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NEWS IN BRIEF

**Court sentences
cleric to 4 years**

JAKARTA, Indonesia — A court sentenced Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir on Tuesday to four years in prison for sedition, but threw out charges that he belonged to al-Qaida's main Asian ally — even though some of Southeast Asia's top terror suspects have named him as the group's spiritual leader.

The trial was seen as a key test of Indonesia's commitment to confronting Islamic militancy, and the mixed result and lenient sentence was a blow to Indonesia's efforts to combat terrorism.

Judges said there was insufficient evidence that the ailing, soft-spoken 65-year-old preacher is the top power behind — or even a member of — Jemaah Islamiyah, the group blamed for the October 2002 Bali nightclub bombings and the Aug. 5 bombing of Jakarta's Marriott Hotel.

**Census: 1.4 million
more in poverty**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 1.4 million more people in the United States fell into poverty last year — almost half of them children — even as the country emerged from recession, according to a Census Bureau survey.

About 12.4 percent of the population, or nearly 34.8 million people, lived in poverty in 2002, according to the bureau's American Community Survey that was to be released Wednesday. That was up from 12.1 percent, or 33.4 million, in 2001.

Roughly 17.2 percent of children, or 12.2 million, lived in poverty in 2002, up from 16.4 percent, or about 11.5 million, in 2001.

Median household income rose by \$51.

What a stack



MELISSA GENTRY • THE BATTALION

Junior English major **Laura Laubach** puts the final touches on the Bonfire Coalition for Students' make-shift bonfire near Rudder Fountain Tuesday. The coal-

ition is attempting to work with University administration to bring Aggie Bonfire back to campus. The group is also focusing on promoting the Aggie spirit.

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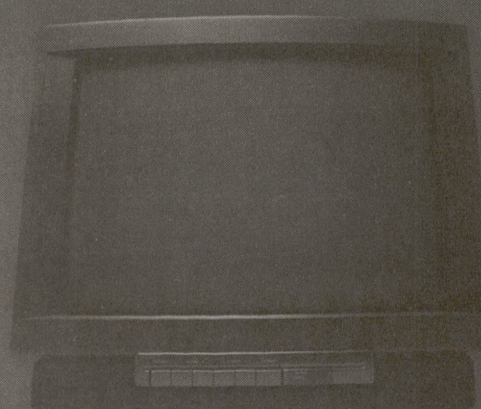
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**Jennifer Hart
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