

THE BATTALION

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Texas A&M University

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UT refuses to release records

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M officials responded swiftly to inquiries about security cameras, even as the other flagship university in Texas has become embroiled in a legal battle with the state attorney general about whether such information should be available to the public.

In October 2002, a Daily Texan reporter requested open records on the geography, times

of operation, technicalities and costs associated with surveillance cameras located on the University of Texas campus. UT officials denied the request, citing "protection of national security."

When a Texas institution denies an open records request, the state attorney general must issue an opinion about whether the institution's reasons for withholding information are valid.

After UT officials refused to answer the reporter's questions in October, they turned over that same information to the attorney

general "in an effort to influence his decision" on the case, according to The Daily Texan.

On Jan. 6, newly elected Attorney General Greg Abbott rejected UT's claims that disclosure of the information was an issue of national security and that there was an alleged procedural error in the request.

On Jan. 15, the UT System filed a lawsuit against Abbott to dispute his ruling, citing the USA Patriot Act, a law passed in October 2001 in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

UT general counsel Patricia Ohlendorf consulted UT President Larry Faulkner before hiring an Austin firm to file the suit on the university's behalf, according to The Daily Texan.

UT officials continue to assert that disclosing information about surveillance cameras would leave the school vulnerable to terrorists and terrorist attacks, according to the Austin American-Statesman.

See **Lawsuit** on page 2A

Security Camera Controversy

Oct. 11 Daily Texan reporter requests security camera information. UT offices deny open records request, citing "protection of national security."

Jan. 6 Attorney General issues opinion, orders UT to release information

Jan. 15 UT files suit against attorney general, citing Patriot Act

Jan. 27 City of Austin files similar lawsuit against Attorney General

SOURCE: THE DAILY TEXAN

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Aye, aye captain!



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Three-year-old Grace Bible Church Pre-school student, **Isaac Womack**, looks through a pair of binoculars while playing at the Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley on Wednesday afternoon. The Museum, located in

downtown Bryan, is open to all children and allows them to paint, play, and pretend to be whatever they like. It is open Monday through Saturday and admission is four dollars per person.

A&M athlete drug policy explained

By Hedish Connor
THE BATTALION

On the heels of the suspension of a Texas A&M athlete for alleged possession of steroids, the Athletic Department is reiterating its drug policy, saying A&M student athletes are educated on drug use and tested within the first week of their arrival to campus.

From the moment a student enters the program, all student athletes are required to participate in an educational seminar on the use of drugs and give a sample for a drug test, said Alan Cannon, A&M assistant athletic director.

The A&M Athletic Department has a three-offense-consequence system for students who test positive for drug use. The department does not condone use of illegal or performance-enhancing drugs, Cannon said.

"We are trying to educate young people to these problems and we will not put up with the use of illegal substances," Cannon said.

Senior center Andy Slocum was arrested this past week for possession of a controlled substance and was suspended from the team by Melvin Watkins, A&M men's head basketball coach.

Slocum, a junior agriculture development major, has been charged with two counts of possessing a controlled substance.

In addition to the Athletic Department's educational seminar and drug test, students are asked to sign a release form allowing the department to contact their parents if an offense occurs, Cannon said. If students choose not to sign the release form,

See **Policy** on page 5A

Internet hoax sweeps A&M

By Melissa Fowler
THE BATTALION

Olsen twins not attending

An article circulating through e-mail since Monday claiming the Olsen twins have announced plans to attend Texas A&M is a hoax, said a spokeswoman for Dualstar Entertainment Group, the girls' production company.

"The girls are juniors and taking their SATs now, but still have an entire year of high school left," the spokeswoman said.

The forwarded article appears to be a post on the CNN Web site (CNN.com). It is formatted like other articles on the site and is complete with a picture of the twins and menu bars that link to

the official CNN.com site.

The article, which claims Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen want to live on the Northside of campus in Fall 2003, cannot be found on CNN.com even by searching through archives.

A representative from CNN could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Junior education major Melissa Zulinski said she read the e-mail and believed it was real until a co-worker searched CNN.com and discovered the article was fake.

Ben Zurbrugg, a junior chemical engineering major and Student Computing Center employee, said creating such

an e-mail would not be difficult. Circulating an e-mail such as this is easier for students because neo e-mail addresses are accessible through a public domain, Zurbrugg said. Addresses are set up this way to enable professors and teaching assistants to reach all students.

The origin of the e-mail remains unknown.

Zurbrugg said the University could track the e-mail and see where it began if it started within the University e-mail system.

Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen are among the wealthiest teenagers in America. They started their acting career when they



MARY-KATE AND ASHLEY OLSEN
Source: www.angelfire.com

were 9 months old playing the role of Michelle Tanner on eight seasons of the sitcom "Full House."

Today the twins have their own clothing line, video games and a Mattel doll that is second in sales only to Barbie.

Their straight-to-video movies including "Our Lips Are Sealed," "Holiday in the Sun" and "When in Rome" have sold more than 27 million copies.

The 16-year-old Olsen girls attend private school in Los Angeles and have not declared any college plans.

A&M Health Science Center accredited

By Allyson Bandy
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center received full accreditation for 10 years from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The SACS is a federally recognized agency that accredits universities, said Dr. Elvin Smith, executive vice president of the Health Science Center.

"This (accreditation) is so important in order to maintain the standards of excellence," said Nancy W. Dickey, M.D., president of the Health Science Center and vice chancellor for Health Affairs.

"This is in the students' best interest, considering most scholarships and federally funded loans only apply to accredited schools," Dickey said.

The SACS evaluates apply-

ing institutions on several criteria, including student services, curriculum, technology and performance, Dickey said.

The SACS accredits more than 12,000 public and private educational institutions, from prekindergarten through university level, in 11 states of the Southeastern United States and in Latin America.

Smith said the accreditation from the SACS is important because "it is peers around the country evaluating the quality of your institution."

In 1999, the Health Science Center made itself a separate body no longer affiliated with A&M. It shares the same Board of Regents and the same chancellor with A&M but has a separate student body and separate facilities, Dickey said.

Currently, the only building

See **Center** on page 2A

Health Science Center Accreditation

- Scholarships, federally funded loans now apply
- Includes College of Medicine and five other schools
- The center awards 300 degrees per year

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Firms settle charges of violating privacy

By Siobhan McDonough
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Two companies that distributed questionnaires to millions of students, promising to use the data for educational purposes, have agreed to settle federal charges that they broke privacy laws by selling the information to credit card, insurance and other companies, the government said Wednesday.

Educational Research Center of America of Pittsburgh and Student Marketing Group of Lynbrook, N.Y., were ordered by the Federal Trade Commission to destroy any information they acquired

from children under 13.

Since at least 1999, the companies have surveyed millions of high school students and more than 300,000 middle and junior high school students, the FTC said.

Under the agreement, the companies are also barred from using previously collected student information for noneducational marketing and from using any data gained in the future for similar marketing unless they specify before distributing questionnaires how the data will be used. The settlement contained no financial penalty.

"The lesson in this case for marketers is that it's deceptive to promote a student survey as purely educational, then use it for

commercial marketing," said Howard Beales, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

The FTC charged that the companies shared survey data with commercial marketers including banks and retail stores. By settling, the companies did not admit breaking any law.

Jan Stumacher, president of Student Marketing Group, said, "We believe that the settlement reflects our view that there was no attempt to mislead students, but simply a disagreement over the level of detail that should be provided in connection with the collection of information."

See **Charges** on page 2A