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A&M network faces more problems

By Sarah Walch
THE BATTALION

Students in residence halls and open-access labs Monday might have noticed an Internet shut out around 10 a.m., when an equipment operator somewhere between College Station and Dallas cut the optical cable that physically connects the Texas A&M network to the rest of the world.

The problem, known as a Backdoor Fade, took three hours to fix while technicians figured out where the gap was and reconnected the cable line, said Willis Marti, associate director of Computing and Information Services.

During that time, campus technicians rerouted network lines through other sources so that students could access all but big commercial sites like eBay, Marti said.

The disconnection came only three days after CIS Director Tom Putnam sent out an e-mail alerting all students connected to the network that their

infected computers were slowing down the entire network, whether located in residence halls or in off-campus homes or apartments and connected through A&M modems.

"A lot of people ignore (viruses) until it affects them," Marti said. "They forget about the fact that their machine affects others. If you have an infected machine, you're slowing other people down."

Marti said he wants people to realize how important it is to fix virus problems on their own, otherwise CIS will have to start charging people for having viruses, as other large universities have already done.

"It would be like TS (Transportation Services) giving you a little yellow ticket for having a virus," he said. "We don't want to do that."

To speed up services for students and faculty, Putnam said, everybody who owns a PC should click on Windows Update under the Start Menu and install all of the critical updates listed.

The latest virus on that list, Randex, was located by Microsoft on Sept. 10, and a patch

was created. Randex guesses easy passwords like "password," "computer" or "12345." It is "Version J" of a virus that has existed since January, Putnam said.

The virus is similar to one that caused a break-in into professors' voice mails on campus in early January.

Putnam and Marti echoed Associate Director of Communications Walt Magnussen's warning in January that students and faculty should create unique passwords to ward off potential hackers and viruses.

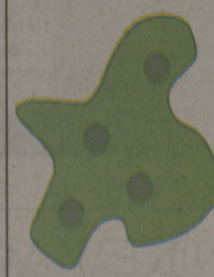
"Somebody gets infected with the virus, and then takes the program that infected their computer, changes it slightly to make a new virus and then virus scanners let it through," Putnam said.

Some on campus have had passwords hacked by Randex, Marti said. To avoid future problems, students and faculty should change their passwords to make their account and the entire A&M network more secure.

Marti recommended people write down a pass-

COMPUTER SAFETY TIPS

CIS officials advise that students use the following tips to help solve the virus problem.



Update anti-virus programs.

Check Windows Update through the Start Menu.

Choose unique passwords rather than generic ones.

Know that one infected computer can bring down the whole network.

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word and put it in their purse or wallet rather than use a password that is too simplistic.

"There are a lot of viruses now that try to guess passwords," he said.

Beyond that, students should update their virus software often, Putnam said. Symantec and

See Network on page 2A

A&M researchers propose routine depression tests

By Lindsay Broomes
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M psychologist Mary Meagher is among a group of researchers recommending the implementation of depression screening at routine doctor's visits, to help diagnose mental disorders at an early stage.

The Mental Health Index-5 is a self-administered screening tool that can help detect depression. The MHI-5 can be scored and discussed in a time frame of 15 minutes or less, Meagher said.

Meagher, family medicine physician Rachel Bramson and colleagues from the University of California-San Diego and the University of Southern Mississippi have conducted a study of 591 patients ages 18 to 86. These primary healthcare patients were tested for depression using the MHI-5.

The short, five-question test is a compact version of the larger Mental Health Inventory and was developed for use in the general public.

The MHI-5 questionnaire asks questions such as: How much of the time during the past four weeks have you felt downhearted and blue? How much of the time during the

See Depression on page 2A

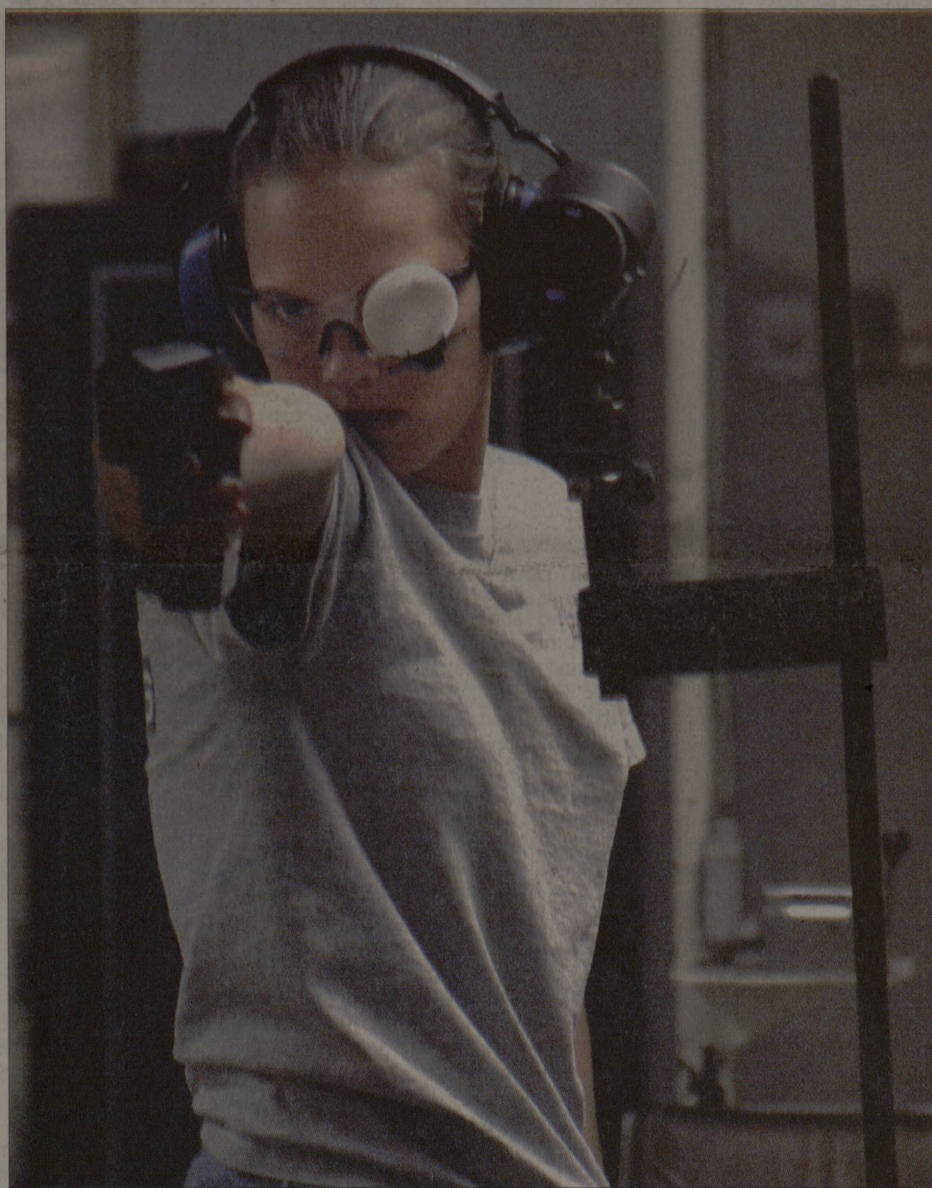
Treatment for Depression

About 18.8 million Americans, approximately 9.5 percent of the population, suffer from a depressive disorder each year. The following are options available for treatment.

- Psychotherapy
- Hypnosis
- Support groups
- Meditation
- Medication
- Exercise
- Natural remedies

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Take your best shot



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Sophomore agriculture development major **Tammy Gebert** aims down range at a target 50 feet away, practicing before tryouts for the Texas A&M Pistol Team. Tryouts for the team will be held through Sept.

26th at 7 p.m. in the basement of the Military Science building and include a rapid fire test, a target test and slow shot test. The pistol team welcomes students of all skill levels to participate in tryouts.

Third special legislative session begins

By Kelley Shannon
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Ten Senate Democrats who fled the state to thwart congressional redistricting by Republicans returned to the Capitol to a thunder of cheers and applause Monday as another special legislative session convened.

The presence of Sen. John Whitmire of Houston, who defected from a group of quorum-busting Democrats holed up in Albuquerque, N.M., gave Republicans the quorum they needed to conduct Senate business.

Ten fellow Democrats waited to enter the Senate chamber until they were certain a quorum, or two-thirds, was present. But Whitmire quickly asked that the Senate adjourn until Tuesday, and Republican lawmakers exited before the Democrats showed up.

When they arrived, a packed Senate gallery erupted with loud, long cheers of approval. The Democrats raised their joined hands in a circle on the Senate floor.

"Thank you Texas!" Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, D-San Antonio, shouted to the crowd.

Van de Putte, chairwoman of the Senate Democratic Caucus, led 11 Senate Democrats during their more than six-week stay in New Mexico.

"It's been six weeks since Senate Democrats took a stand based on principle, based on voting rights, based on our belief that only in the rule of law can there be true liberty," she said.

The Democrats pledged to keep battling redistricting — in the Senate and in court. They said the Republicans are trying to shut off the representation of rural and minority Texans in Congress.

"This fight is long from over. We have just begun the fight," said Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas.

See Session on page 2A

U.S. troops skirmish with Afghan guerrillas

By Stephen Graham
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, Afghanistan — American planes, aiding ground troops, bombed posi-

tions Monday in southern Afghanistan as part of an operation that has killed at least 15 suspected Taliban fighters, the U.S. military said.

There were no reported casualties among U.S. or Afghan troops in the fighting that began a day earlier in Kandahar province and has been dubbed Operation Mountain Viper, said a statement issued by the military from its headquarters in Bagram.

Earlier, the military said guerrillas fired mortars and machine guns at U.S. soldiers in eastern Afghanistan, an area that has seen repeated clashes in recent months.

Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division, based in Fort Drum, N.Y., came under attack Saturday as they patrolled near a U.S. base in Paktika province, a few miles from the border with Pakistan, the American military said in a statement.

The guerillas, believed to be al-Qaida or remnants of the

See Guerrillas on page 2A

WTO looks forward after defeat in Cancun

By Traci Carl
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CANCUN, Mexico — World Trade Organization leaders, crippled by two major defeats in four years, are searching for a way to win back the trust of poor nations and cobble together a global trade treaty that will shape the world's economy for years to come.

Developing countries say they won't take any more bullying from the rich, and want a deal that will help even the poorest.

The demands came amid the surprise collapse of crucial trade negotiations in this Mexican resort. Just as ministers were digging in for an extra day of talks, the meeting's chairman, Mexican Foreign Secretary Luis Ernesto Derbez, called off negotiations, saying there wasn't enough agreement to move forward.

Developing nations — some triumphantly — leaked the news to

journalists in the hallways of Cancun's convention center, even as U.S. trade officials gave a news conference explaining how negotiators were trying to move forward.

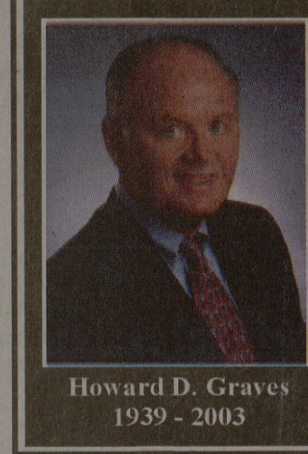
"Unless they listen to countries, unless they listen to the problems we have in meeting some of the demands of the developing countries, this is what will happen," said Rafidah Aziz, Malaysia's minister for international trade and investment.

The failure of talks will be felt around the world. Rice farmers in Asia and wheat farmers in Kansas were preparing for a decision in Cancun that would have led to the reduction of agricultural subsidies and tariffs.

Some farmers could have been forced out of business, while others — from poor producers in Africa to large multinationals in the United States — would have found new markets.

See WTO on page 2A

Services for Howard D. Graves



Howard D. Graves
1939 - 2003

Will be held at 3 p.m., today at Grace Bible Church, 700 Anderson.

Shuttle buses will be available in the Reed Arena parking lot beginning at 1:45 p.m.

The last bus will leave at 2:45 p.m.

Return shuttles will begin after the service.

Aggie ice cream hits stores

In the last few weeks, Aggies have demonstrated their fanaticism for all things maroon — even when it comes to ice cream. Aggie Blitz, a limited-edition flavor of Dreyer's ice cream, has been flying off the shelves of local grocery stores.

The vanilla-flavored, fudge-swirled ice cream is mixed with maroon, caramel-filled footballs and is packaged in maroon and white containers.

Eddie Livingston, grocery manager at Albertson's on Longmire Drive, said the store is

selling out of the popular flavor as soon as it receives shipments, according to the Bryan-College Station Eagle. Livingston said customers have been clamoring for more Aggie Blitz, and Albertson's is begging Dreyer's for more.

Dreyer's made only about 50,000 tubs of the flavor, but its public relations director, Kim Goeller-Johnson, said fans should look for the ice cream next September when it may return to Texas for a 'sophomore season.'