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Fire causes Academic Building evacuation

By Dallas Shipp
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Students and faculty were evacuated from the Academic Building on Monday afternoon when students smelled something burning on the second floor.

Those inside did not immediately evacuate the building because no one knew what the smell was or could locate its origin.

"We could smell something burning but didn't know where it was coming from," said junior Imran Alchter, who works in the Professional

School Office, located on the second floor.

Senior finance major Laura Berg, who also works in the Professional School Office, said a noticeably long time passed between noticing the smell and then evacuating the building.

After a student reported a haze of smoke in the hallway, the College Station Fire Department was called and reported to the scene.

Officers confirmed the students' suspicions and described the smell as a possible electrical fire. Once inside, the firefighters identified the source of the smoke as a burning motor in an air conditioning unit located on the second floor.

Although they responded to the call quickly, the fire department was unable to park the fire truck near the building due to low-cut trees in the area.

"They are nice to look at," said officer Joe Warren of the College Station Fire Department, "but they can cause a safety concern."

Warren added that if the fire had been more serious, the trees would have caused them to run long hoses across the plaza which would have seriously hampered their efforts.

Tom Dew, superintendent of Landscape and Pavement Maintenance, said that he was unaware

of any problems with trees on campus.

"We try to keep all trees along streets pruned to 13 feet, 6 inches, which is the same height as most bridges and overpasses," Dew said. "The fire department hasn't told us of this problem, but we will do what we can to make sure it is corrected."

The fire also raised the concern of many workers inside who were afraid they would be without air conditioning during one of the hottest months in College Station.

Maintenance workers said the air conditioning system would be repaired within the next few days.

A campus under construction



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Numerous projects hinder movement around campus

By Courtney McDonald
THE BATTALION

Students returning to campus this summer should expect a tedious time parking or navigating through campus due to the continuing Main Campus Street Renovation Project.

While traveling on campus, students will encounter continuing construction on Bizzell and new construction on Spence and New Main Drive.

The projects, managed by the Department of Parking, Traffic, and Transportation Services (PTTS), are aimed at improving drainage and resurfacing the streets correctly, said Douglas Williams, PTTS associate director.

The entire project was to be completed in October, but Williams is optimistic that all construction could be finished as early as August or September.

Despite the beneficial nature of the

projects, the increased number of construction zones creates a meddlesome flow of traffic to, from, and on campus for students, said senior biomedical sciences major Suzanne Getz.

"(The University) needs to focus on one project at a time," Getz said.

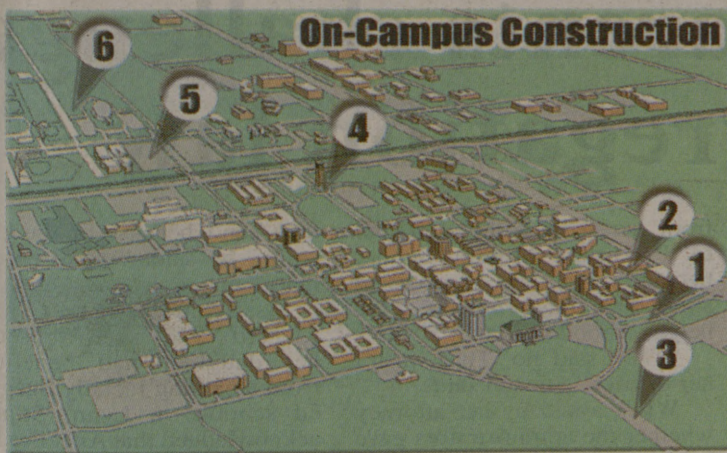
Williams said the construction has been planned for years, and the simultaneous occurrence of projects is circumstantial. The University had the necessary funding, therefore they undertook the many construction ventures despite the incompleteness of similar projects.

Williams said drivers on campus will inevitably run into parking and traffic problems around construction areas.

"You can't make a cake without getting the pan dirty," he said.

In order to accommodate the complications, the PTTS is building additional

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- Off-campus Construction**
- Second Street Plaza
 - Louise Street
 - College Main Parking Garage
 - Church Street
 - Cherry Street

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

Northgate construction continues

By Lauren Bauml
THE BATTALION

Construction throughout campus and on main roads, such as Wellborn and University, have caused both frustration and annoyance for drivers and pedestrians around College Station.

Now, people that head to the attractions on Northgate will be subjected to the frustration and annoyance as well,

thanks to construction on the Second Street Plaza that began in early May.

The Second Street Plaza will be located between Louise Street and the College Main Parking Garage's Second Street exit. The street will contain art exhibits, decorative lighting, and landscaping.

Throughout the construction both Second Street, from Church Avenue to Cherry

Street, and Louise Street, from College Main to Second Street, will be closed to traffic.

Mark Smith, who serves as the College Station's public works director, said the construction is a necessary addition to the Northgate area.

With a newly added private dorm to Northgate and the increased parking with the garage, there is an increase of

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Date set in Houston for pornography trial of cadet

By Jessi Watkins
THE BATTALION

Stephen Michael Johnston, who was arrested in March as part of a nationwide crack down on child pornography, will be tried July 15 in Houston.

Johnston, a senior psychology major and member of the Corps of Cadets, was one of eight people arrested in Houston and among 89 people nationwide in an undercover FBI sting called

"Operation Candyman."

Johnston pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiracy to distribute child pornography on the Internet.

His trial was originally scheduled for May 20, but was postponed after several motions were filed by different attorneys involved in the case, said Kesha Handy, public affairs specialist for the U.S. Attorneys Office.

Johnston will remain in jail in Houston, where he has been since his

arrest, until his trial, said Bob Wiatt, director of the University Police Department.

"He is still in jail on a bail he is unable to make," Wiatt said.

Johnston may return to school if he is not convicted, said Colonel Rick Mallahan, assistant commandant of the Corps of Cadets.

"If he doesn't have to go to jail, he is intending on returning to school," Mallahan said.

Mark Bates, 23, of Palestine, is the alleged moderator of the electronic news group formed with the purpose of facilitating the trading and distribution of child pornography and child erotica on a mass scale via the Internet.

Bates is charged with conspiracy to transport or distribute and receive child pornography via the Internet and possessing and receiving child pornography.

Bates is also charged with conspira-

cy to transport child pornography in interstate and foreign commerce via the computer.

If convicted of any counts alleging conspiracy, transporting or the receiving of child pornography, Johnston faces a maximum 15 year term of imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. If convicted of a possession of child pornography, he faces a maximum five year term of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

Medical examiner attacked

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Medical examiner O.C. Smith, who has worked on some of the city's most puzzling deaths, is at the center of another perplexing case: He was attacked over the weekend, bound with barbed wire and left with a bomb tied to his body.

Smith, 49, was attacked as he left work Saturday night and was found three hours later lying in a parking lot.

A bomb squad removed the device and Smith escaped without serious injury, returning to the scene with minor cuts and bruises to assist authorities. The FBI, including a profiler, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, were called in.

The motive for the attack

remains unknown, but authorities believe Smith's work in helping police investigate murders and suicides plays a role. As medical examiner, Smith performs autopsies on murder victims throughout western Tennessee and often testifies in court.

Among his recent cases was the death of Harvard University biologist Don Wiley, whose fall from a Memphis bridge in December fueled fears of terrorist kidnappings. The medical examiner also helped identify the body of Katherine Smith, 49, who was found burned beyond recognition in February the day before a hearing on federal charges.

Leaders of India, Pakistan refuse to budge

ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP) — As the presidents of Russia and China prepared to plunge into the international effort to head off war, India and Pakistan refused to budge on Kashmir, both insisting Monday they were fighting terrorism.

Refusing to meet face to face, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf met separately with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on the eve of an Asian security conference dominated by efforts to bring the two nuclear-armed nations into face-to-face talks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin were scheduled to meet separately, but nearly simultaneously, with Musharraf and Vajpayee on Tuesday, ensuring that even if India and Pakistan refuse one-on-one

talks, their messages will be delivered through intermediaries. Putin arrived in Kazakhstan early Tuesday.

The mediation attempts appeared to be coordinated among the United States, Russia and China. When Putin extended his invitation to the two leaders to talk in Almaty, President Bush was at his side.

NATO leaders also took the unusual step of appointing Putin as the envoy to convey the alliance's concerns about war to Musharraf and Vajpayee.

Meanwhile, violence continued in Kashmir on Monday. At least eight civilians were killed and 23 injured as Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy artillery and machine-gun fire along their frontier.

Also on Monday, Norway advised its citizens against traveling to India.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP