

THE BATTALION

107 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
July 16, 2001
Volume 107 - Issue 171
6 pages

Professor fired for plagiarism

Stuart Hutson
The Battalion

Tenured agricultural economics professor Mary Zey was officially fired, effective July 2002, by Texas A&M Provost Ronald Douglas last Friday for plagiarizing the work of two of her former colleagues.

The move comes after the recommendation to fire Zey by a University committee that initially was charged with investigating charges made by Zey that Harland Prechel and John Boies had plagiarized a 1999 paper.

The committee instead found that Zey had included falsified work as well as unattributed information that was

provided by Prechel and Boies.

In her response to the committee's findings, which were issued in June, Zey produced more than 100 pieces of evidence that she claimed proved that Boies was only a paid employee and not a co-author to the material. In an addendum, the committee noted that two photocopied sets of checks made out in Boies' name were falsified.

Zey's attorney, Andrew S. Golub of Houston, said in an interview with *The Bryan-College Station Eagle* that the checks were merely annotated to clarify to the committee that Boies was an employee.

Douglas has declined to comment on the matter, and Zey only has responded

through an issued statement in which she maintains her innocence.

"I have been convicted of an offense I did not commit," Zey said. "I have been wronged at the hands of vindictive accusers, an uninformed and biased committee and an irresponsible TAMU administration."

This investigation was one of many internal inquiries performed on behalf of Prechel, Boies and Zey over the last six years in which Prechel and Boies have maintained that Zey plagiarized them — and in which Zey stated that Prechel and Boies have plagiarized her.

All previous investigations concluded no plagiarism, as defined by either the

University or the National Science Foundation, had taken place.

However, Boies maintains that Zey and her husband Steve Murdock, head of A&M's Department of Rural Sociology, improperly exerted political influence during Boies' application for tenure two years ago to ensure that he was not granted tenure — effectively dismissing him from the University.

A faculty senate committee agreed, but Boies' tenure was still denied by Douglas. Boies now works for the U.S. Department of Census in Washington, D.C.

"It came as a bit of a shock that [the

See Zey on Page 2.

News in Brief

Campus

Bookkeeper admits stealing \$200,000

Mary Ann Ruether faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine after admitting Tuesday to stealing nearly \$200,000 while performing bookkeeping duties for the Texas A&M Faculty Club. Ruether, who has worked for the Faculty Club since 1988, admitted to the theft after discovering that A&M was conducting an investigation into the missing funds. A&M officials said Thursday that such theft is usually prevented by employing two independent bookkeepers for each university account, and that this was an isolated incident. The Faculty Club is a restaurant on the 11th floor of the Rudder Tower open only to paying A&M faculty, staff and alumni.

State

Mechanic charged in officer's death

LUBBOCK (AP) — An unemployed auto mechanic has been charged with capital murder in the death of police Sgt. Kevin Cox, who was shot in the head in an exchange of gunfire at the man's home. Bond for Richard Robinson, 47, was set at \$1 million. Assistant Chief Randy McGuire said Robinson, who was wounded, would remain hospitalized for several days. Cox was the second Lubbock officer to die in five days. Rodney Kendrick, 33, died July 1 of injuries suffered in a motorcycle accident during a funeral procession. Officer Jonny Hutson was treated and released after a bullet grazed his head during Friday's shootout. Police were conducting a thorough investigation at the home Saturday. Walker said it may take the entire weekend to complete the crime scene investigation.

Manatee spotted

CORPUS CHRISTI (AP) — A manatee, the endangered mammal thought to have inspired mermaid folklore among sailors, is paying a rare visit to the Texas coast. Marine watchers have reported seeing the walrus-like manatee three times, said Tony Amos, a research associate with the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas. Linda May, area coordinator for the Texas Marine Mammal Banding Network, said the manatee sightings have been waters off Galveston, Port Aransas and Rockport.

The mummy



Teenagers Ryan Keim and Kyle Tilton wrap Blake Maddox from head to toe in toilet paper during an obstacle race at Southwood Park Thursday. The race was part of "Hands On" Summer at the EXIT Teen Center, a program to provide recreational activities for teens in College Station.

STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Special Services building closed

Stuart Hutson
The Battalion

Underneath the Texas A&M campus lies the most damaging enemy to A&M's buildings — an 8-foot-deep layer of unstable clay soil.

According to the Physical Plant, the shifting of this soil is responsible for the sinking of a major portion of Ross Street, the water main burst near Agronomy Road in June, and now has made the Special Services Building near Lechner Hall susceptible to sudden collapse.

Workers spent this past weekend moving supplies and equipment out of the building, which housed the Texas Agricultural Extension Services' information

"The risk of sudden collapse of a major portion of the building is extremely remote, but not zero."

— Richard Robertson
head of Robertson Consulting Engineers

Bush administration may grant Mexicans residency

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Bush administration is considering granting legal residency to millions of undocumented Mexican immigrants living in the United States.



BUSH

Such amnesty would give a permanent reprieve to certain Mexicans living undercover in this country, largely in the border

states. It also could be a political boon to the Republican president as he seeks Hispanic support.

There are 3 million Mexican-born people living illegally in the United States, according to a report last week by Mexico's National Population Council.

An immigration task force of top Justice and State Department officials planned to send President Bush a report Monday on the broad outlines of U.S.-Mexico border issues. It will recommend that the United

States take action to address illegal immigration, but will stop short of offering concrete proposals, a Justice Department official said Sunday.

The task force is considering several options, including a proposal to give the illegal Mexican immigrants permanent residency, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. That is what Mexican President Vicente Fox has been pressing Bush for.

Major questions remain unanswered about how the administration would administer

such a program. The official said issues under consideration include how quickly the immigrants could earn legal status, and whether they would gain such status based on date of entry into the United States, or by occupation, such as farm worker.

The working group was formed after Bush and Fox met in February. Attorney General John Ashcroft and Secretary of State Colin Powell head the

See MEXICANS on Page 2.

Houston recovering from flood

HOUSTON (AP) — Kathy Vossler has no illusions about returning to life as it was before Tropical Storm Allison blew into her world.

For now, she would settle for more than one pair of shoes.

"It's just depressing," said the self-employed attorney of a life still in limbo more than four weeks after the storm destroyed her home and everything in it.

"I've got my practice here. I've got kids to raise," she says. "I lost all my clothes. All my suits came back from the dry cleaners with a little tag on them that said, 'Sorry, this is the best we can do.'"

Ruined suits may seem like a small complaint from a storm that left 22 dead and nearly \$5 billion in damage in the Houston area. But for Vossler, it is just one more hurdle among what seems like hundreds as she

tries to regain some sense of normalcy.

"There's nothing you can just reach for and it's there," she said. It also will be a long time before she can sleep comfortably through a thunderstorm — and there she has plenty of company.

The 2001 hurricane season's first named storm so saturated the nation's fourth-largest city that four days after it first came ashore on June 5, the water had nowhere to go but up.

Allison damaged 48,000 homes — destroying 4,500 — and so swamped the downtown area that Harris County's court system and theater district remain in shambles a month later.

Nine hospitals at the world-famous Texas Medical Center either partially or fully closed. Two medical schools lost nearly 35,000 mice, rats, rabbits, dogs and mon-

keys and countless tissue and cell samples used in medical research that had, in some cases, stretched on for decades.

The 47 rhesus monkeys that were among the thousands of animals drowned in the basement of University of Texas Medical School were more than living tools for research into autism, memory and infantile amnesia for Dr. Jocelyn Bachevalier, the neurobiology and anatomy professor who worked with them. She calls the animals "my babies."

"It's like having a little kid with you," said Bachevalier, a former National Institutes of Health researcher who has been at the Houston facility for 10 years. "They are not human beings, but they're close."

Bachevalier rushed to the medical school

See ALLISON on Page 2.

technology office, the Department of Rural Sociology and the Department of Residence Life custodial staff.

The 80 staff members who occupied the building will be moved to temporary offices.

The 84-year-old building, which displays gaping cracks in its walls and flaking plaster, was found to have sunk as much as one inch in some places over a five-month survey by the College Station-based Robertson Consulting Engineers.

"The risk of sudden collapse of a major portion of the building is extremely remote, but not zero," said Richard Robertson, head of the consulting company, in a Physical Plant report. "Based upon solely what is visible and measurable today, I would say zero. Taking into account the age, type of construction and possible hidden damages raises the risk above zero."

Vice President for Administration Charles A. Sippial said the building was closed down as soon as the danger was reported, and plans to dismantle the structure will soon be finalized.

"We thought it the prudent thing to do to close the building immediately if there were any indication that the safety of faculty and staff housed there could be in question," Sippial said. "So we immediately took action."

Sippial also said that other buildings are being investigated for stability, most notably the

See BUILDING on Page 2.

INSIDE

Sports
• A Lone Star flavor to AA All-Stars Round Rock plays host to game with Texas connections

Opinion
• Until death us do part Proposed amendment is close-minded, unlawful

Battalion News Radio:
1:57 p.m. KAMU 90.9

www.thebatt.com