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Pumpkin head



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

College Station resident Susan Webb helps her 2-year-old son Campbell Webb pick out just the right size pumpkin Tuesday afternoon at The Farmer's Market on South College Ave.

Board of Regents endorses initiative

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Researchers at Texas A&M will collaborate with researchers at Baylor to uncover the entire sequence of DNA for cattle that will help develop tests for traits including resistance to animal diseases.

The Board of Regents approved the project at its meeting in September.

The National Institutes of Health has just finished human genome sequencing and are interested in genome sequencing in other organisms, said James Womack, distinguished professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Basically, we are interested in species important to human health," he said.

Researchers now know of threats to human health such as mad cow disease and agricultural bio-terrorism, and it is important to understand the genome of domestic animals, Womack said.

Womack, along with Loren Skow, a professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine and researchers from Baylor University, University of Illinois and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) lab in Nebraska drafted the proposal to the regents.

The project initiative is centered around

Texas A&M and Baylor, Skow said.

"The relationship with Baylor comes from myself and professor Womack submitting DNA sequences for analysis," he said.

Now that the Board approved the resolution, A&M has put a higher priority for sequencing species, Womack said.

The project's cost is estimated at \$50 million. Researchers are in the process of joining with USDA and others to help fund the project.

"We hope the beef industry will be behind it generating political and financial support," Womack said. "Sequencing three billion pieces of information is not cheap."

Texas is a leader in the area of this type of research and will continue to strive for success, Skow said.

"This puts us in the position to not only work with cattle but other species like dogs, sheep and cats," Skow said. "It goes hand in hand for efforts to clone these animals too."

Efforts for genomic research began as early as 1978, before the word genome was even created, Skow said. Professors from the College of Veterinary Medicine and the animal science department have worked continuously on the effort.

Researchers will begin meeting in December to discuss further plans for the project.

Airstrikes in Iraq focus on key southern air base

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key target of U.S. and British bombing in Iraq in recent weeks has been an air base south of Baghdad that would be central to Saddam Hussein's defense against an American invasion.

Since mid-September, Tallil Air Base — a key link in an Iraqi air defense network that remains formidable despite damage from years of periodic U.S. bombing — has been struck seven times, more than any other target in that period, according to Central Command, the headquarters for U.S. operations in the Persian Gulf.

The choice of bombing targets could reflect Pentagon efforts to lay the groundwork for an invasion if President Bush decides military force is needed to oust Saddam Hussein. Pentagon officials, however, say the attacking pilots are simply responding in self-defense to provocations from Iraqi air defense guns and radars.

Although Tallil has been a frequent target lately, the bombing has not been extensive enough to neutralize the target. Over the years, Iraq has shown a remarkable ability to repair and replace damaged air defenses.

Besides Tallil, the other major air defense sites in southern Iraq that have been hit recently are Al Kut, Al Amarah and the airport at Basra. On Tuesday, the Central Command said allied aircraft bombed a command and control communications facility near Al Kut, in response to unspecified "hostile acts" by Iraq.

Tallil, about 160 miles southeast of the Iraqi capital, is an air defense sector headquarters. It has surface-to-air missiles and the communications facilities to link them to the rest of Iraq's air defense network. It also has two substantial runways and can support dozens of fighters.

In contrast to the recent flurry of allied attacks in the south — 23 since Aug. 27 — there were none reported in northern Iraq in that period.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld says the U.S. attacks are simply a necessary response to Iraqi efforts to shoot down the U.S.

and British pilots who patrol the skies over northern and southern Iraq to enforce "no fly" zones. Iraq has long asserted that the flight zones are a violation of its sovereignty.

Rumsfeld did acknowledge last month that he ordered U.S. forces to take a different approach.

Instead of firing mostly at Iraqi air-defense guns and radars, pilots are now targeting more of the communications centers, command buildings and fiber-optic links that are easier to find and harder to replace.

In at least a few cases, U.S. targets have appeared related to preparations for war.

On Sept. 5, for example, allied pilots bombed a military airfield 240 miles west of Baghdad. The target, as described by Central Command, was ordinary: an air defense command and control facility. But the location was unusual: a remote airfield known as H-3 that originally was built to support an oil pumping station near the Jordanian border. In a break with its usual practice, Central Command did not identify the location.

Stephen H. Baker, a retired Navy rear admiral who served aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt during the Gulf War, said the strike at H-3 was unprecedented in the decade-long history of "no fly" zone patrols.

"The objective of the strike could have been to destroy air defenses to allow easy access for special operations helicopters to fly into Iraq via Jordan or Saudi Arabia as part of a critical primary mission to hunt down Scud" missiles, Baker said recently. "Knocking out Iraqi radars at H-3 also would allow allied aircraft mounting major raids on Iraq a clear route into the country."

The spate of aerial attacks on the Tallil base began Sept. 15.

In its typically cryptic description of U.S. and British bombing, the Central Command said precision-guided munitions struck an air defense communications facility at Tallil that day. Nine days later, other unspecified "air defense facilities" were bombed at Tallil and Al Amarah, another repeated target.

Business Fellows bring resources to women's prison

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

The Lowry Mays School of Business Fellows are volunteering at the women's federal prison work camp in Bryan.

"We will be teaching the ladies everything from resume writing and interview skills to ethical issues they will face as they make the transition back into the world following their sentence," said Ty Popplewell, senior finance and accounting major and one of the coordinators of the program.

"The committee brainstormed on a way to give back all that we had the privilege of learning in the Fellows program, and this was definitely the perfect fit for achieving our goal," said Laura Pringle, senior finance major and program coordinator.

The first semester of the Fellows program for students, which begins the spring semester of junior year, focuses on professional development and the second, personal growth.

"Everyday we interact with so many who are just like us. In visiting the prison, we gain a true

taste of reality," said Arati Bhattacharya, senior marketing major and Fellows member. "This is a unique opportunity because it allows us to step out of our comfort zones spurring personal growth and facilitating the transition we will face in the working world."

Walking through the gates of the prison and standing before the women at the kickoff program was definitely a different experience for the Fellows, Bhattacharya said.

"We were intimidated at first, but it is just such a great learning opportunity to provide them with all that we have learned and truly give back to the community," she said.

The Fellows will go to the prison once a week as well as two Saturdays for three hour sessions.

The first big session took place on Saturday, Sept. 28 and served as a kickoff for the program and introductions.

The second Saturday session will focus specifically on job interviews, and prisoners will learn how to say correctly that they have served time to a possible employer, Popplewell said.

Ninth victim in sniper shootings identified as FBI terror analyst

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) — An FBI terrorism analyst was identified Tuesday as the ninth person killed by the Washington-area sniper, shot in the head in an attack investigators say has yielded the most detailed clues yet.

For the first time, witnesses were able to give information about license plates on vehicles seen fleeing the scene, including a light-colored Chevrolet Astro van with a burned-out rear taillight.

A law enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said another witness gave a description of a dark-skinned man, possibly Hispanic or Middle Eastern, in a white van.

"There was some additional information that we were able to get from last night's case, and I am confident that that information is going to lead us to an arrest in the case," Fairfax County Police Chief Tom Manger said.

Law enforcement sources said there was no indication the sniper targeted Linda Franklin because of her job. She worked for the FBI's Cyber-Crimes Division, created last year to

focus on computer crimes as well as intellectual property cases.

Montgomery County (Md.) Police Chief Charles Moose, the head of the investigation, emphasized that Franklin was not working on the sniper case.

Franklin, a 47-year-old mother of two grown children, was killed Monday night as she and her husband loaded packages into their car outside a Home Depot store.

Ballistics evidence Tuesday connected the slaying to the gunman who has killed eight other people and wounded two more since Oct. 2.

With the terrifying spree nearly two weeks old, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld agreed Tuesday evening to provide military surveillance aircraft in the hunt for the killer, a Pentagon spokesman said. Sources said federal agents on the plane will relay any information they collect to authorities on the ground.

The Army also has started searching its records for people with sniper training.

Separately, Homeland Security Director

Tom Ridge said investigators are hesitant to rule out the possibility that the slayings are the work of a terrorist because there is no hard evidence about motive.

Friends who gathered at Franklin's Arlington home said she and her husband were planning to move to a bigger home in the area and were at The Home Depot to buy supplies for the move and the new house.

Franklin recently had a double mastectomy following breast cancer and was still in physical therapy at the time of her death, according to her friend Paul Hulseberg. He called her courageous.

"Linda was a dedicated employee, and she will be missed," FBI Director Robert Mueller said. "All of us are deeply shocked and angry over this tragedy."

Robert Young, a Washington construction worker, returned to the shopping center Tuesday to talk with police. He said he had



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SOURCES: Associated Press; Home Depot; ESRI; GDT

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