

## 8th Annual Meeting Planners Showcase

AT REED ARENA ON THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Thursday, October 11, 2001 • 10:00 - 4:00  
(Come and Go at your leisure)

Find out how YOU can create the Perfect Special Event, Meeting/Conference, Wedding or Reunion or

How WE can help bring your Association's Meeting to Bryan/College Station!

Representatives from local conference & meeting planning services will be on hand to answer all of your questions!  
Meeting Venues Hotels/Motels Restaurants Entertainers  
Caterers Transportation Companies B&B's and many more!

\*\*\*Bring Business Cards\*\*\*  
Door Prizes will be given away throughout the day!

### GRAND PRIZE DRAWING:

2 Round Trip Airline Tickets compliments of Continental Airlines to anywhere in the United States!

Hosted by: The Bryan/College Station Convention & Visitor Bureau, Reed Arena, and Clear Channel Communications!

For more information please contact Erin at 260-9898

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Thinking about a career in medicine or veterinary medicine? Ross University invites you to...

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Sunday, October 21, 2001  
AUSTIN MARRIOTT AT THE CAPITOL  
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School of Medicine: 9:30am - 12:00pm  
School of Veterinary Medicine: 1pm - 3:30pm

Please note, presentations start promptly!

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Come to the workshop on Internship Search Strategies and get an edge on the competition...

- Search Tools
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Thursday, October 11 • 3:30 PM • 404 Rudder  
Tuesday, October 23 • 5:30 PM • 404 Rudder

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# Sci Tech

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Page 4 THE BATTALION Wednesday, October 10, 2001

## LINGUISTIC LINK

### Genetic clue connects biology and language

By MELISSA BRADDOCK  
THE BATTALION

The speed and ease of language development in children has long suggested to researchers that some genetic aspect must be involved.

Now, in work published in the Oct. 4 issue of the journal *Nature*, a team of British geneticists and linguists have identified the first gene to be directly linked with speech and language.

The researchers, led by Dr. Anthony Monaco of the University of Oxford, studied a large British family in which many members display a severe language disorder.

Within the "KE" family, 15 of 37 members spanning three generations display the same symptoms of garbled pronunciation and the inability to grasp grammatical rules.

Inheritance patterns indicated to researchers that the disorder was likely caused by a mutation in a single dominant gene.

A few years ago, Monaco and his team identified a 100-gene region on Chromosome 7 as a likely location for such a mutation.

Then, the researchers searched

for Chromosome 7 abnormalities in an unrelated young boy with the same language disorder.

This led them to a defect in a specific gene, known as FOXP2, that was known to be involved in fetal brain development.

Monaco then identified the precise mutation on the FOXP2 gene that results in this language disorder. The observed mutation involves a substitution of a single nucleotide out of 6,500 in one of the two copies of the FOXP2 gene.

Looking back at the KE family, the scientists found this same mutation in all the affected family members, but not in any unaffected family members or healthy volunteers.

In the *Nature* article, the Monaco proposed that this single replacement alters the gene's protein product enough to impair its function and ultimately "...leads to abnormal development of neural structures that are important for speech and language."

The study authors cautioned that the FOXP2 gene's precise function is not yet clear, and that it is probably only one of many genes directly or indirectly involved in speech and language.

FOXP2 is not specifically a

gene that triggers speech ability.

In fact, its similarity to other known genes suggests that it likely produces a transcription factor — a protein that modulates the activity of other genes, in this case genes involved in early brain development.

If a baby inherits a mutated FOXP2, these genes will not be properly controlled and the developing brain will fail to make the circuits needed to process language.

Over the next few years, Monaco hopes to identify these "downstream" genes and gain further insight into the molecular underpinnings of language.

Although the team's discovery supports the basic concept that language has a genetic element, it does not resolve the long debate among cognitive scientists over whether or not genes "hard wire" grammar circuits in the brain.

In an accompanying *Nature* commentary, Dr. Steven Pinker, a cognitive scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an advocate of genetically "hard-wired" grammar, wrote that this discovery is likely to greatly contribute to the understanding of how the

brain processes language and how human language evolved.

While he does not believe language can be linked to a single gene, Pinker points out that this provides strong evidence for a genetic basis of at least some language disorders.

The FOXP2 gene is likely to play "a causal role in the development of normal brain circuitry that underlies language and speech," Pinker wrote.

Many other scientists believe more conservative and feel that genes such as FOXP2 may regulate a general developmental process rather than specific language abilities.

"This is one of a family of genes that also exists in other animals. We need to find out what effect similar mutations would have in other species in order to understand more about what this gene does," said Colin Allen, a Texas A&M philosophy professor and cognitive science expert.

It may be relatively simple to uncover what is happening

The Wiley Lecture Series Presents:



## Looking to the Future:

Policy Changes Resulting from the Attack on America

Wednesday, October 10, 2001

7:00 p.m.  
MSC 224



[wiley.tamu.edu](http://wiley.tamu.edu)



## LIVE MUSIC

**Wednesday - \* Fallout \***  
Cover \$3.00

**Thursday - \* Rebecca Torrellas \***  
Cover \$5.00

**Friday - \* Thread \*** featuring 4 other guest bands  
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**Saturday - \* Closed for a private party \***  
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## ORDER OF OMEGA

### Texas A&M University

"Greek National Honor Society"

First Meeting: Thursday October 11, 2001 @ 7:00  
Who: New & Old Members  
Where: Kappa Delta Sorority House  
Layne's food will be served

If you have any questions, contact:  
[orderofomegatamu@yahoo.com](mailto:orderofomegatamu@yahoo.com)

or

Bruce Cannon V.P. Programs 696-4908	Elizabeth Degen President 774-5007	Tammie Preston-Cunningham Advisor 862-5636
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\*\*\*Please Bring 2 canned goods and wear your pin to the meeting\*\*\*

## Attention All Members of NSCS

National Society of Collegiate Scholars

### 3rd Meeting

When: October 11, 2001  
Where: 225 MSC  
Time: 5:30 p.m.

For more information, contact us at:  
[nscs\\_tamu@yahoo.com](mailto:nscs_tamu@yahoo.com)

## There's a Place for You in the Peace Corps

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## GENITAL WARTS STUDY FOR FEMALES

Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas is participating in a research study for external genital warts in females. A pharmaceutical company is sponsoring this 3 - 6 month study.

Participation is voluntary.

Qualified volunteers may receive related medical services, including:

- Study-related medical examinations
- Study-related laboratory blood work
- Investigational drug

For more information and to find out if you qualify, please call our Bryan clinic at 846-1744.

Research participants will be compensated for their time.