

THE BATTALION

Volume 109 • Issue 133 • 12 pages Texas A&M University www.thebatt.com Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Gaines memorial raises questions of accuracy

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

An effort to revive a stalled movement to erect a statue of Matthew Gaines on campus has prompted critics to charge the project is politicizing history for the sake of diversity.

The idea of honoring Gaines, a former slave who served as a Texas state senator during Reconstruction, first surfaced almost a decade ago but was put in limbo in 2001 when then Texas A&M President Ray Bowen returned the proposal to the President's Advisory Committee on Art Policy for more study.

Student Senate Speaker Brooks Landgraf said

A&M President Robert M. Gates may be more receptive to the idea, and a student committee created by the Senate two weeks ago will meet for the first and only time today to discuss how the Gaines memorial can move forward.

The project has raised questions of historical accuracy and proponents have acknowledged overstating Gaines' contribution to A&M.

In an e-mail to student organizations soliciting support, Martha Gault, chair of the Matthew Gaines Memorial Council, said Gaines was responsible for the establishment of A&M and that without his efforts, the University would not exist today.

"To say (Gaines) was solely responsible is somewhat misleading," said Dale Baum, a history

professor at A&M who specializes in the Civil War and Reconstruction.

In 1871, the 12th Texas Legislature passed a bill to ensure the state could use federal funds to create a land grant college in Texas, leading to the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas in 1876. However, it is unclear what role Gaines played in passing the bill, aside from voting for it.

The actual bill was probably drafted in the Texas secretary of state's office at the behest of then-Gov. Edmund Davis, Baum said. Gaines did not author or sponsor the legislation, but like other



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Republican legislators, voted for it.

Baum, a long-time supporter of a Gaines memorial, said it would help recognize the progressive policy achievements of the Republican Party in Texas during Reconstruction. The decision to honor Gaines, Baum said, is not based only on his contributions to the establishment of A&M.

"This is admittedly a political issue," Baum said. "We can show that from day one, an African American was involved in this school."

Landgraf said he had met with Baum to discuss Gaines' memorial, and that the overstatement in the e-mail had been corrected.

However, the correction has not placated critics,

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Watch this!



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Taking advantage of the nice weather, freshman general studies major **Brian Benavides** jumps over a set of four stairs in front of the MSC on

Monday afternoon on his skateboard as a group of people watched on. He has been skateboarding for more than five years.

Media Board to consider barring student leaders

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

The Student Media Board will consider a proposal Wednesday that would prohibit student leaders from serving on the body that selects the editor in chief of *The Battalion* each semester.

The Board, which oversees *The Battalion*, has three student members nominated by the student body president. Faculty and staff comprise the other five voting members, and any decision to appoint or fire an editor must be approved by the Provost.

The proposed amendment to the Board's bylaws was filed by former Editor-in-Chief of *The Battalion*, Brady Creel.

In a statement submitted to the Board, Creel said he was "disturbed at the present state of student representation on the Board," and that "having student political figures as members of the Student Media Board negates everything journalists believe in."

In the past, the student body president has

nominated himself, members of the Student Government Association executive council, the president of the Memorial Student Center council or other high-profile student leaders.

Creel's proposal would bar students who serve as officers in the executive councils of the MSC, SGA, Interfraternity Council and Corps of Cadets, as well as other organizations from serving on the Board.

The Board represents a good cross section of campus, said Dr. Leroy Dorsey, head of the journalism department and Board chairman.

Dr. Barbara Gastel, a journalism professor and Board member, said she could see how having student leaders on the Board may create conflicts of interest, but said she is still considering the proposal and has not decided how she will vote.

Barry Hammond, the former MSC council president and a student member of the Board, said he was not familiar with the proposal and could not comment on it.

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Bonfire sales ban lifted

By Janet McLaren
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University President Robert M. Gates officially lifted the moratorium on the sale of Bonfire-related merchandise for the Aggie Moms Club at a meeting with the Aggie Moms Federation Saturday.

Linda Hill, Aggie Moms Federation president, said Gates specifically lifted the ban for Aggie Moms.

"The moratorium on the sale of Bonfire memorabilia

and related items will be lifted for Aggie Moms Clubs and Aggie Moms Clubs only," Hill said.

Earlier in the week, Bonfire Coalition sent a letter to Gates requesting that the moratorium be partially lifted for Aggie Moms during Parent's Weekend, April 10-12.

"The intent of the letter was mainly to help out the Aggie Moms," said Ryan Kirkpatrick, co-chair of Bonfire Coalition. "Every year the Moms bring Bonfire paraphernalia to the sale but they're not allowed to sell any."

Kirkpatrick said A&M Vice-President for Student Affairs Dr. J. Malon Southerland and the Department of Student Affairs had banned the sale of Bonfire-related merchandise by the Aggie Moms Club.

Diane Taylor, 2003-04 president-elect of the Brazos County A&M Mother's Club, said she was "absolutely thrilled" with Gates' decision. "Whoop!" Taylor said. "That's great news."

Taylor said shoppers could

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CS Council members would raise candidate age from 18 to 21 years

By Nicole M. Jones
THE BATTALION

The College Station City Council has discussed raising the age requirement for council members to 21, but no efforts have been made to actually change it, said College Station Mayor Ron Silvia.

The age requirement to serve on the College Station City Council is currently 18. A candidate for a council position must have lived in College Station for at least one year.

The item on the City Council's agenda was the city charter, which is the "constitution" of College Station, Silvia said. Included in the charter are age requirements, term limits and residency requirements, all of which had to be discussed, Silvia said.

"We discussed whether someone 18 years of age has the maturity to make the decisions of a city councilman, but there was nothing that was put forth to go on a ballot for citizen approval," Silvia said.

Despite their concern about whether a student has the time and maturity to hold the position, most of the seven council members are opposed to changing the age requirement, Silvia said.

Some Texas A&M students, such as Kyle Whatley, the director of the Maroon Party at A&M, feel that changing the age requirement from 18 to 21 would further alienate young adults from participating in local government.

"Students already feel that the city doesn't like them very much and that the city specifically targets them in their law enforcement," said Whatley, a senior political science major.

Whatley said he thinks city officials are worried that if a student is elected to a position on the council, he will not be able to handle the

responsibility.

Gary Halter, A&M political science professor and a former mayor of College Station, said that even if the motion is put to a citizen vote, changing the age requirement is not a good idea.

"I think it is rather stupid to put it to a vote since the reaction and backlash from the students may produce something rather different than intended," Halter said.

Even though students make up a

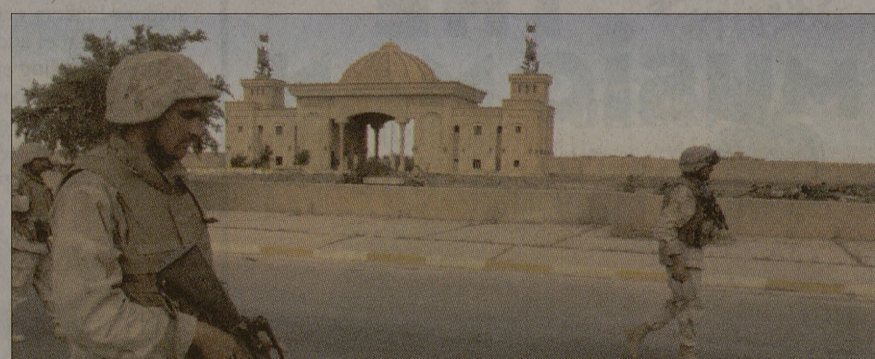
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College Station City Council Requirements:

- U.S. citizen
- 18 years old
- Resident of city for at least one year

SOURCE: COLLEGE STATION CITY CHARTER

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION



KRT CAMPUS

American forces encounter little resistance as they take Saddam's home town of Tikrit late Monday afternoon.

Major combat winds down

By David Espo
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit fell Monday with unexpectedly light resistance, the last Iraqi city to succumb to overpowering U.S.-led ground and air forces. A senior Pentagon general said "major combat engagements" probably are over in the 26-day-old war.

As fighting wound down, Pentagon officials disclosed plans to pull two aircraft carriers from the Persian Gulf. At the same time, Iraqi power brokers looked ahead to discussions on a postwar government at a U.S.-arranged meeting set for Tuesday.

"I would anticipate that the major

combat engagements are over," Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal told reporters at the Pentagon. Tikrit fell with no sign of the ferocious last stand by Saddam loyalists that some military planners had feared.

Secretary of State Colin Powell hinted at economic or diplomatic sanctions against Syria, saying the government is developing a weapons of mass destruction program and helping Iraqis flee the dying regime. Syrian officials denied the charges.

Looting eased in Baghdad after days of plundering at government buildings, hospitals and an antiquities museum, and group of religious and civil opposition leaders met in the capital to plan

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