

# THE BATTALION

109 Years Serving Texas A&M University

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## Divided legislature tackles redistricting plan

By Kelley Shannon  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Partisan bickering broke out as quickly as the Texas Legislature convened Monday, with House Democrats claiming Republicans were acting as puppets in a congressional redistricting “power grab.”

Republican Gov. Rick Perry ordered state lawmakers to return to work to consider a GOP-backed redrawing of congressional district lines, an effort pushed by U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

“This week is independence week, and we’re

going to find out this week whether the Texas Legislature is still independent from the partisans in Washington, D.C.,” Rep. Jim Dunning of Waco, House Democratic Caucus leader, said just before Monday’s special session started.

About two dozen Democrats gathered with him and said Texans made it clear in a series of public meetings across the state the past few days that they don’t want the Legislature to take up congressional redistricting.

Later, Republicans on the House Redistricting Committee acknowledged that most public testimony at the meetings opposed revising congressional lines but some suggested Democrats had

organized the opposition.

“It was almost like a political rally,” said Rep. Robert Talton, R-Pasadena, of a meeting in Houston. “It was something that was an organized effort, I assume, to intimidate us.”

Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston, said earlier that the districts Republicans want would hurt minority and rural voters.

“We have a clear message for Tom DeLay,” Coleman said. “Stop lying about what you’re trying to do.”

DeLay’s office had no immediate response to the Democrats.

In the past, DeLay, a Republican from Sugar

Land, has said he wants more Republican congressmen from Texas.

Democrats hold a 17-15 advantage in the congressional delegation, even though all statewide elected officials in Texas are Republicans. A map that was backed by DeLay during the regular session in the spring would have likely given Republicans as many as 20 seats in the U.S. House.

Redistricting was so divisive in the 140-day regular session that 51 House Democrats secretly fled to Ardmore, Okla., to block a quorum and halt

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## Lack of jobs forces grads back home

By Natalie Younts  
THE BATTALION

The declining economy has led only 33 percent of Texas A&M’s May 2003 graduates to find employment, said Marti Boerema, director of experiential education at the A&M Career Center.

According to CNN.com, a survey taken this spring on Monster.com reported that 61 percent of college graduates plan to return home after graduation.

“Students are graduating in economic times that are dramatically different from the economy in which they entered A&M,” Boerema said. “Perhaps, they — and their parents — see it as a viable strategy to save money, pay down educational loans or credit card debt and gain a sound financial footing before moving out.”

This year’s class is not the only one that is moving back home. Thomas Foster of Harker Heights, Texas, who graduated in May 2002

with a degree in computer science, said he deliberately sought out a job near his family’s community so he could live at home.

Foster said although he has found a job and started working last December, he still lives at home. He said he invests the money he earns and contributes some of it to his family.

“(My parents) are happy to have me so long as I pay rent,” Foster said.

Brian Moshier of Flower Mound, Texas, who graduated in May with a degree in management, said he moved home after graduation because he had not secured employment.

Moshier said he has not heard a reply from any of the online resources he sent his resume to, which included Monster.com, hotjobs.com and careerbuilder.com.

Moshier said he also used the Career Center while on campus, but to no avail. He said he has been

See **Grads** on page 2

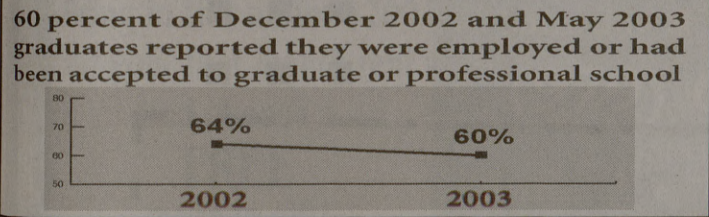
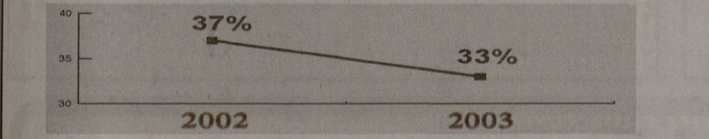
## Handball 101



EVAN O'CONNELL • THE BATTALION

Senior economics major Mike Petr (right) and senior civil engineering major Logan McWhorter play handball at the Student Recreation Center on Monday morning for a kinesiology class.

### Have a degree, now what?



SOURCE: A&M CAREER CENTER

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

## System cuts 3 departments

Staff & Wire

The reduction in state funding led the Texas A&M University System to lay off eight employees last Wednesday.

Funding to the A&M System was cut from \$29.8 million to \$25 million due to state budget cuts. Three departments were eliminated in the cuts that are expected to save the \$450,000, said Bob Wright, System communication director, according to the Bryan-College Station Eagle.

After the \$9.9 billion state budget deficit was announced, lawmakers said massive funding cuts would be necessary.

“The decision is not a reflection on the performance of any individual employee or department,” said System Chancellor Howard Graves in a statement. “Our state is experienc-

ing critical budget shortfalls that have affected almost every state institution and agency.”

Community development, distance learning, and planning and system integration offices were eliminated as a result of budget cuts.

Daniel Hernandez, who heads the community development department, could not be reached for comment Monday.

The names of those laid off were not released.

Wright said the layoffs should be the only ones at the central offices unless funding is reduced again.

A&M officials have attempted to cut the 7 percent of the overall 2003 budget requested

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## Bryan to enforce noise ordinance

By Rob Munson  
THE BATTALION

The Bryan Police Department will begin enforcing a zero-tolerance policy on the city’s noise ordinance today by giving officers a more powerful role in determining what constitutes unreasonable noise, police officials said.

Bryan Assistant Police Chief Pete Scheets said the city’s noise ordinance has not changed. The change is in how police officers will enforce the ordinance. The policy also applies to vehicles.

Previously, Bryan police responded to noise complaints with verbal warnings.

“What’s a nuisance in one part of town might not be in another,” Scheets said. “We’re using our officers’ reasonable standard, which is based on the community’s input through neighborhood meetings.”

Now, Bryan officers will use their own judgment to determine if a source of noise merits a citation.

“When we got a call in the past and the officer deemed the source unreasonable, the officer would issue a warning,” Scheets said. “Now if they deem the noise unreasonable, the officer issues a citation.”

Scheets said crushing an aluminum can and dropping it on bare concrete registers 85 decibels, which is considered an unreasonable level in some towns that enforce noise laws. Scheets said decibel meters will not be used by officers to determine if a source of noise is too loud, because readings can be misleading.

“Having bass so loud that it can rattle pictures off the wall might not register at 85 decibels,” he said.

Unreasonable noise levels are part of Bryan’s nuisance ordinance, which has been in place

### BRYAN: Zero Tolerance Policy

• In 2002, Bryan received 2,350 complaints of noise

• To date, 1,110 complaints of loud noise have been reported

• First offense - class C misdemeanor punishable by fines ranging from \$1 to \$2000



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION  
SOURCE: CITY OF BRYAN

since December 1975.

“Nowadays, we’re addressing more and more complaints about the kind of loud music that disturbs people’s sleep or disrupts their lives at home or work in some way,” Scheets said. “The number of complaints about crime, disorder and decay is dropping.”

Scheets said the need for noise control stems from an increase in the number of complaints from Bryan residents.

Last year, Bryan police received roughly 2,350 complaints of noise. To date, approximately 1,110 complaints of loud noise have been reported by

See **Noise** on page 2

## Israel offers to return Bethlehem

By Alexandra Zavis  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Israel agreed to return the West Bank town of Bethlehem to Palestinian control after its pull-back Monday from the Gaza Strip, crucial steps that advance a U.S.-backed “road map” to Palestinian statehood and raise hopes that 33 months of violence may be nearing an end.

The two sides’ prime ministers also set a meeting to plan their next moves, as bulldozers

tore down Israeli checkpoints and traffic flowed freely in Gaza for the first time in months. Palestinian police took control of the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun on the heels of the departing Israeli troops.

The developments followed declarations of a temporary halt to attacks by three main Palestinian groups, but there were still trouble spots.

The first full day of the truce was marred by a Palestinian shooting that killed a Bulgarian construction work-

er on an Israeli road project near the West Bank town of Yabed. Renegade members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, loosely linked to Yasser Arafat’s Fatah movement, claimed responsibility.

However, Palestinian Information Minister Nabil Amr said it was not clear Fatah was involved. “It was an individual attack that should not affect the truce declaration,” he said, adding that “the Palestinian

See **Mideast** on page 6

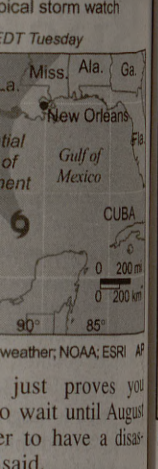
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