

THE BATTALION

Volume 109 • Issue 110 • 12 pages

Texas A&M University

www.thebatt.com

Thursday, March 6, 2003

Task force investigates step show disturbance

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

University officials are investigating the cause of the Feb. 22 disturbance that ended the Greek Olympiad Step Show competition after-party in a series of fights and gunshots.

Dean of Student Life Dr. Dave Parrott will act as co-chair, along with Director of Special Facilities Steve Hodge, for a task force to improve security at the annual event. The committee will include members of the Kappa Alpha

Psi fraternity, which sponsors the step show.

The party in Reed Arena following the competition ended early after drinking, drugs and fighting sparked disturbances that sent the approximately 5,500 partygoers racing to the exits, according to the University Police Department. UPD requested the assistance of the Brazos County Sheriff's Office and the College Station Police Department, calling for all available units. Gunshots were fired in the parking lot, and there were several robberies reported in the vicinity of the arena after the party ended.

Hodge said he decided to end the party after

fights had broken out on the floor and people began leaving the arena en masse. He directed his staff to turn the lights on and open exits to prevent a bottleneck.

"We opened doors we don't usually open to make sure people got out safely," Hodge said.

In addition to six police officers at the event, about 100 arena staff were providing security at the party, Hodge said. The party, the largest held each year in Reed Arena, may be too large, meaning future attendance may be scaled back, he said.

"In hindsight, we probably wouldn't sell as many tickets," Hodge said.

Hodge said there had been a series of altercations throughout the night, but such incidents were not unusual at a party of that size.

Parrott said the task force will conclude its inquiry in May with recommendations to prevent disturbances at future Greek Olympiad events. The annual event is an asset to the University, Parrott said.

"My hope is that (Greek Olympiad) can be held in a safe and secure manner," Parrott said.

Fraternity spokesman Maco Faniel said the

See **Olympiad** on page 2

95 bin Laden links convicted

By Scheherezade Farnarzi
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Saudi Arabia has convicted 95 people of being linked to al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and sentenced them to prison terms of one to three years, a Saudi human rights campaigner said.

The 95 were convicted of charges that included belonging to or supporting al-Qaida, and received sentences from one to three years, al-Khamis said late last week.

Saudi authorities are holding 400 others in jail, Abdelaziz al-Khamis, head of the London-based Saudi Center for Human Rights Studies, said in an interview.

He said authorities had detained a total of 2,500 for questioning since the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, most in the past three months as the United States geared up for possible war against Iraq.

Government officials weren't immediately available for comment. A press office spokeswoman at the Saudi Embassy in Washington D.C., who did not give her name, said officials who could discuss the subject

had left for the night.

Instead of holding trials, a cleric who had read official intelligence reports "came to the prison cells, asked the prisoners a few questions and sentenced them on the spot," al-Khamis said.

He said his London-based center, established in September, has 3,700 members — including doctors, lawyers, journalists, government officials and a judge — working clandestinely inside Saudi Arabia to provide information about human rights abuses.

Saudi authorities were not available for comment late Wednesday.

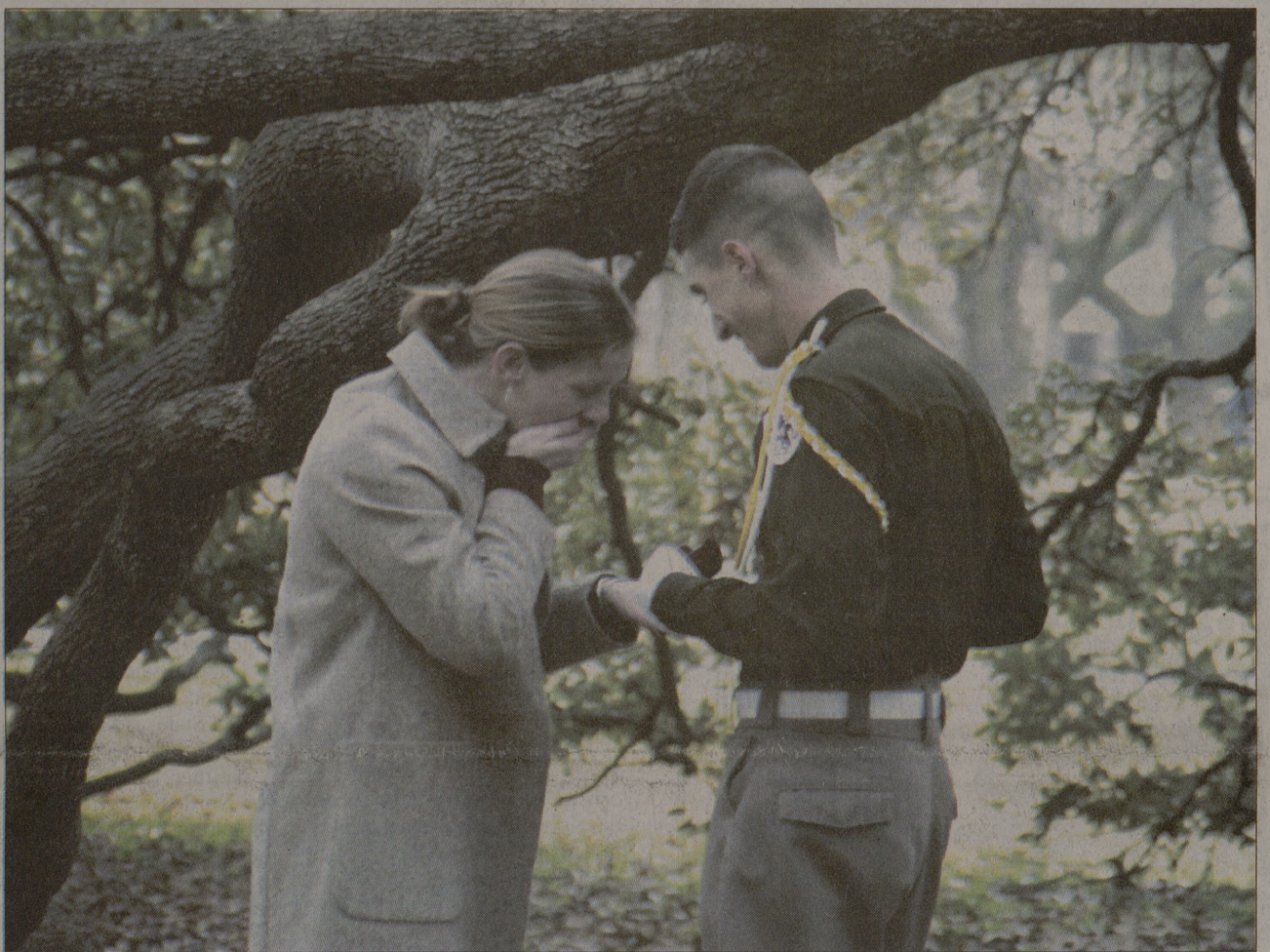
The kingdom said last month it had referred 90 Saudis to trial for alleged al-Qaida ties and that 250 Saudi suspects were under investigation.

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef also said at the time that more than 150 Saudi suspects had been released after being cleared of terror connections. The announcement was the first word of Saudi proceedings connected to post-Sept. 11 crackdowns.

Saudi Arabia was the home-

See **Links** on page 2

She said yes

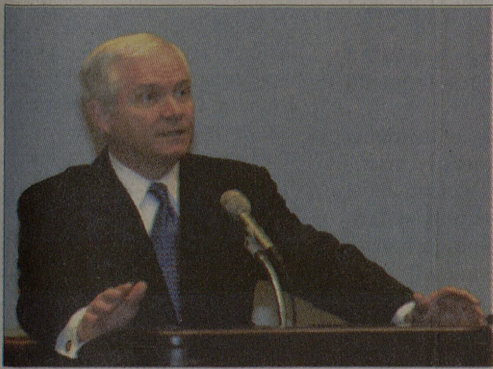


ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Senior engineering major **Vince Damon** shows the engagement ring to new fiancée **Lindsay Askins**, a junior animal science major, on Wednesday afternoon under the Century Tree. He proposed with an Aggie ring box

Gates: Student fee will not be raised

By Brad Bennett
THE BATTALION



ADAM A. KRAZER • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M President **Robert Gates** addresses the Student Senate at its meeting Wednesday evening.

A&M President Dr. Robert Gates said the University can surpass other schools in national ranking despite budget cuts if the University prioritized funding and hired more faculty, and also pledged to heed student opinion this year and not raise the student service fee.

"The greatest opportunities come at the toughest times to those who are willing to be bold," Gates said Wednesday during a question-and-answer session with the Student Senate.

Gates explained at the beginning of the meeting about consequences of the recent fee increases being voted down by students. He said the computer service and student services fees will not be increased this year because of student wishes but will be enforced eventually.

Michael Konopacki said that Gates not enacting the fees shows his commitment to the students.

"I was very impressed that President Gates followed student input and didn't increase the computer fee," said Konopacki, Veterinary Medicine senator and senior biomedical

science major.

Most of the questions focused on how the budget restraints will affect students.

Gates was optimistic about A&M's ability to deal with the budget problems which he said are also affecting schools across the country, some with greater financial problems than A&M.

Gates said that if A&M becomes more efficient it can put together the resources to hire more faculty as other schools reduce the size of their faculty.

"Because of these budget

See **Gates** on page 2



ADAM A. KRAZER • THE BATTALION

Dr. Joseph G. Dawson, a professor of history, discusses the development of nuclear capabilities in North Korea.

Experts consider N. Korean threat

By Janet McLaren
THE BATTALION

The United States must work to ease tensions with North Korea and prevent the emergence of another nuclear threat, national security experts at Texas A&M said during a panel discussion Wednesday on U.S. relations with North Korea.

A&M faculty members answered questions and discussed the threat that North Korea poses to the United States and explained the history of the United States' conflict with the communist regime at a forum sponsored by the Memorial Student Center Wiley Lecture Series.

Col. Joseph Cerami, a lecturer in national security policy at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service, said the possibility of a North Korean attack is a concern for the United States.

"North Korea has missiles that could potentially hit the Western U.S.," Cerami said. Dr. Joseph G. Dawson, professor of history and director of the A&M Military Studies

See **Korea** on page 2

Professors protest war with Iraq

By Lecia Baker
THE BATTALION

A group of A&M professors staged an antiwar protest Wednesday afternoon, urging a peaceful resolution to the confrontation with Iraq.

About two dozen professors, clad in black to symbolize their opposition to the war, gathered in the Academic Plaza for a "teach-in" and discussed their views with passersby.

"We want to discuss alternative ways to engage in the situation in Iraq, but we also want to discuss North Korea and other global situations in ways that result in peaceful resolutions to conflict," said Dr. Patrick Slattery, an education professor.

Dr. George Welch, a physics professor, said he hoped more antiwar protests would mobilize

public opinion against military action in Iraq and force world leaders to take notice.

"A push toward a war is a big mistake," Welch said.

Ray White, a Vietnam war veteran and Class of 1985, said he was protesting American policy because the United States does not have a just cause for war against Iraq, and said other alternatives should be explored. He warned that ravages of war could leave lasting effects on American soldiers, and leave a bitter legacy much like the Vietnam conflict.

"There will be a hole in their souls," he said.

Some students attended the protest to discuss their feelings toward war. Tanya Mounsey, a junior theater arts major, said she was not against military action, but wanted to learn more about the issue.

"There are different points of

view that students should become educated about so they will be able to make their own decisions," Mounsey said.

Michael Loudermilk, a junior history major, has a brother in the armed forces who is stationed in Kuwait. He said he supports the military but also wants to consider antiwar perspectives.

"It's important to understand issues connected to the war, and to know what my brother is fighting for," Loudermilk said.

The protesters' discussion group ended at 2 p.m., and was followed by a demonstration for peace at 4 p.m. and a candlelight vigil at 6 p.m.

Members of the A&M chapter of Young Conservatives of Texas are countering the antiwar events by wearing red, white and

See **Protest** on page 2



ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

A&M music professor **Harry Berger** and others protest the United States going to war outside the Academic building Wednesday afternoon.