

THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Student input sought for Bonfire 2002

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

The planning phase is finished and students are now being asked to decide whether a drastically redesigned Bonfire should burn next fall.

Students will be able to participate in a survey this week intended to gauge support for Bonfire under the strict new safety parameters. Student support will be a decisive factor in Texas A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen's determination on whether to let Bonfire continue, said Bonfire

2002 Steering Committee facilitator Dr. Bryan Cole.

"He [Bowen] has always said that strong student support is a must for this project to move forward," Cole said. "And Bowen will consider the survey results before making a decision."

A link to the survey, which will take place Jan. 16 to 18, will be sent to all students through the Neo email system. Students need to have activated their neo accounts to receive the survey. Students can also complete the survey at voting tables at on-campus locations.

Bonfire planners have unveiled three potential designs for the Bonfire stack, which can be viewed at Evans Library, Sbis Dining Hall, Commons Lobby, Duncan Dining Hall, the Blocker building, the Memorial Student Center Flag Room and the Bonfire 2002 website, <http://studentaffairs.tamu.edu/bonfire02>.

In addition to a vote on which design students prefer, the survey will explain the new safety measures and ask students if they are willing to attend and participate in building Bonfire. The survey

will also solicit student feedback about how much should be spent on the project and where the funding should come from.

Bonfire 2002 is expected to cost as much as \$2 million, and Bowen has said the University may have to scrap Bonfire unless costs can be reduced. However, Cole said much of the cost comes from one-time expenses, and he estimates that future Bonfires can be built for between \$500,000 and \$750,000.

Student Body President
See **Survey** on page 8

Bonfire 2002 Open Forum

MSC 292 - 10 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m.

Survey locations: Jan 16-18

- MSC
- Zachry Building
- Student Recreation Center
- Wehner Building

Or online at vote.tamu.edu
Wednesday through Friday
Source: Bonfire 2002 Steering Committee
CHAD MALLAM • THE BATTALION

'Per Unitatem Vis'



STUART VILLANUEVA • THE BATTALION

Members of the Ross Volunteers run across Simpson Drill Field with their rifles held high during practice Tuesday afternoon. The Ross Volunteers are fine tuning

their maneuvers in preparation for their performance in the King Rex Parade at Mardi Gras next month in New Orleans.

Journalism limits number of students

By Sommer Bunce
THE BATTALION

Following the release of a December consultant report that examined the deficiencies of Texas A&M's Department of Journalism, the department is showing signs of accepting recommendations, including limiting the number of students in the program and dropping the department's telecommunications program.

The minutes of the Dec. 6 journalism faculty meeting show that A&M Provost Dr. Ron Douglas verbally approved a limit of 50 freshmen and 10 transfer students into the department effective Fall 2002. The limit would hold for the entire school year, and could remain in effect for a period of two years, according to the minutes.

A three-man team of external consultants, consisting of journalism faculty from the Universities of Alabama,

Wisconsin and Texas, concluded in a Nov. 27 report that the department was in need of major changes, including possibly cutting the journalism student enrollment by half.

Their report gave three options that included dissolving the program entirely. But their recommendation was to strengthen the department by trimming enrollment figures to 400, a loss of approximately 400 students currently in the degree program.

Larry Oliver, an associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts, said freshmen admitted into the program will come from the top 10 percent of all applying freshmen. Requirements for transfers may include such criteria as higher grade-point ratios (GPR) and prerequisite courses.

In a Dec. 21 email addressed to journalism faculty, Journalism Interim

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BISD cancels Wellness Fair amid controversy

By Elizabeth Martin
THE BATTALION

Amid the controversy raised by a Planned Parenthood brochure advertising abortion services and the organization's continued involvement in the Bryan Independent School District's annual Wellness Fair, Bryan Superintendent Herman Smith has announced the fair is canceled.

Smith announced last week that the decision to cancel was made four months ago for financial reasons, and

was not related to the issue of abortion. Smith's announcement keeps board members, who may have been reluctant to admit an organization into the fair that advertised abortion, from deciding to exclude Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood's 2001 advertisement was contrary to a Fair policy which dictates that abortion is not to be mentioned in distributed information BISD School Board Member Robert Worley, a contributor to the

See **Fair** on page 8

'Sidelines' cast member pleads guilty to charges

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Former Texas A&M basketball player Bettina Ann Jones has pleaded guilty to second-degree drug charges and received a 10-year sentence with a chance of probation after three charges of selling drugs to an undercover officer.



JONES

Jones, a former student who appeared on the third episode of ESPN's reality-style show "Sidelines," this

fall, was first arrested in July for selling 15 pills of MDMA, more commonly known as Ecstasy, 1.3 grams of cocaine and \$200 worth of a third substance, imitation Ecstasy, to an undercover officer.

"She was selling less than one gram of Ecstasy and at the time was already on probation for forgery and drug possession," said Ed Spillane, Brazos County assistant district attorney.

Jones was placed on probation for those charges after her arrest on the drug delivery charges, Spillane said.

The two second-degree felonies are

punishable by two to 20 years in prison and each charge carries a fine up to \$10,000.

Selling imitation Ecstasy is punishable by a two-year jail sentence and carries a state jail penalty.

Jones' plea agreement was reached in December only one week after a Brazos County grand jury indicted her on the charges. The plea included an option for her release after six months if she maintains good behavior and receives a favorable warden's report.

"They call this 'shock probation' and as long as she stays out of trouble

they will put her on probation after six months," Spillane said. "But the judge doesn't have to. After the six-month period has passed, he loses the power to do that."

If the judge grants Jones early probation on good behavior, it will be for five years.

According to the Texas A&M 1999-2000 Basketball Media Guide, Jones was an All-State junior college first team guard and a four-year letter winner in high school. She lists her future

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Bizzell construction hinders campus access



JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

By Sommer Bunce
THE BATTALION

Construction will again challenge driving, parking and bike riding on campus as Texas A&M adds a major renovation of the Bizzell Street loop to already clogged conditions in the construction of a parking garage and underground passageway on Wellborn Road.

In work that began last week, construction on Bizzell has reduced the former four-lane street to a winding, two-lane street scattered with stop signs and Department of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) traffic directors. The Bizzell loop construc-

tion is expected to continue until October, PTTS officials said.

Traffic entering from South College Drive to Bizzell, from Texas Avenue to New Main Drive and from George Bush Drive to Bizzell should expect delays. Westbound traffic will no longer be able to travel to Ross Street from Bizzell.

Students should carpool or use campus shuttles to access the east area of campus, said PTTS Information Officer Angela Newman. But PTTS Interim Director Bobby Bisor warns against bicycling in the area of the construction, calling it a safety issue.

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INSIDE



AggieLife Pg. 3

In the bedroom

Marisa Tomei and Nick Stahl discuss working with director Todd Field and their roles as Natalie and Frank.

WEATHER TODAY

HIGH 65° F
LOW 29° F

WEDNESDAY

HIGH 68° F
LOW 42° F

FORECASTS COURTESY OF www.weathermanted.com