

THE BATTALION

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A&M launches joint enrollment program

By Karen Yancey
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M and Texas A&M-Kingsville recently launched a joint enrollment program between their agriculture colleges to provide educational opportunities for the expanding minority population in South Texas.

The South Texas Joint Enrollment Program allows agriculture students to transfer to A&M after spending their freshman and sophomore years at A&M-Kingsville. Students must have a 3.0 grade point ratio to transfer. After completing 75 class hours, they must leave the program and

enroll at A&M. However, participants may not change majors outside the College of Agriculture.

Fifty freshman will be admitted into the program this fall. Next year's enrollment will increase to 100 freshmen and 300 should be accepted into the program in 2005.

Dick Creger, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at A&M, said Ronald Rosati, the dean of college of Agriculture and Human Sciences at Kingsville, approached him with the idea.

"I think it's great," Creger said. "It gives kids access to A&M who want to come here but who may need

more preparation."

Creger also said the program aims at increasing diversity at A&M.

"We hope to do this with other A&M System universities or universities that aren't part of the system," he said.

The University runs similar transfer programs with Blinn College and San Antonio's Palo Alto College.

"From our University's perspective this is a major new development," Rosati said.

The college of agriculture has two other joint enrollment programs with A&M but neither are as encompassing as the South Texas Joint Enrollment Program.

Rosati, who came up with the idea a year ago, said both campuses were supportive and getting the program started was not difficult.

"We have a history of close cooperation among the agriculture programs in Texas A&M System universities," Rosati said.

A&M's current Agriculture Program is an agreement between the Texas Cooperative Extension and agriculture colleges in the A&M University System to deliver programming to the people of Texas. The Texas Cooperative Extension is a state agency that provides research information to the public.

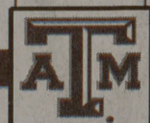
Joint enrollment with Texas A&M-Kingsville

Allows agriculture students to transfer to A&M after two years at Kingsville

Students must have a 3.0 GPR

Students cannot change majors outside College of Agriculture

50 freshmen to be admitted in Fall 2003



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

Egyptians work for Mideast cease-fire

By Ravi Nessman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Egyptian mediators asked Palestinian militants Sunday to halt attacks on Israel in an effort to rescue a U.S.-backed peace plan that foundered after more than a week of violence. Israel's prime minister suggested he might accept a limited truce.

Palestinian officials said there were expectations that the current cease-fire efforts might succeed where others had failed, despite militia leaders' renewed assertions they will not lay down their arms.

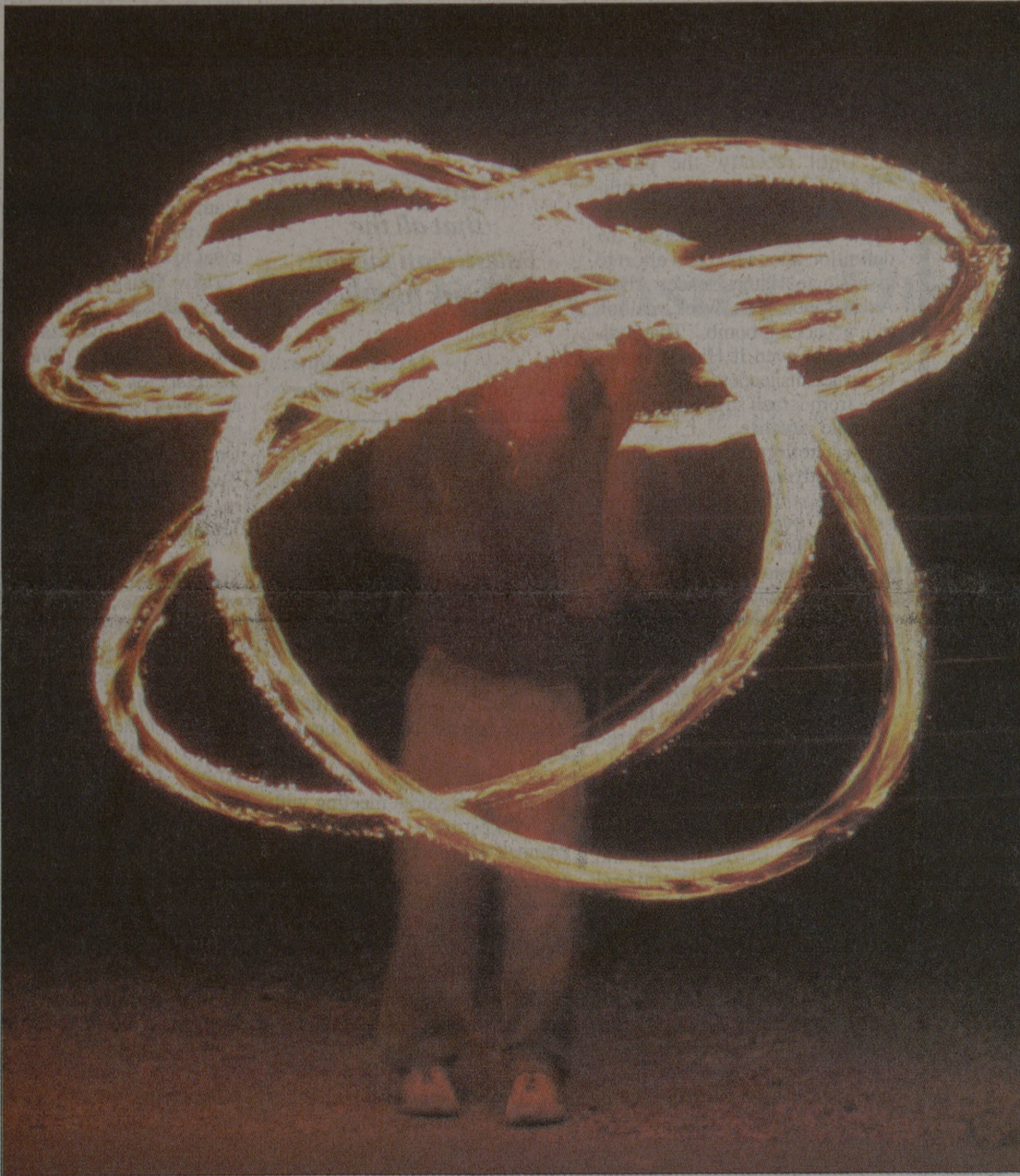
In Maine, President Bush said he was confident of eventual peace between the longtime enemies, with a Palestinian state existing in peace beside Israel.

After a weekend meeting between Israeli and Palestinian security officials, both sides said Israel was considering a gradual withdrawal from Bethlehem and parts of the Gaza Strip, leaving security to the forces of Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas and security chief Mohammed Dahlan.

Addressing a Cabinet meeting Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that if militants agree to a cease-fire, Israel would, for the most part, respect it.

"If no one fires on us, we will not return fire, except in

Great balls of fire



Junior industrial distribution major **Brian Cole** spins flaming balls of teflon connected to metal chains behind Easterwood Airport on Saturday night. **Cole's**

hobby is known as Poi and has become increasingly popular during the past five years.

TERESA WEAVER • THE BATTALION

Rochon vies for diversity

By Justin Smith
THE BATTALION

Bringing together the surrounding communities, local schools and students of a university is the best way to encourage diversity at a place like Texas A&M, said Dr. Ronald Rochon.

Rochon, the last of three candidates visiting A&M vying for the new position of vice president of diversity and associate provost for institutional diversity, made a presentation Friday describing how the University can become more diverse.

"The first step for the University is to gain the trust of families in the community," he said. "And then in connection with the University students and area (kindergarten through high school) teachers and students, they can create appropriate programs."

Rochon has put this theory to the test at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse where he heads the Research Center for Cultural Diversity and Community Renewal. Rochon and the CDCR received the largest grant in the history of UW-La Crosse — \$5 million. The center was able to educate many members of the Hmong community, a large Asian community in Wisconsin, many of whom have since gone on to teach among other things.

Since its success at UW-La Crosse, the CDCR has worked with Hmong and others at many of the UW branches in the state.

Rochon said another way to increase diversity is to work abroad.

Rochon worked with schools and communities in Ghana while at UW-La Crosse.

"Teacher exchange between countries can be a very useful tool," he said.

Rochon said that a goal of the University should be to provide equitable opportunities for all.

"Diversity encompasses acceptance and respect for differences among all individuals," he said.

Rochon was formally educated at Tuskegee University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

He has since taught education at several

See **Rochon** on page 2

Saudis raid Mecca, find al-Qaida links

By Faiza Saleh Ambah
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MECCA, Saudi Arabia — Police fought overnight gunbattles with suspected al-Qaida militants who were planning an imminent terrorist attack, killing five and arresting others believed linked to last month's suicide bombings in Riyadh, a Saudi official said Sunday.

One security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said two police officers were killed in a shootout at a checkpoint shortly before a fierce gunbattle erupted during a raid on a bomb-filled, booby-trapped apartment late Saturday.

The Saudi Interior Ministry released a statement saying the raid took place at an apartment building in the al-Khalidiya district, about three miles from the main Mecca mosque, at 9:30 p.m. The statement said police

clashed with a "group of terrorists... (who) were preparing an imminent terrorist act." No details of the alleged plot were given.

Five suspected militants died in the gunbattle initiated by the "terrorists," the statement said without giving their nationalities. Five security agents and four bystanders were slightly injured.

The statement said the apartment was booby-trapped and ready to explode. Some 72 bombs of different sizes were found with numerous other weapons, including semiautomatic rifles and knives, communication devices, bomb-making materials and masks.

The Interior Ministry statement said two Chadians, an Egyptian and a Saudi were among at least five people arrested in the raid. The fifth was not identified. Numerous other suspects were arrested later in Mecca. It did not elaborate.

Police raid apartment in Mecca

Saudi security agents raided a bomb-filled, booby-trapped apartment in the holy city of Mecca Saturday night, where the Saudi government said "a group of terrorists... were preparing an imminent terrorist attack."



Police raid apartment, killing five terror suspects

SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

The official told The Associated Press that he believed the suspected militants were "members of al-Qaida cells" because of similarities between weapons they used and how they "immediately shoot at the police when cornered."

He also believed those killed and arrested were

See **Mecca** on page 2

Storms test campus lightning system

By Megan Orton
THE BATTALION

As fierce storms swept through Brazos Valley this weekend, reports of dangerous lightning and funnel clouds alarmed area residents.

Patrons at the Memorial Student Center were ushered into the basement restaurant as the storm made its way through College Station Friday night.

Texas A&M's Deputy Director of University Relations Lane Stephenson said 200 to 300 people were crowded in the basement for 20 minutes until the danger passed. No damage was reported.

As summer storms become more frequent, a new lightning system implemented last year is being used to forewarn members of the A&M community when conditions are ripe for cloud-to-ground lightning strikes.

The new system uses two ThorGuard systems on 11 locations around campus, including the Student Recreation Center and the A&M golf course, to ensure the safety of those outdoors during storms.

"Texas receives a fair amount of lightning across the state," said Scott Steiger, head of A&M's storm chasing team. Steiger was part of a 12-year study that led to the naming of Houston as the "lightning capital of Texas."

Houston experiences about four flashes of cloud-to-ground lightning per square kilometer per year, the highest rate of lightning in Texas, Steiger said.

Nationally, Tampa Bay, Fla., has the highest rates, with 11 flashes of

cloud-to-ground lightning per square kilometer per year.

A&M isn't the only school that has implemented the ThorGuard system. Texas Christian University, University of New Mexico and Clemson University, along with many municipalities, use the ThorGuard system to warn their residents of impending lightning danger.

Steiger said certain areas on

See **Lightning** on page 2

THORGUARD: Lightning warning system

- 11 locations throughout campus including two at the Recreation Center and one on the golf course
- Predicts before lightning strikes
- 15-second warning alarm along with flashing lights
- Three 5-second blasts signal that danger has passed

JOSHUA HOBSON & RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: A&M STORM CHASING TEAM

NEWS
THE BATTALION
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