

Birds on campus cause concern

By JESSE STEPHENSON
The Battalion

Students walking past the Student Recreation Center are wading through more than traffic. Despite the University's best efforts, birds continue to blanket parts of West Campus with feces.

Charles Sippial, vice president for administration, said that although measures to solve the problem are being taken, he was "not too optimistic" they will work.

One option being considered is a device that imitates the cries of birds of prey, like hawks. A similar method was tried in the past but only worked for a short period of time. The device drives the birds from one location to another, and they become accustomed to the noise and learn to ignore it.

In the meantime, officials will employ noisemakers called "screamers."

Screamers behave much like fireworks. They are supposed to startle the birds and cause them to roost elsewhere.

Noisemakers that sound like gunshots will also be used each day beginning about 5 p.m. — the birds' primary roosting time. The noisemakers will be used on main campus and West Campus.

This strategy was employed during the winter break and has been the most effective way of dealing with the problem, said Tura King, a University spokeswoman with University Relations.

Forrest Lane, student body president and a senior political science major, has also heard complaints from students. He said putting nets on the trees has been considered as a possible long-term solution.

Eliminating the birds is not an option. The birds are protected migratory animals, Sippial said, and experts expect them to leave the area some

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ANDY HANCOCK/THE BATTALION

The University has tried several tactics to keep the birds away from campus.

Reach for the stars



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Nelida Lara, a sophomore economics major, stretches her muscles at the bar during her advanced ballet class on Monday.

Exhibit honors black history

Cushing collection shows African-American contributions

By BRANDIE LIFFICK
The Battalion

The history of African-Americans at Texas A&M will be presented in an exhibit opening Saturday at the Cushing Library.

Titled "In Fulfillment of a Dream: African-Americans at Texas A&M University, 1876-2000," the exhibit will be open to the public for viewing through June during the regular operation hours of Cushing Library.

"The exhibit shows the activities of African-Americans at Texas A&M since 1876," said Angus Martin, reference archivist at Cushing Library and curator of the exhibit.

The exhibit includes a time line of events, artifacts and several panels featuring information on individuals and their contributions to the University.

The official unveiling will be marked by a reception on Saturday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

"While we did send out many invitations, the reception is also open to the public," Martin said. "Anyone is free to attend and view the exhibit."

The exhibit's opening coincides with

the beginning of Black History Month and the 2001 Black Former Students Reunion. A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen and Martin will speak at the reception and welcome participants to the Black Former Students Reunion.

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— Dr. Ray M. Bowen
University President

"It's an opportunity to welcome back students and thank them for all that they contribute to this University," Bowen said.

Although not admitted as students or faculty members until 1963, African-Americans have served in staff positions, such as groundskeepers and custodians, since the University opened in 1876.

"One of our panels discusses a custodian named Daniel Jackson. He was nicknamed Uncle Dan and was well-known and liked by the students," Martin said. "We have several panels featuring individuals."

Other featured individuals include Dr. James L. Courtney, the first African-American to receive an undergraduate degree from A&M, and Dr. Roscoe W. Lewis, the first African-American professor to serve on the faculty.

Steve Smith, an exhibit advisory committee member, said work on the exhibit began two years ago and was completed with the help of numerous members of the library staff.

"In a way, it's like a work of art; the setup changes with each hit of inspiration," Smith said. "This is a big step for [Cushing Library]. We have never had an exhibit like this before. Usually, we have a lot of artifacts, so this was a bit more of a challenge to present all of this information in an appealing way."

"Everybody set this as a high priority," he said. "We received funds from

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Rec center could run at a deficit

By SOMMER BUNCE
The Battalion

State Rep. Fred Brown filed a bill this week in the Texas House of Representatives requesting a \$50 raise in the cap of the Recreational Sports Center Fee.

Brown is introducing the bill on behalf of the A&M Student Senate, which recommended in Spring 2000 that the cap be raised from \$50 to \$100. The cap was set six years ago when the Rec Center on West Campus was opened and has not been raised since, said Rec Sports Director Dennis Corrington.

The Rec Center is currently running at a deficit, though the operational budget guarantees upkeep on center equipment for the next year, Corrington said. Money needs to be set aside in a depreciation fund to maintain the building and safeguard against permanent structural damage, he said.

"We're running good now," Corrington said, "but a fee increase will ensure that, four years from now, we'll still be OK."

The increase in utility expenses this year alone is

\$150,000, Corrington said. The Rec Center's operational budget has increased since it first opened; the student fees, however, have not.

The bill was approved by voters during March student body elections, said Speaker of the Student Senate Chad Wagner, a junior political science and history major. Senators examined the physical conditions of the Rec Center and determined that extra funding was needed for structural improvements.

"In the beginning, the Rec Center wasn't expecting the amount of traffic it has received in the years since it's been running," Wagner said. "They need money to paint the walls and replace old carpet, and then maybe they can add new equipment and increase the number of programs and aerobics and kickboxing classes."

A cap is just what it sounds like, Wagner said: a limit on how much students can be charged. It is not necessarily the amount students are charged in their fee statements. A raise of the cap means the University can

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ROBIN GRAHAM/THE BATTALION

State Rep. Fred Brown proposed a bill that would raise the rec center fee cap so that equipment can be fixed.

Student Senate expresses condolences to OSU

By JEANETTE SIMPSON
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Student Senate recognized and shared in the grief of Oklahoma State University Wednesday when it adopted a resolution expressing the Senate's condolences.

"[The Oklahoma State] campus is much like our own. We want them to know

that we share in their pain with their loss," said Student Body President Forrest Lane, a senior political science major.

With the Spring 2001 elections approaching, the Senate also passed an Election Revision Bill in emergency legislation, meaning that the bill was read and voted on in the same meeting.

The bill revised the regulations each candidate must follow while campaigning.

"Many of the changes presented on this bill are old precedents that needed to be put in writing to make the election regulations more clear," said Lisa Schlitzkus, chairwoman of the Rules and Regulations Committee

and a junior political science major.

Among the changes included in the bill was a clause that prohibits candidates from offering students rides in the bed of a truck or pulling trailers offering students rides in order to solicit votes.

The Senate also increased the filing fee all candidates

must pay. Each of the fees was increased \$5.

The filing fee was increased to cover the cost of running the elections, said Election Commissioner Erika Prochaska, a junior history major.

"These fees are the only source of income the election commission has except for the money allocated by the Student Government As-

sociation," Prochaska said. "With a recent increase in voter turnout, the cost of running scantrons has risen, and there are also costs with running Battalion ads and purchasing the scantrons."

In other business, the Senate approved two resolutions congratulating President George W. Bush and Gov. Rick Perry.

City installs parking meters at Promenade Lot, along University

By DAVID JOHNSON
The Battalion

Waiting in line for a parking spot may always be a problem on Northgate, but the city of College Station is trying to lessen the blow of the parking problem.

Recently, all 116 parking spaces on the Northgate city lot, once controlled by a central master meter, are now controlled by individual electronic parking meters. The newest phase of the Northgate Parking Plan was approved by the College Station City Council last year. Other changes include a new parking garage and eventual elimination of street-side parking.

College Station Fire Marshall John Mies said the changes were made in re-

sponse to complaints of long lines caused by many people trying to pay at one machine. He said that "if one machine went down, the whole lot would go down," rendering all the parking spots unusable until a city electrician could fix the meter. Now if a meter goes down, it will affect that particular meter, which, he said, can be quickly reprogrammed with a handheld device.

The new machines are accompanied by new parking fees. A \$4 flat rate will no longer cover all-day parking. From 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. the first hour of parking is free, and each additional hour costs 50 cents. During the day, the meters will allow pre-payment for up to four hours. After 6 p.m., individuals can pay for up to eight

hours of parking, and the rate increases to \$1 an hour.

Mies said that the change was not made to keep people from parking on Northgate all

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— Chris Greco
manager, Freebirds' World Burritos

day; it is just the way the meters work.

Individuals parking on Northgate can pay with change and dollar coins. In the future,

the city hopes to implement prepaid cards as a means of payment.

Shelby Willett, manager and part owner of Fitzwilly's, said, "I think it will be better because the last system was terrible. We won't have people standing, waiting in line anymore."

Although most Northgate businesses are happy to have the headache of the old system alleviated, they see paid parking as a bigger problem.

Chris Greco, manager of Freebirds' World Burritos, said that parking on Northgate is a "piss-poor situation for everyone." He said, "It is ridiculous that it costs to park anywhere within short walking distance of Northgate."

He said the city is slowly taking away all of Northgate's

free parking, which is affecting both customers and employees. Already, a worker stands watch all day to keep people who do not pay out of their customer lot.

Don Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken, said, "I don't like any of it. In my opinion, the parking should be free." He said that the city should pay for the parking out of the taxes levied on Northgate businesses.

In response to the concerns over paid parking, Mies said, "They (business owners) are allowed to have their opinion, but we have a job to do." He said that, before the city lot was built, there were only 30 potholed spaces behind Northgate, and that the additional improved

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KRISTI HINES/THE BATTALION

Parking at the Northgate lot costs \$1 per hour between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. The meters allow up to eight hours of prepayment. During the day, the first hour is free with each additional hour costing 50 cents.