

THE BATTALION

107 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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News in Brief
State

Offkin man charged with woman's death

LUFKIN (AP) — A 19-year-old man was charged Monday with capital murder in the death of a 79-year-old woman. Police said Marco Ramos was charged in the June slaying of Lorraine Webb. Ramos was already being held in Angelina County Jail on \$20,000 bond for the July 4 med robbery of a convenience store and theft of the store owner's car. While investigating Webb's death, officers noticed that the woman lived only a few blocks down from Ramos. Several interviews with Ramos, who had done some odd work for Webb in the past, led police to focus on him as the lead suspect in the case. Ramos later signed a written confession, police said. If convicted, a capital murder charge carries a sentence of life in prison or death.

Nation

Pain relievers do not damage kidneys

CHICAGO (AP) — Moderate use of over-the-counter pain relievers like aspirin, Tylenol and ibuprofen does not appear to cause kidney failure in healthy men, as some feared, according to one of the biggest studies yet to examine the issue. The study of 11,032 men was paid for by the National Institutes of Health and the makers of the Tylenol. The patients used up to 500 pills a year — a little over one a day — for an average of 14 years, and no link was found between those who used the most.

Three categories of pain relievers were studied: aspirin; Tylenol and other forms of acetaminophen; and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, such as naproxen, which is sold as Aleve, and ibuprofen, which is in Motrin and Advil.

University suspends its research studies

BALTIMORE (AP) — Johns Hopkins University has suspended all human research studies by the doctor whose asthma experiment went awry in June, causing the death of a healthy, 24-year-old participant. The university also said Monday it is imposing additional supervision on the hundreds of studies it conducts each year, and said an external investigation of the fatal research will begin later this month. The actions were contained in a report to the federal Office of Research and Protection on the case of Ellen Roche, who died June 2.

Senate committee approves request for funding research

Stuart Hutson
The Battalion

It is not known if U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison enjoys the taste of a maroon carrot, but if she has her way, they will be on dinner plates across the country.



HUTCHINSON

The Senate Appropriation Committee approved Hutchison's request for funding Tuesday that includes \$862,000 for a Texas A&M research program committed to engineering foods with increased levels of com-

pounds known to prevent dietary diseases.

"Both farmers and consumers will benefit from this valuable research, which seeks to improve diets to prevent diseases such as cancer, heart disease and stroke," Hutchison said.

The program, titled "Designing Foods for Health," has already produced more than six items found in grocery stores. These include golden rice, the 10-15 onion and the maroon carrot which, contains ultra high amounts of beta carotene, an anti-oxidant that helps prevent the leading cause of death in America — cardiovascular disease.

"I can't say how much Sen. Hutchison has done for this program," said Ed Hiler, vice chancellor for the Department of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "We are very appreciative of her support of programs that are benefiting the health of people across the country."

Hiler said the food program works with medical professionals that help identify specific beneficial compounds. Researchers at A&M isolate those compounds in foods already being commercially produced, and then engineer the foods to contain higher levels of those compounds.

"This is somewhat of a fledgling field, but one that will become increas-

ingly important to improving the public's health," he said. "Americans are now becoming more aware that the foods that they eat play a crucial role in preventing diseases that kill millions of people every year. This program is another step to help people get everything they need in their diet."

Also included in Hutchison's request was \$1.85 million for joint research between Texas A&M and New Mexico State University to improve irrigation efficiency in the Rio Grande Basin.

"Water is important in this state because it is the key economic component

See RESEARCH on Page 2.

Ouch



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Quancy Franklin, a 15-month-old from College Station, is held by his mother, Constance, while he is given a shot at a free immunization clinic at the

Lincoln Center Tuesday. The Brazos County Health Department operates clinics across the area for children to be immunized against childhood diseases.

Credit cards burden students

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many college students are crushed under a burden of credit card debt, which can cause serious financial trouble particularly in repaying student loans, congressional investigators conclude in a study released Tuesday.

Three lawmakers said Congress must take action and colleges should collect data on the role played by credit card debt in students' decision to drop out. An official of a university group said that would be extremely difficult.

Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., one of the three House members who requested the General Accounting Office study, accused banks and credit card companies of putting profits first at the expense of young customers' interests.

"Consistent misuse of credit cards by college students, particularly combined with student loan debt, could lead to substantial debt burdens," the GAO report said. "This problem could become particularly severe after graduation, when many students must begin making payments on education loans."

Roughly half of college graduates leave school with an average \$19,400 in student loans, according to the report.

It cited previous studies showing that 63 to 64 percent of college students have at least one credit card in their name, of whom 58 to 59 percent pay their balances in full each month.

Among those who do not pay in full, the average balance owed is \$577, according to the studies. Between 14 percent and 16 percent of students reported balances exceeding \$1,000 while 5 percent had balances of more than \$3,000.

Some lawmakers and consumer groups have assailed the widespread marketing of credit cards to young people, especially college students, who often have no income or credit record. In the worst cases, critics say, students who run up big debts are forced to drop out and work full time to pay them off.

In some instances, suicides by college students have been attributed to their despondency over credit card debt.

The GAO report said that officials at seven of the 12 universities visited by investigators cited financial problems, including credit card debt, as possible reasons why students decided to leave.

See CREDIT on Page 2.

Faculty pay cut by state

Stuart Hutson
The Battalion

A cut in funding for university faculty pay raises will mean a tightening of academic and administrative budgets for Texas A&M and other public universities.

During its last session, the Texas Legislature only allocated money for half of the annual university staff raises, leaving a gap that the University must fill in order to keep its professors' salaries nationally competitive, said Texas A&M Provost Dr. Ronald Douglas.

"We have to offer these raises," he said. "But we haven't decided how to ap-

proach coming up with the funding," Douglas said.

The legislature normally allocates funds for the full amount of minimum pay raises, which University departments may then supplement.

Douglas said the funds for the 3 to 6 percent raises is likely to come from budget cuts, but added that administrators will attempt to minimize the effects of the cuts on students and student programs.

An increase in student fees, however, is still a possibility.

"We are not ruling out any options at this point in time," Douglas said. "We will

be meeting in August. ... But we are not sure when any action will be taken on this."

Other Texas public universities are attempting to supplement the smaller funds as well.

According to the Associated Press, the University of Texas-Austin administration has already asked departments to cut budgets by 2 percent.

The Texas Tech administration has proposed a cut of up to 1 percent of its total operating budget to produce the \$2.3 to \$2.7 million dollars required for faculty raises.

Connecticut passes law in effort to deter Ritalin use

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — When Sheila Matthews' son was in first grade, a school psychologist diagnosed him with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and gave his parents information on Ritalin.

Matthews refused to put him on the drug. She believed the boy was energetic and outgoing, but not disruptive, and she suspected the school system was trying to medicate him just to make it easier for teachers.

Now Connecticut has weighed in on the side of parents like Matthews with a first-

in-the-nation law that reflects a growing backlash against what some see as overuse of Ritalin and other behavioral drugs.

The law — approved unanimously by the Legislature and signed by Gov. John G. Rowland last month — prohibits teachers, counselors and other school officials from recommending psychiatric drugs for any child.

The measure does not prevent school officials from recommending that a child be evaluated by a medical doctor. But the law is intended to make sure the first mention of drugs

for a behavior or learning problem comes from a doctor.

The chief sponsor, state Rep. Lenny Winkler, is an emergency room nurse. "I cannot believe how many young kids are on Prozac, Thorazine, Haldol — you name it," Winkler said. "It blows my mind."

While she has no problem with the use of Ritalin under a doctor's care, Winkler said a teacher's recommendation is often enough to persuade parents to seek drug treatment for their child's behavior problems.

See RITALIN on Page 2.

On the rise

Ritalin sales have declined slightly, though overall sales of analeptic drugs — used to treat attention deficit disorder — have increased.

Analeptic prescriptions in the United States



Who uses Ritalin

Breakdown of those who used Ritalin in the United States by age and gender for 2000.

Gender	Age Group	Percentage
Male	5 or younger	12.6%
	6-12	57.8%
	13-18	23.5%
Female	19 or older	14.4%
	6-12	45.2%
	13-18	16.2%
	19 or older	36%

NOTE: Numbers do not total 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: IMS Health

INSIDE

- Sports**
 - Baseball commissioner urges umpires to "hunt for strikes"
- Opinion**
 - Confederate and Christian monuments remind us of our heritage

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