

THE BATTALION

107 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
June 18, 2001
Volume 107 - Issue 156
6 pages

News in Brief
Community

Matthews receives death by injection

Ynobe Matthews, the 25-year-old convicted of raping and murdering 21-year-old Carolyn Diane Casey in May 2000, was sentenced to death Friday.

The seven-woman, five-man jury deliberated for four-and-a-half hours before returning with their verdict for Matthews, who is also accused of raping and murdering 21-year-old Jamie Hart and sexually assaulting five other women. Prosecutors said Friday it is unknown if Matthews will stand trial for those charges.

Because Matthews was sentenced to death by injection, his case will be automatically appealed to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Traditions security stabbed Saturday

A security officer working at the construction site of the Traditions Dorm was stabbed in the leg Saturday night. The officer reported he was attacked by an 18- to 20-year old African American male who was five-foot 11-inches tall and weighing about 140 pounds.

The officer was taken to the College Station Medical Center where he was treated and released.

State

Perry warns price gougers after storm

Gov. Rick Perry warned state agencies late Thursday of possible price-gouging stemming from cleanup efforts because of Tropical Storm Allison.

"I have become concerned about reports of possible price-gouging in the Southeast Texas region," he said. "If true, such practices will only revictimize those devastated by the flooding."

The Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act prohibits charging excessive prices for fuel, food, medicine and other necessities during a declared disaster. The penalty is \$2000 per violation. If the act is to acquire money from one 65 or older, the penalty increases to \$10,000 per violation.

Anyone aware of such activities should contact the Attorney General's office at 1-800-337-3928, or via the Internet at www.oag.state.tx.us.

System for verifying grades will be changed for elections

Robin Lewis
The Battalion

Last semester, senior Boo Boo Davies was found ineligible shortly after he was elected senior yell leader for the 2001-'02 school year. In a controversial decision, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. J. Malon Southerland allowed Davies to remain a yell leader on the condition that he brought up his grade point ratio (GPR) to a 2.25 this summer.

Some lauded Southerland for his decision while 200 others staged an April 30 protest on Southerland's lawn. All agreed that the lapse in grade verification should never have happened.

In an attempt to halt further lapses, student activity leaders have reformed the campus election process by requiring three University officials instead of one to verify students' grades and asking student groups to present a list of requirements for elected positions.

The minimum qualifications, fixed by the University, for a student to hold office includes a 2.0 GPR to apply and a 2.0 in all subsequent semesters.

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CHANGES IN STUDENT ACTIVITY GRADE VERIFICATION

- THREE STUDENT ACTIVITY OFFICIALS INSTEAD OF ONE WILL VERIFY GRADE REQUIREMENTS
- EACH STUDENT GROUP MUST SUBMIT A SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS TO STUDENT'S APPLYING FOR ELECTED POSITIONS

CHAD MALLAM/THE BATTALION

For example, the yell leaders' constitution requires a candidate to have a minimum 2.25 GPR to run and to maintain a 2.0 while in office.

Davies, who was mistakenly approved to run for office, was later found unqualified for the yell leader position.

"This year, we just made an administrative mistake," said Kevin Jackson, director of student activities.

He explained that relying on one person to do the grade checks for all the student organizations was not enough.

"We are all human," Jackson said. "There's always a chance that a mistake can be made."

The Department of Student Activities

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Search for design firm continues

University unable to reach agreement with one selected

Stuart Hutson
The Battalion

The University's search for a safety design firm will take longer than expected because of an inability to reach a contractual agreement between the University and its first choice, Vallen Knowledge System Corp.

Dr. Bryan R. Cole, head of the University's Bonfire Steering Committee, said the deadline for selection of a safety design firm has now been moved to August 1, instead of June 1.

The selected firm will work with CBM Engineering to finalize three plans which will be presented to the student body for final selection. The two week presentation is still expected to take place at the beginning of Fall 2001.

Cole said the agreement with Vallen Knowledge System Corp. fell through because they wanted to make significant changes to University's contract.

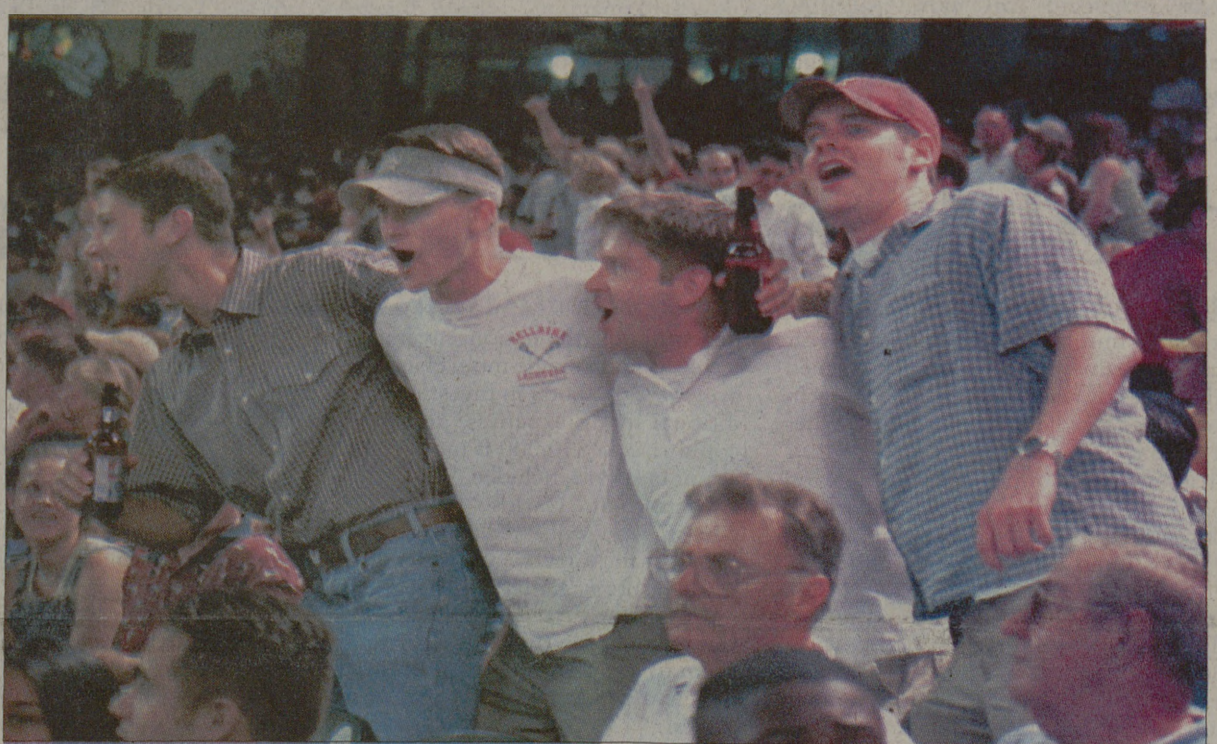
"The sent it to their lawyers, who basically rewrote it," he said. "They included a number of points which the University could not accept. One of which was their wish that the University waive sovereign immunity."

Sovereign immunity is a stipulation required by the Texas State Legislature which limits the liability of government officials. Cole said the University could not agree because only an order from the Texas Legislature could waive the immunity.

"[The immunity] could slow down our search some," he said. "But we are opening up our search on a wider scale and we are putting the details of our requirements up front so that potential firms can come into this with their eyes open."

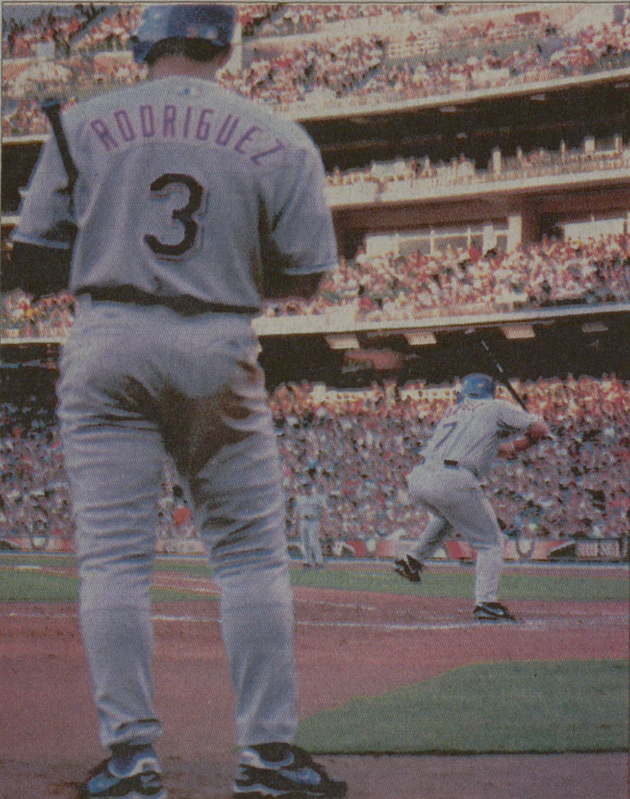
Cole said that the final deadline for the future Bonfire designs has not been altered, and that the University still intends to do its best to have a Bonfire in 2002.

Vallen Knowledge System Corp. Administrators could not be reached for comment.



Former students Miles Oberten, Class of '99; Greg Pryor, Class of '97; Randy Estes, Class of '99 and Brian Mancrief, Class of '99, sway to the Aggie War Hymn Friday night at Enron Field in Houston.

Aggie Night at Enron



Texas Ranger Alex Rodriguez watches as catcher Ivan Rodriguez bats against the Astros Friday night.

Maroon-clad fans attend Friday Lone Star game

Mark Passwaters
The Battalion

Last Friday's Houston Astros-Texas Rangers game at Enron Field already had a distinctive Texas flavor to it, as it was the first time the two teams had ever played each other in Houston.

On that night, however, the red of Astros' shirts and the blue of Rangers jerseys had competition from the maroon of thousands of A&M shirts worn to Aggie Night.

The Astros came up with the idea of Aggie Night three years ago and have seen the program's popularity grow each season.

"I think it's really special that we have a night like this, especially when Texas [the Rangers] didn't seem interested," said Ryan Bellows, a Class of '00 graduate who now works with the Astros.

With the Rangers in Houston, the game seemed to many to take on a bigger meaning.

"It's cool that we have them here. We have the interstate rivalry," said Layne Wiatt, a member of the Enron Field grounds crews and a senior wildlife and fisheries sciences major.

Gov. Rick Perry, Class of '72, threw out the first pitch as the Aggie War Hymn played in the back-

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Perry vetos bill prohibiting execution of retarded

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Rick Perry on Sunday vetoed a bill that would have banned the execution of mentally retarded



PERRY

killers, saying the state already has safeguards in place to protect such inmates.

The bill "is not about whether to execute mentally re-

tarded capital murderers. We do not. It's about who makes the determination in the Texas judicial system," Perry said at a news conference.

The veto came on the last day he could sign or veto bills before they become law without his signature.

Perry criticized the bill as a way of giving judges the power to overturn a jury's determination of whether an inmate is mentally retarded.

"It basically tells the citizens

of this state 'we do not trust you to get it right,'" Perry said.

Bill sponsor Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, said Perry's veto was embarrassing for the state.

"It gives us the appearance of being barbaric," Ellis said at a news conference at his Houston home. "Governor Perry had a historic opportunity to show the world that we are not only tough on crime, but fair and compassionate as well. He missed that opportunity."

The bill would have allowed the jury to determine during the trial's punishment phase whether a defendant is mentally retarded. If so, the person would have been sentenced only to life in prison.

If the jury determined the person was not mentally retarded, a defense attorney would have been able to petition the judge to consider the issue, and two experts would have been assigned to make a determination.

If the evidence had shown

the defendant was mentally retarded, the judge would have been required to issue a life in prison sentence.

"It sends inconsistent messages," Perry said. "It says to juries 'we trust your judgment if you determine that a defendant does not have the mental capacity to understand what that means. But, we don't trust you when you determine that he does have the mental capacity to

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