

THE BATTALION

Volume 109 • Issue 123 • 12 pages

Texas A&M University

www.thebatt.com

Tuesday, April 1, 2003

Police release racial profiling report

By Janet McLaren
THE BATTALION

Officials with Texas A&M's University Police Department say officers do not conduct racial profiling during stops, but some minority students remain skeptical despite the exonerating results cited in the department's annual racial profiling report released in March.

"The policy of any police department on racial profiling is absolutely no," said Bob Wiatt, director of the UPD. "It's forbidden."

The College Station Police Department also submitted its racial profiling report to the City Council last week. Both reports detail the racial demographics of traffic stops and arrests for 2002.

According to the UPD report, whites made up 83 percent of the total traffic stops for the year while Asians made up 7 percent, blacks made up 5 percent and Hispanics 5 percent.

Compared to the demographics of the student population provided by the A&M Office of Institutional Studies and Planning, whites, and Asians are pulled over on campus more frequently

than other races. Whites currently make up 76 percent of the student population and Asians comprise only 3 percent.

The CSPD reported similar statistics, citing whites as the most frequently stopped ethnicity, followed by black and Hispanic drivers. In proportion to the percentage of College Station households with access to a vehicle, whites and blacks were overrepresented in police stops, while Hispanics and Asians were underrepresented.

Sophia Lecky, a junior information and operations management major, said that while the reports seemed to show a fair ethnic representation by the UPD,

they did not prove that racial profiling is not a problem in the area.

"These reports can't be the final word," Lecky said. "This doesn't mean that discrimination does not exist."

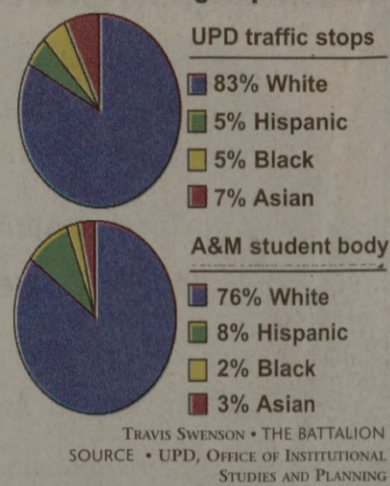
Wiatt said complaints of racial discrimination in the UPD are uncommon.

"Over a period of years, we have had one or two complaints, but very few overall," he said. "We generally have video cameras that refute any accusations."

Wiatt advised students with any complaint of racial discrimination to

See **Profiling** on page 2

University Police Department Racial Profiling Report 2002



Fighting Fire



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

College Station fire fighters walk down the stairs of The Zone Apartments after putting out a fire that broke out late Monday night. The cause of the fire is unknown. The fire destroyed a four-bedroom apartment and

caused smoke damage to two others. There were no injuries and officials are investigating the cause of the fire, said College Station Fire Department spokesman Bart Humphries.

Byrne names new basketball coach

By Michael Crow
THE BATTALION

On Monday, Texas A&M Director of Athletics Bill Byrne named his second head coach replacement since being appointed in December of 2002, announcing that renowned women's basketball coach Gary Blair would leave the University of Arkansas to take over the vacancy at A&M left when Peggie Gillom's contract was not renewed.



BLAIR

Byrne, formerly the director of athletics for the University of Nebraska, was largely influential in the hiring of Dennis Franchione as the Aggies' head football coach.

According to The Associated Press, Blair was reportedly offered \$400,000 a year by A&M, which doubles his annual salary at Arkansas.

Like Franchione, who built a name for himself at Texas Christian University before taking over at the University of Alabama, Blair will be returning to the Lone Star State. Blair compiled a 210-43 record at Stephen F. Austin University prior to his 10-year stay at Arkansas.

Byrne said that Blair's roots should ease his transition to

Aggieland.

"Gary is an outstanding coach with tremendous success in women's college basketball," Byrne said. "He's a native Texan and so is his wife, and I think they will fit great into the Aggie family."

During his 18-year career, Blair's teams have gone 408-163, making him one of the 25 winningest coaches in women's collegiate basketball. He has taken teams to the NCAA Tournament 11 times, including a trip to the Final Four in 1998. Last season, he took Arkansas to the second round of the NAAs.

Blair said that some might question why he chose to leave a successful program.

"I wasn't looking for a job, but sometimes a great job comes looking for you," he said. "Texas is my home state, and I've been familiar with Texas A&M for a long time. I know what kind of program A&M can be, and I want to be the architect to get it done."

Gillom's contract expired at the end of the 2002-2003 season, which ended with a loss to Baylor University in the Big 12 Tournament on March 11.

Still, despite Blair's hiring within the month, Assistant Director of Athletics Steve Miller said that

See **Coach** on page 2

SBP candidates woo undecided voters

By Esther Robards-Forbes
THE BATTALION

With students almost evenly split among a crowded field of student body president candidates in the initial round of voting, runoff contenders Stony Burke and Matt Josefy honed their campaign pitches to woo undecided voters at a debate Monday.

The two faced off before about 100 students in the Memorial Student Center Flagroom, but there was little disagreement between Burke and Josefy on any issue.

Both candidates said they opposed tuition deregulation, but conceded there was little they could do to dissuade the state legislature from passing it. However, if the Texas A&M University system Board of Regents is given tuition-setting authority, a student

representative should be added to the Board to ensure students' voices are heard, Burke said.

Josefy said any effort to put a student representative on the Board would be unlikely to succeed, and added that it would be difficult to choose one student to represent the entire student body to the Board of Regents.

Both of the candidates touted their extensive student government experience and their ability to work well with faculty and administrators, as well as student organizations.

Burke and Josefy stressed the need of the student body president to hear the voices of the students and increase student involvement with student government.

"One of the things that makes this University distinct is that if you as a student have an idea, you should be able to run with that and put that in place,"

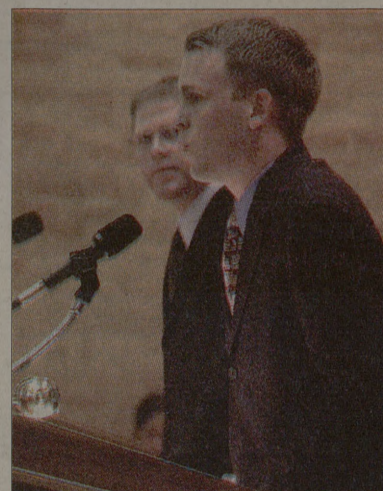
said Josefy, a senior accounting major.

Burke emphasized the need to target specific student leaders for involvement in projects and suggested offering academic extra credit to students who attend forums and focus groups for the Student Government Association.

Both candidates support the diversity initiatives that have been set forth by the administration.

"Every student pays the exact same amount of tuition and fees here at Texas A&M, but they don't receive the same amount of respect. And that hurts being an Aggie," said Burke, a senior international studies major. "We are the only school in the Big 12 conference without an African-American studies program, and we are the largest school in the nation without."

See **Candidates** on page 6



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION
SBP candidates (front) Matt Josefy and Stony Burke.

A&M bolsters local economy

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M, with its hefty payroll and well-heeled student body, helps insulate Bryan-College Station from the nationwide economic slowdown, local business leaders said.

With an unemployment rate of 1.7 percent, Bryan-College Station boasts the lowest unemployment of any metropolitan area in the country at a time when other cities are experiencing rising jobless rates, according to the December 2002 data report of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The national average is 5.7 percent.

"We have not been impacted overall as much as the nation in general," said Royce Hickman, president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce. "A number of the jobs in this area are related to the government, with Texas A&M University, the Texas A&M system, two large school districts, and health care centers."

More than 21,000 local residents work

for the University and for A&M System offices located in College Station, with a total payroll of \$603 million.

In the Oct. 14 issue of Business Weekly, Bryan-College Station was named one of the twelve "pockets of prosperity." Like Bryan-College Station, most of the other cities on the list were located near a major university or another large government entity.

"The University is a major economic engine, providing educational and research opportunities, as well as being the largest employer for this area and the more rural surrounding areas," Hickman said.

In addition to being a large employer, A&M is also a more steady employer than the private sector, said Garry Basinger, vice president of development for the Bryan-College Station Economic Development Corporation.

"It also helps employment rates that the University is a government entity; therefore, mass layoffs are simply not an option,"

See **Economy** on page 6

Street fighting 50 miles from Baghdad

By David Espo
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

American forces battled Iraqi defenders in fierce street fighting 50 miles south of Baghdad on Monday, pointing toward a drive on the capital. Army guards shot seven Iraqi women and children to death when their van refused orders to stop at a checkpoint, officials said.

U.S. troops and tanks encountered rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire in a dawn raid against Republican Guard defenders of Hindiyah, a key city astride the Euphrates River. Other units fought to isolate Najaf to the south and prevent attacks on U.S. supply lines.

"There are maneuvers going (on) to try to destroy those divisions that stand in our way" of Baghdad, Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal said at the Pentagon.

He added that more than 3,000 precision-guided bombs have been dropped on Iraq in the past few days, out of 8,000 in the entire war.

In the northern part of Iraq, commanders said an assault on a compound controlled by an Islamic Iraqi group turned up lists of names of suspected militants living in the United States.

And heavy bombing was reported during the day, from areas near the northern oil fields to downtown Baghdad to Republican Guard defensive positions south of the city. Bombing south of the capital, probably against Republican Guard positions, resumed at daylight Tuesday.

On the 13th day of Operation Iraqi Freedom, British officials claimed that 8,000 Iraqis have been taken prisoner so far.

But a defiant Iraqi foreign minister said invading forces face the choice between death or surrender.

"Every day that passes the United States and Britain are sinking deeper in the mud of defeat," said Naji Sabri.

Iraqi television aired footage of President Saddam Hussein and his sons Oday and Qusai, but there was no way of determining when the video was shot. Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on PBS that U.S. intelligence sources have been unable to confirm that Saddam survived the March 19 strike on a bunker where he was believed to be staying but said, "That doesn't mean he's dead."

For his part, President Bush warned that Saddam "may try to bring terror to our shores." The United States is acting to prevent such threats, he said as he issued his latest forecast of victory. "Day by day we are moving closer to

See **Baghdad** on page 2