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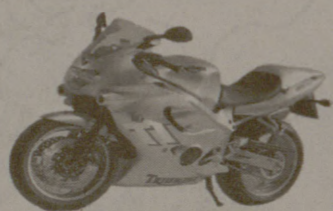
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BRIAN RUFF • THE BATTALION

Junior environmental design major Alan Harmon carves a chimney to go on top of his "Beetlejuice house style" pumpkin outside the Langley Architecture Building Wednesday

afternoon. Harmon's pumpkin along with many others, will be displayed during the annual archiTORTURE event starting at 7 p.m. tonight.

State Dept. advertises American way of Islam to Arab audiences

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is offering Muslim countries four U.S.-prepared television commercials aimed at providing a better understanding of Islam in America.

The four ads, each about two minutes long, are part of a \$15 million campaign by Charlotte Beers, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and a former Madison Avenue advertising executive. The ads explain "what kind of a society we are, how we treat people," to countries often hostile to the United States, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Wednesday.

Boucher said the ads are now being tried out in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, and negotiations are under way to buy airtime in other Muslim nations in Asia and the Middle East and on media outlets that reach many Arab countries.

"The goal was to use the period of Ramadan to play these ads because there's a tradition of people telling the story of Islam in their country during the month of Ramadan," Boucher said. The fast-ing period starts next month.

The spots feature a doctor, Elias Zerhouni, the Algerian-born director of the National Institutes of Health; a Libyan-born baker, Abdul Hammuda of Toledo, Ohio; a Lebanese-born teacher, Rawia Ismal of Toledo; and a medic with the New York Fire Department, Farouk Muhammad.

They were produced in conjunction with the

Council of American Muslims for Understanding, a nonprofit, nonpolitical group dedicated to providing a better understanding of Islam in America, Boucher said.

He said that in some countries the ads have been submitted to censorship boards because everything that goes on television in those countries must be approved by such a board.

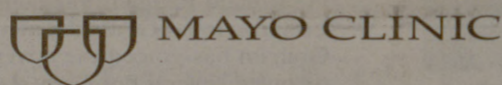
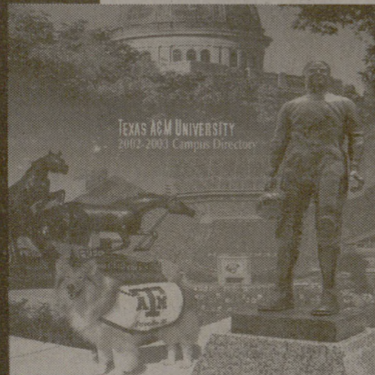
Boucher said he was not ready to put out a list of countries the United States was talking to about the ads because the campaign may be adjusted based on its performance in Indonesia.

"We decided we would actually go out and try to buy advertising time where we wanted it, where we wanted it to the people we wanted to hear our story," he said.

Asked if the ads would ever be broadcast by the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera satellite network, which reaches many Arab countries, Boucher said, "They wanted too much money."

He said the United States was under no illusions that the ads would stop suicide bombers by showing Islamic militants the United States was tolerant of their religion.

"I know that there are an awful lot of people, though, who need to know more about the United States," he said, "who what they think they know about the United States is based on distorted images and rumor ... and that's its good for us to tell them our story."

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Hours: 9 A.M.-4:30 P.M. Monday-Friday

NEWS IN BRIEF

Judge dismisses
Columbine lawsuits

DENVER (AP) — A federal judge formally dismissed lawsuits filed against the Jefferson County sheriff's office by the families of three students wounded in the Columbine High School shootings.

Judge Lewis T. Babcock ruled in November that sheriff's officials

had immunity to the suits brought by relatives of Richard Castaldo, Sean Graves and Mark Taylor. He also found they had responded reasonably to the shootings.

The families alleged sheriff's officers failed to investigate alleged threats and crimes by the Columbine gunmen a year before the rampage and botched the response.

Babcock formally dismissed the

suits on Friday. His order was made available Tuesday.

The judge allowed one Columbine lawsuit to proceed. The suit against the sheriff's office by the daughter of teacher Dale Sanders, who bled to death, was settled in August for \$1.5 million.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold opened fire at Columbine on April 20, 1999, killing 12 students and Sanders before killing themselves.



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