

## Dorms below fire standards

### A&M correcting safety issues

BY ROLANDO GARCIA  
The Battalion

Residence halls at Texas A&M are coming under fire for potential fire hazards and fire code violations, a recent investigation found.

In a comprehensive safety inspection conducted last year of all residence halls in Texas public universities, the state fire marshal reported that all schools' housing facilities fall below fire-safety standards. "No university came out with a sterling record," said Wayne Smith, director of safety inspections with the state fire marshal's office.

During an inspection from June 5-9, officials found a variety of violations in the Northside residence halls, including trash chutes without fire sprinklers and multistory buildings with only one exit route and lack of emergency lighting. In the event of a fire, students in those halls would have to travel through smoke to access fire-escape ladders.

Fire doors intended to block the advance of flames through corridors were propped open. Also, doors to individual rooms are not fire-safety rated because they are hollow and not composed of solid wood, Smith said.

In the Southside residence halls, doors lack self-closing devices and are not fire rated, stairwell doors were propped open and exit corridors were not subdivided into smoke compartments.

Inspections of corridor-style halls found similar violations, including stairwells not enclosed with firewalls and doors.

The report also identified key fire hazards in the University-owned apartments, including no fire alarm systems and inoperable smoke detectors.

All residence halls had penetrations in firewalls that were not sealed against heat and smoke. Smith said holes were drilled to install cables and wires, but the gaps in the firewalls were never closed.

In a subsequent inspection in October, officials reported that all corrections had been made to the Corps dorms, but minimal progress was being made in other residence halls.

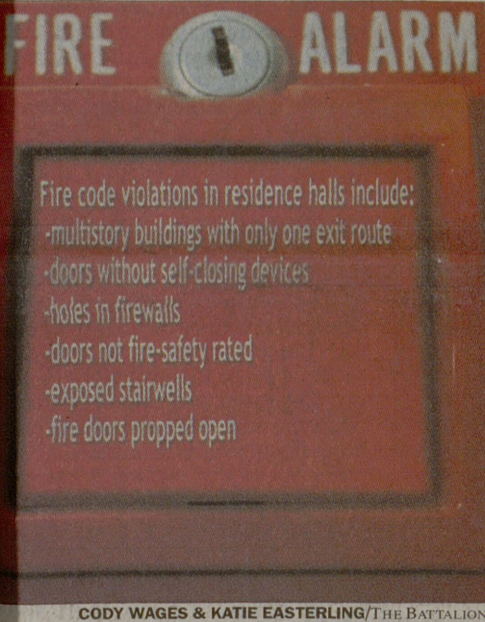
"The universities have been very vigorous in working to fix these problems," Smith said.

Chris Meyer, director of the A&M Department of Environmental Health and Safety, said the November 1998 fire in Corps Dorm 9 prompted the University to make fixing the aging corridor-style dorms a priority. Only one room was destroyed, but a majority of the building suffered smoke damage.

Investigators could not determine the cause of the fire, but reported several deficiencies in the hall's fire-safety measures that failed to prevent the spread of flames. In particular, the report faulted exposed stairwells and doors without closing devices.

"Unless the stairwells are enclosed, they act like chimneys and allow heat and smoke to travel throughout the building," Meyer said.

The University is gradually working to correct the long list



CODY WAGES & KATIE EASTERLING/THE BATTALION

Fire code violations in residence halls include:

- multistory buildings with only one exit route
- doors without self-closing devices
- holes in firewalls
- doors not fire-safety rated
- exposed stairwells
- fire doors propped open

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## Hoops for charity



BERNARDO GARZA/THE BATTALION

Roderick Guerra, a freshman electrical engineering major, takes a shot at a basketball hoop set up by One Army, a men's service organization, on campus Wednesday afternoon. One Army is raising money for United Way.

## Meningitis vaccines scarce

BY BRADY CREEL  
The Battalion

The recent outbreak of bacterial meningitis in communities surrounding Houston has increased demand for vaccinations, which was evident Wednesday afternoon when students crowded into the A.P. Beutel Health Center.

Students studied, worked crossword puzzles together and visited quietly during the hour-long wait. Only 50 students were lucky enough to receive a dose.

Dr. Ann Reed, a head of clinical services at Beutel, said 100 doses of the vaccination had been ordered, but only 50 were received Wednesday.

"We got them at noon, and we

were out at 3 p.m.," Reed said.

Dorothy McGee, a registered nurse at the Brazos County Department of Health, said there have been no reported cases of meningitis in Brazos County since the late 1980s or early 1990s.

"As far as any high risk in this area, no, we haven't had anything like that," McGee said.

She said she does not anticipate any kind of epidemic in the Brazos Valley.

Many of the students waiting for vaccinations Wednesday realized they shared something in common — they were from the suburbs north of Houston.

Reed said that, although the Houston area has not been classi-

fied as an epidemic, students whose hometowns are affected might be more concerned about being exposed to the infection.

Reed added that there have been no reported episodes of meningitis at A&M.

McGee said the vaccine must be taken as a preventative.

"For people who have been exposed to [meningitis], the vaccine won't do them any good," she said.

Reed said the vaccine is limited because manufacturers do not make large quantities unless it is needed, and they must then attempt to keep pace with the demand.

"The companies can only

**BACTERIAL MENINGITIS** - an infection of the fluid surrounding the spinal cord and brain.

**Possible symptoms:**

- high fever
- rash
- cough
- stiff neck

**Vaccination protects against Type A and C bacterial meningitis.**

SELSO GARCIA/THE BATTALION

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## Business college considers minors

BY ARATI BHATTACHARYA  
The Battalion

The Lowry Mays College of Business is considering allowing business students to select minors in addition to their major.

Chad Wagner, speaker of the student Senate and a junior political science and history major, said there has been a concern about why business students cannot have minors when Aggies in other academic colleges can.

"I think all students try to maximize their opportunities during the short time they are here at A&M," Wagner said. The students see this as an opportunity to further enhance their education.

The business minor was

passed in Fall 1999 as a Student Senate bill, then certified by last year's Student Body President Will Hurd and then-Speaker of the Student Senate Bryan Minyard.

"Now that the bill has been passed through the Senate with our endorsement, we plan to support any initiatives that would be successful," Wagner said. "This must be done via negotiation and cooperation with Faculty Senate and Academic Operations Committee."

Lara Pringle, a member of the Academic Affairs Subcommittee for Student Senate and a sophomore business administration major, said the legislation holds a good

chance of being passed. "So far, we've passed it through the Student Senate and

**"I think all students try to maximize their opportunities during the short time they are here at A&M."**

— Chad Wagner  
speaker of Student Senate

Faculty Senate," Pringle said. "Now we've moved into the

business school — there was actually a point where it was almost implemented."

Pringle said that business students are supportive of the minor program and that the process of declaring a minor will be easier if the College of Business cooperates.

"Students definitely want it on their resumes because it helps so much," Pringle said. "Essentially, business students are taking enough hours to have one."

Pringle said the business college has always considered an emphasis in certain areas the equivalent to a minor, but it is not.

"I think a minor would be very beneficial to every busi-

ness student's education," said Barry Hammond, a sophomore business administration major.

Wagner is confident the program is feasible.

"I think it's very possible to implement a minor into the business curriculum," Wagner said. "Of course, nothing will happen overnight, and it will take a lot of cooperation and effort, but everyone wants what's best for A&M. If we can prove that it's in the best interest for the business school and A&M, then it will probably go through."

Hammond said a minor will be beneficial to business students who are interested in areas other than business.

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**TEXAS A&M BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**TEXAS A&M BLACK FORMER STUDENTS REUNION, FEB. 2-4**

visit [www.blackaggies.org](http://www.blackaggies.org) for more information

**HARAMBEE 2001, FEB. 5**

Sponsored by African Students Association & MSC Black Awareness Committee

Contact MSC Student Programs Office for more information

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

## Black History Month begins

BY RISHA BRYAN  
The Battalion

In honor of Black History Month, Texas A&M will host events throughout February to celebrate the history and significant contributions of African-Americans.

National recognition of Black History Month began in 1976. The heritage and pride continues as some student organizations celebrate the richness and diversity of African-American culture.

"Black Awareness Month is a significant tribute to all African-Americans who made accomplishments throughout the nation and the world," said Everett Brouffard, president of Phi Beta Sigma and a senior economics major. "February is a time for unity be-

tween all African-Americans and a time for all to learn more about our heritage."

A formal reception at the Texas A&M Cushing Memorial Library, "In fulfillment of a Dream: African Americans at Texas A&M University, 1876-2000," will open the 2001 Black Former Students Reunion.

The reunion will take place Feb. 2-4 and will feature speakers such as Casey Daniels, an anchor for CNN Headline News, and Donovan Wheatfall, owner of Computer Innovation Services in Dallas. Daniels and Wheatfall are both A&M graduates.

Texas A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen will begin Saturday's event with a welcome to a continental breakfast at the George Bush Presidential Conference Center and a round-table

discussion. The reunion will host a banquet Saturday evening and a Sunday-morning prayer breakfast.

Harambee 2001, an event celebrating the unity and diversity of African-Americans, is slated to begin Feb. 5 in Rudder Theater. The event includes guest speaker the Rev. Robert Muhammad, a southwest representative of Islam, who will lecture on the importance of remembering African-American heritage.

Harambee will showcase a wide array of African-American poetry and performing talent. "Harambee 2001 is a celebration of unity and diversity on campus, and we expect a large turnout from around the community," said Wilmetria Simpson, MSC Black Awareness

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## UNT suspends Kappa Alpha Order's chapter

(AP) — Hundreds of University of North Texas (UNT) students rallied Wednesday to support the temporary suspension of a fraternity accused of chanting racial slurs and waving a Confederate battle flag at football recruits.

Members of Kappa Alpha Order's UNT chapter are accused of confronting about 35 mostly black football recruits who were touring the Denton campus with their parents over the weekend.

University officials have suspended the chapter while they investigate.

LaToya Royal, a member of the tour-leading Eagle Angels, said about 20 men wearing their Greek letters ran down the stairs with a dog wearing a Confederate battle flag bandana and "stopped about 20 feet away and began chanting and singing."

"I heard them say, 'No race from Africa or any other land shall stand against us,'" Royal said.

The Angels' vice president, UNT junior Colleen Murphy, said Kappa Alpha members also chanted Saturday, "Let's march them back to the Southern cotton fields" and "Blacks don't belong here."

In a statement released Monday, Kappa Alpha president Matt Spellman said: "Kappa Alpha is a Southern fraternity, not a Confederate fraternity. We celebrate the South as a melting pot of many different and interesting cultures. The members of Kappa Alpha are a very culturally diverse group."

Spellman said the person responsible for taking the Confederate flag to the event has been dismissed from the organization.

One mother who was on the tour told her son he would not attend the university, said Eagle Angels President Adrienne Williams.

"Racism is totally inconsistent with UNT's mission," Norval Pohl, university president, said in a prepared statement. He promised swift, strong action if the investigation confirms impermissible behavior.