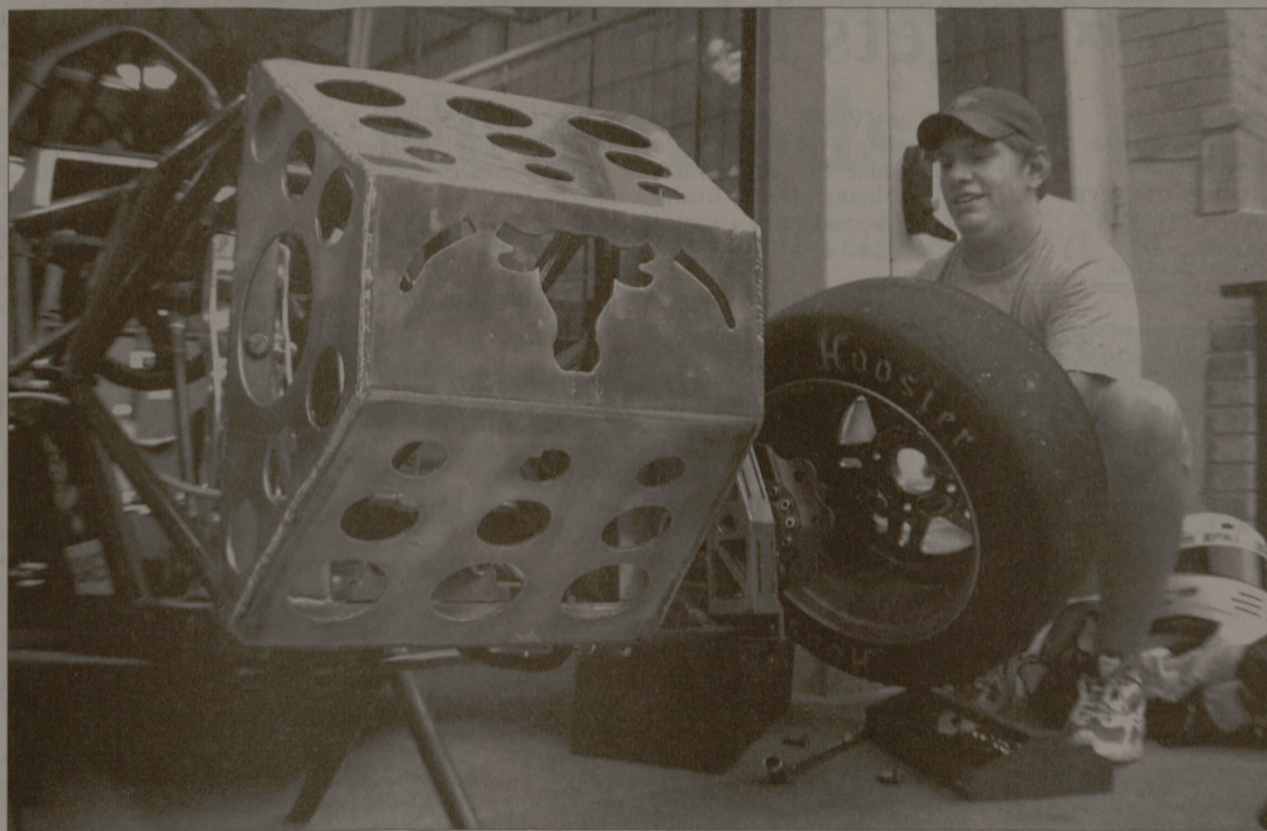


On your mark, get set, go!



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Junior mechanical engineering major Vince Shepherd changes a front tire on the Texas A&M 2003 Formula Society of Automotive Engineers car at Thompson Hall before taking it for a test drive on Riverside Campus. The Formula SAE car will be competing in the Sport Car Club of America Solo-II Nationals competition next week in Topeka, Kan. Shepherd said the car corners with 1.5 lateral G's.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IRS help centers gave incorrect information

WASHINGTON (AP) — IRS centers established to help people prepare their tax returns gave incorrect answers — or no answer at all — to 43 percent of the questions asked by Treasury Department investigators posing as taxpayers.

The investigators concluded that half a million taxpayers may have been given wrong information between July and December 2002.

Internal Revenue Service employees gave wrong answers to 28 percent of the questions. Twelve percent went unanswered, as taxpayers were told to do their own research in IRS publications. In 3 percent of the attempts to get questions answered, the auditor could not get any service at the center.

"We recognize that an accuracy rate of 67 percent for tax law service is inadequate," Henry O. Lamar, the IRS commissioner overseeing individual tax returns, wrote to the investigators.

The auditors said they had a better chance of getting a correct answer when IRS employees walked them through relevant material and asked probing questions.

The questions most commonly answered incorrectly dealt with the earned income tax credit, education credit and dependents.

"The IRS' failing grade here is unacceptable," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa.

The Treasury Department's inspector general started investigating the error rate at the nation's 400 taxpayer assistance centers when a 2001 study showed that auditors making anonymous visits got incorrect or insufficient answers to 73 percent of their tax law questions.

The IRS hopes to improve its track record and answer 80 percent of the questions correctly this year, and 85 percent correctly next year.

Senators: NASA mistakes same in Columbia as in Challenger

By Paul Recer
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Senators criticized NASA on Wednesday for not naming people personally responsible for the Columbia disaster and for giving an important new job to an official linked to decisions made in the space shuttle tragedy.

NASA administrator Sean O'Keefe defended his stance on naming names, saying later that there was no reason "there has to be a public execution" of engineers involved in the accident.

At a hearing before the Senate committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Sen. Ernest F. Hollings, D-S.C., said the space agency and the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) did not go far enough in assigning blame for the space shuttle accident that killed seven astronauts.

Hollings challenged O'Keefe to explain why Ralph Roe, an engineer the CAIB report said was involved in decisions linked to the accident, had been named the number two person in the new NASA Engineering and Safety Office.

Hollings said Roe and Linda Ham, manager of program integration for the shuttle, canceled efforts to take spy satellite photos of the shuttle that could have established if the spacecraft's wing had been damaged during launch by a chunk of foam insulation peeled from a fuel tank.

The senator said flawed decisions made in the Columbia accident reminded him of issues raised following the 1986 space shuttle Challenger accident that also killed seven astronauts.

The CAIB chairman, Ret. Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., said the board "does support accountability" in the Columbia accident, but that members felt they should not attempt to identify those personally responsible and would "let the proper authorities deal with accountability." At a

news conference following the hearing, O'Keefe said naming individuals bearing responsibility for the Columbia accident would be pointless. He said that would be done only if someone was found to have acted maliciously.

"We are not going to make those judgments," he said. "It's all in the report."

"Nothing at this point shows that any folks fell into that category," O'Keefe said.

Ham has since left her job in the space shuttle program, but remains employed by NASA. Roe has been named to the number two job in NASA's new Engineering and Safety Center now being established at the Langley Research Center in Virginia.

At the hearing, Gehman said decisions that led to the Columbia accident were "set in motion between five to 15 years ago," and that all the leaders — including NASA, Congress and the White House — "are responsible for the conditions" that led to the accident.

Gehman said NASA was starved for funds over the years and that space shuttle program managers were forced to wring money out of the shuttle program "in order to do other things."

"Over a decade the spending power of the NASA budget was reduced by over 40 percent," Gehman said. Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., challenged O'Keefe to explain how the space agency intended to change its culture, which the CAIB report blamed heavily for the cause of the accident.

O'Keefe said it would involve more than changing personnel. Some basic cultural changes will occur. "Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said she was shocked by the CAIB report. Congress needs to make sure processes are put in place to prevent future shuttle accidents, Snowe said.

"We can't allow our outrage or concern to atrophy," she said. "When the spotlight is off, we need to be assured that what is recommended in the report goes forward."

Affordable Health Insurance for College Students

FREE QUOTE
979-693-1683

Bruce Boyd

Texas A&M Club Baseball Team

Team Tryouts
Sept. 9-11, 13 @ 4:30 p.m.
Southwood Athletic Complex

Informational Meeting
Sept. 8 @ 7 p.m.
MSC 228
clubbaseballtripod.com

Tents, Tables, Chairs, Linens
BBQ Pits, Grills, Griddles
Dance Floors & Much More
www.partytimere rentals.com

Get Grilling with Party Time
Party Time Rentals
1816 Ponderosa, College Station 696-5555 • 1710 S. Texas Ave, Bryan 822-5555

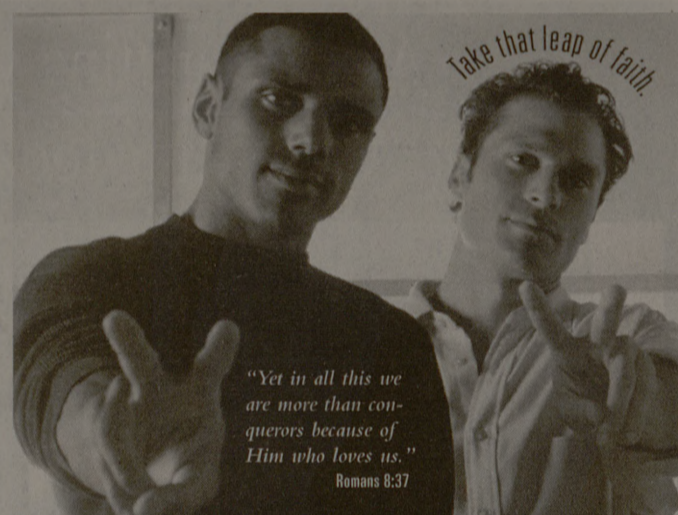
You're invited to Texas A&M Hillel's

Welcome Back Bash

Join us for some swimming, ice cream eating and fun!

When: Sunday, September 7, 2003 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Where: Meet at Hillel at 6:15 pm
800 George Bush, CS • 693-7313 • <hillel@startel.net>

What to bring: yourself, your swimsuit, and a towel!



"Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of Him who loves us."
Romans 8:37

The Josephites:

Serving the African-American community since 1871. We are an interracial society of brothers and priests.

Consider it.

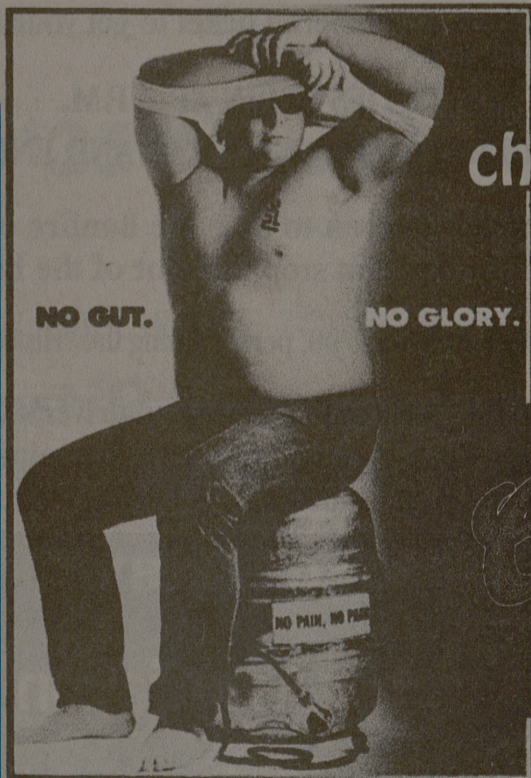
A Vocation with the Josephites

Call toll free: 1.800.897.1827 fax: 410.727.1006 email: vocationssj@aol.com www.josephite.com

auto decals

call us at

764-4444



College LIFE

front design

murals • maroon dominoes • muggin' bears

check us out each week for sweet new shirts at post oak mall



framed art • aggie caps and visors • towels