

# THE BATTALION

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## RHA claims neutral on off-campus bonfire

By Lauren Bauml  
THE BATTALION

In a two-hour debate Wednesday night, the Residence Hall Association (RHA) amended a proposed resolution after delegates pressured the general assembly to drop language from legislation that did not support off-campus bonfires.

RHA ruled to support the efforts of the Fall Activities Council, but after debate concluded to neither support

nor oppose an off-campus bonfire and the Unity Project, a student organization seeking to build its own bonfire this fall.

With the overwhelming vocal pressure of Northside halls, including Moore and Moses halls, the general assembly voted to remove language from proposed legislation that said RHA would not support an off-campus bonfire.

"(We) did not expect this to happen," said Suzanne Hill, RHA vice president of operations and senior

meteorology major. "We can't tell hall officials what to think, but we can get the point across that they are not allowed to represent any hall at an off-campus bonfire project."

Some delegates argued that prohibiting support of the Unity Project would violate First Amendment rights.

Luke Cheatham, a Walton resident adviser and spokesman for the Unity Project, was present at the meeting.

"We are here to support residents of the community and bring unity back to

students," Cheatham said. "We have found a majority of support for an off-campus bonfire including red pots, old yell leaders and alumni. If students choose to participate, that is their right."

When the question arose of who the Unity Project was intended for, Moore Hall President Michael Hilsher and sophomore general studies major said "Aggies," but later changed his view to include all members of the community, including Blinn students.

RHA President John Casares said

the debate did not divide the general assembly.

"I believe this meeting has made us stronger because the amendments proved the process works. People voiced their opinion, were heard and things changed," Casares said. "I don't think we have ever been stronger as an organization."

"We are fired up for this year, and I know good things will come because tonight proved we all have a voice," Hill said.

### Slithering by



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Former Texas A&M student and assistant curator of collections and exhibits at the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History Amy Witte cares for a Trans Pecos Rat Snake. The rat snake is part of a snake exhibit put on

at the museum in Bryan. The exhibit includes 50 different types of snakes from Texas and 12 of them are poisonous. The exhibit is cared for by Texas A&M students and will run until Dec. 1.

## Representative calls for affordable education

By Lauren Smith  
THE BATTALION

The Texas Legislature should place more emphasis on attaining affordable higher education that prepares children to become the state's leaders, said Texas state Sen. Steve Ogden, R-College Station Thursday.

A college-educated work force will build a stronger economic foundation for the state, he said.

Ogden is co-chairman for the legislature's Joint Interim Committee for Higher Education Funding, studying public school finance and health costs.

"The big enchilada is medicine and the technology all around it that is improving the quality of and extending lives," Ogden said. "The more technology we apply to medicine, the more it costs and sooner or later it will blow us up."

The large expenditures on health care and advancing medical technology are even affecting Texas A&M, he said.

"The reason Texas A&M is not getting as much money as it needs is the money is diverted to health care; \$11.5 million was spent last year on health care, a 12 to 13 percent increase from

last year, which should be enough," Ogden said. "However, it isn't."

The University is becoming less dependent on state support, he said, which means A&M is becoming entrepreneurial and making \$2 or \$3 for every \$1 the state gives the University.

Ogden said he would like to see more interdependence between A&M and its sister schools through semester exchange programs.

"I would like to see an affirmative action program for undergraduates of A&M's sister schools for getting into graduate school here, which would be good politically and for the University as a flagship school," Ogden said.

Ogden addressed many of the technological issues that the legislature will face in January, from improving air quality to lowering the amount of traffic deaths in Texas. But, he said, higher education remained at the top of his priority list.

"I want the legislature to send a clear signal to higher education in general that the legislature's priority is to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience in Texas, so we can stand up and say our undergrads are the best in the country," Ogden said.

## Prospective student center opens in Dallas

By Lecia Baker  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M will open its first regional prospective student center Sept. 24 in Dallas to assist the area's students on any questions they have regarding admission to the University.

Dr. Joseph Estrada, assistant provost for enrollment, said the center will serve as a satellite office of the Prospective Student Center on the A&M campus in College Station. The center will be staffed with two Dallas-based admissions counselors, Mickey Saloma and Jerry Smith, both A&M graduates.

"The center's main purpose is to keep a constant connection to prospective students and their families," Estrada said. "It will be a place prospective students can go and obtain information on any area of interest, such as admissions criteria, financial aid and housing."

Estrada said the University wants the center to provide information to prospective freshmen, but to also attract transfer, graduate and international students and aid them.

He said the purpose of locating the center in Dallas was to create geographical diversity within the student body. The

University, Estrada said, would like to attract more students from the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and surrounding towns.

Mickey Saloma, the senior admissions counseling adviser, has moved from College Station to the Dallas-based center to offer assistance to the area's prospective students. Saloma and Smith will better serve prospective students by answering questions that students and families might have about the admissions process, but they will also spend much of their time visiting the area's high schools to promote the opportunities at A&M. Their main mission is to establish a closer relationship with the counselors and students of the Dallas area.

Saloma said he wants to put a special emphasis on assisting students with applications.

"I want the center to be a place that students can come and receive help with their applications," Saloma said. "I want every application that comes from the Dallas area to be strong, accurate and complete."

"The beauty of the center is that it is located in the community," said Cynthia

See Dallas on page 2

## Researcher, author speaks about art

By Sara Runnels  
THE BATTALION

Artwork is an essential part of black culture, said Nell Irving Painter, researcher and author on the subject of black history.

"Art itself is a way of creating," Painter said.

Painter, the Edwards professor at Princeton University, said she created both the theme and title of her text specifically to support the idea which the book is based on: black artwork and how it shapes the culture.

Painter said black artists have created a unique identity for their history.

"The textbook focuses on African Americans through the eyes of the African artist, not African American art history," Painter said.

All of the art in the textbook is based on a concept of "history in memory," Painter said.

"History in memory looks at what we want to remember in African American history, but have also wanted to forget," she said.

In writing *Creating Black Americans*, Painter said she did not

want to make it a point to "lead with the bad stuff," such as slavery and white supremacy.

Painter said if there had not been black struggles, then blacks would be leading lives similar to other Americans, free from memories of oppression.

Painter serves as a mentor and professor at Princeton University, and is in the process of completing her seventh text.

She was a guest speaker as part of the American Studies Distinguished Lecture Series Thursday night.

## Uprising put down in Ivory Coast; interior minister and former coup leader killed

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — Loyalist forces put down an attempted coup Thursday in which the minister in charge of police was killed along with a former junta leader who the government said was involved in the revolt that was staged while the president was out of the country.

President Laurent Gbagbo's government has been struggling to calm lin-

gering ethnic and political tension and a restive military since the once-tranquil country's first-ever coup, in 1999.

"According to our information, we can say it is an attempted coup d'etat," Defense Minister Lida Moise Kouassi said on state television which had been off the air during 12 hours of gunfire and explosions in Abidjan, the commercial capital.

Interior Minister Emile Boga Doudou, who controlled the police, and deposed military ruler Gen. Robert Guei both were killed in the uprising, said presidential aide Alain Toussaint from Rome.

He blamed the former junta leader for calling out rebellious forces during Gbagbo's absence.

"Obviously the uprising was prepared ahead of time, knowing the president would be out of the country," Toussaint told reporters. "Do you think Guei was on the battlefield going shopping?"

Toussaint said rebellious soldiers attacked the presidential palace but, with loyalist forces now in control, Gbagbo (pronounced BAHG-bo)

planned to continue his visit and would have an audience Friday with Pope John Paul II.

Officials said Guei was shot at a downtown Abidjan military checkpoint after his car refused orders to stop, the officials reported. Loyalist paramilitary police opened fire on Guei's vehicle and the general died at the scene, said Sgt. Ahoissi Aime.

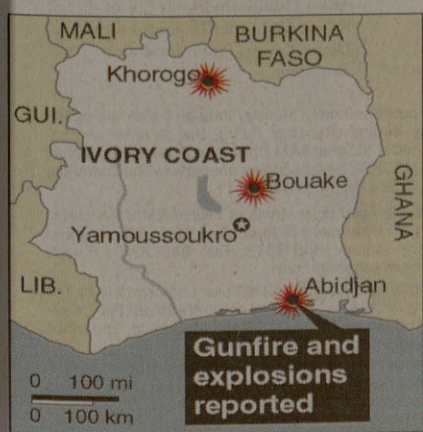
Infrastructure Minister Patrick Achy said it appeared the country's sports minister might still be in the hands of insurgents at Bouake.

The uprising began about 3 a.m. with automatic-weapons fire outside a paramilitary police base in Abidjan. About 15 gunmen broke into the compound as many more gathered outside, an officer said from inside the base.

The rebellious troops also had attacked military targets and bases in at least three other towns in central and northern Ivory Coast.

Kouassi said troops were mobilized nationwide to put down the insurrection

See Ivory Coast on page 2



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

### Regional Prospective Student Center

OPENS SEPT. 24 - DALLAS, TX

Goal: Help prospective undergraduate, transfer, graduate and international students find answers regarding Texas A&M and the admissions process.

The first of its kind, there are plans to open more throughout the state.

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