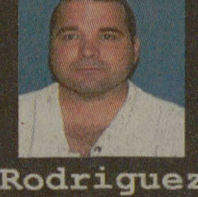
Halprin



Harper



Murphy



Rodriguez



Newbury



Rivas

Mugs and sketches online at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice: www.tdcj.state.tx.us

Reward of \$440,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of seven escaped convicts wanted for killing Irving police officer Aubrey Hawkins.

RUBEN DELUNA/The Battalion

Local authorities remain on lookout for 7 inmates

By AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

Local law enforcement officials are proceeding with caution as the search continues for seven inmates who escaped from a maximum security prison in south Texas Dec. 13.

Local authorities say they have no reason to believe any of the inmates will flee to the Bryan-College Station area, but police across the Southwest are on the lookout for the fugitives.

The inmates are believed to be armed and dangerous after the alleged slaying of Irving police officer Aubrey Hawkins

at an Oshman's sporting goods store. Police say the inmates escaped with ammunition, winter clothes and more than \$70,000 in cash and checks.

The inmates overpowered guards at a Connally prison, took the guards' clothes and sped away in a prison vehicle.

Dan Jones, public information officer for the College Station Police Department (CSPD), said Brazos County law enforcement agencies, including CSPD, the Bryan Police Department (BPD), the Texas A&M University Police Department (UPD) and the Brazos

County Sheriff's Department, are keeping their eyes open.

"All officers across the state and country have practiced heightened alertness and awareness," Jones said. "Every day that they remain uncaptured is a day closer to their being captured. But there's not a whole lot we can say or do."

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice reported that calls continue to come into the hotline established for citizens to report sightings of the escapees, and officials continue to investigate the fugitives' reported whereabouts.

Sightings have been reported in Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Louisiana. No specific information on their presumed whereabouts has been released.

Bob Wiatt, director of UPD, said the media coverage the case has received has increased awareness among the public.

"We are all aware, and of course we have to be ready to respond," Wiatt said. "Nobody has an idea of where they are. All local agencies have pictures of the guys and anyone who believes they saw them may call 911 or their local law enforcement agency."

As A&M students move back into the residence halls and more cars and pedestrians return to the campus for the first day of class, Wiatt encourages members of the A&M community to report suspicious incidents or individuals to the police.

Sue Foster, assistant director Residence Life, said the escaped fugitives have not been addressed specifically in move-in schedules for the 29 occupied residence halls on campus, but safety is always a concern.

See INMATES on Page 2.

Reward for convicts' capture rises again

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Authorities on Monday increased the reward to \$440,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of seven escaped convicts wanted for killing Irving police officer Aubrey Hawkins on Christmas Eve.

The FBI added an additional \$140,000 to the existing \$300,000 reward, Irving Police Department officials said.

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation has a history of cooperation working with the Irving Police Department and we greatly appreciate this demonstration of their commitment to the de-

partment in bringing this tragic and dangerous situation to a close," Irving Chief of Police Lowell Cannaday said in a statement.

The seven men escaped from the Connally Unit near Kennedy, Texas, on Dec. 13th. Police suspect they are responsible for Hawkins' murder during a Christmas Eve robbery of an Oshman's Super Sports USA in Irving, a Dallas suburb.

Irving police spokesman David Tull said authorities hope the additional money entices someone who may be hiding or otherwise helping the fugitives to come forward.

Shooting investigation continues

By ELIZABETH RAINES
The Battalion

Bryan police are still investigating the Jan. 8 shooting at Sanderson Farms in Bryan, where a gunman shot two employees before killing himself.

The victims were Kevin B. Crook, a division manager for Sanderson Farms' production facility in Bryan, and Larry Ryals, a hatchery manager. Crook was killed in the shooting, and Ryals was shot in the arm.

Ryals was taken to St. Joseph Hospital and has since been released.

The shooter, Barry Townsend, was an independent contractor

from Walker County who grew chickens for Sanderson Farms.

Although Townsend is dead, police are still investigating why Townsend went on the deadly rampage.

Although Townsend is dead, the police are still investigating why Townsend went on the deadly rampage.

Sgt. Ernie Montoya of the

Bryan Police Department (BPD) said Townsend had a dispute with the two men and called to meet with them. They met at the production facility at 701 Capital Parkway in a conference room.

"Townsend demanded the two men call his wife and apologize for something," said BPD Lt. Chris Ferris. "Crook tried to make the call but, due to nervousness, could not complete it. At that point, Townsend shot Crook in the chest and Ryals in the arm. Ryals then crawled from the office and alerted the other employees to call the police."

Ferris said it remains unclear why Townsend was demanding an

apology, though there is some speculation of a financial problem.

It was reported in The Bryan-College Station Eagle that Townsend had been arrested twice in Walker County. He was arrested in 1996 for indecency with a child. He received deferred adjudication and six years probation after pleading guilty. He was arrested a second time in December 1999 and was awaiting a jury for the trial when the shooting took place. Townsend's attorney, Hal R. Ridley, did not believe the trial had a connection to the shooting.

Sanderson Farms is based in Laurel, Miss., and produces and distributes fresh and frozen chickens.

Inauguration 2001

WASHINGTON (AP) — John Ashcroft will soon be mingling with his friends back in the Senate, some of whom are ready to pounce.

It is not personal, Democrats said Sunday, while making clear they will not give him a pass to become the next attorney general just because they think he is a fine individual.

See ASHCROFT on Page 2.