

THE BATTALION

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RHA strives to be more leadership oriented

By Carrie Pierce
THE BATTALION

Changes have recently been made to the Texas A&M Residence Hall Association's constitution to make RHA more professional and to help unite the on-campus community, said President Chris Mahaffey.

These changes were unanimously approved at the general assembly meeting Oct. 1. Five amendments have been added to the constitution.

"These amendments promote leadership, growth and camaraderie within residence halls and between residence halls and the University," said Emily Allen, RHA director of public relations.

RHA held an orientation Sept. 21 in which Mahaffey introduced his Vision Plan, a strategy intended to make the RHA a premier leadership organization on campus.

"Residence hall officers and delegates will also have more hardcore leadership development and training under these amendments," Mahaffey said. "We are trying to promote very strong leadership in the residence halls."

According to the revised constitution, RHA serves "to act as the liaison between residence hall students and the University and to serve as a representative voice for on-campus residents."

RHA continues to hold general assembly meetings to bring together the presidents and delegates from every residence hall to discuss campus issues.

"We strive to take concerns of on-campus students directly to the University," Mahaffey said.

The RHA also publishes Hall-A-Baloo, a monthly newsletter for all on-campus students.

"This was introduced last year but was only

published once. This year they will be published every month," Allen said.

The RHA web site, rha.tamu.edu, informs students of upcoming events hosted for on-campus students in efforts to promote the mission, values and spirit of the University within the on-campus community, Allen said.

"As the enthusiasm within RHA increases, so will the enthusiasm within the residence halls," said Carrie Giles, RHA delegate for Neeley Hall.

Mahaffey said an effort is being made to promote on-campus unity and spirit.

"A lot of on-campus students built their Aggie spirit around Bonfire," he said, "and after the tragedy many people gave up, rather than find a new way to build spirit."

On Aug. 29, RHA hosted Aggiefest, in which the on-campus community came together to play games and become acquainted with RHA, Giles said.

The next large event planned, The Spirit of

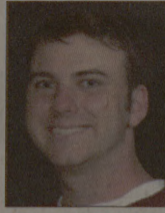
Aggieland, is a campuswide ticket pulling for the A&M vs. Kansas game on Nov. 1. For this game, the on-campus community will be invited to pull as a block, the first time that all on-campus students, Northside and Southside, will pull together for a football game.

"This event will foster relationships between different halls," Giles said.

Standards have been set in the constitution to ensure that all hall councils remain active, Mahaffey said. Appelt Hall, the only hall previously without a hall council, has recently been assisted by RHA in developing a strong council.

According to the amendments, RHA has set up programs within the halls with a wide variety of activities offered to encourage and assist in the development of an educational and social environment within each hall.

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MAHAFFEY

Verizon grant to fund education programs

By Jenna Jones
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M is using a \$140,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to fund two programs within the College of Education and Human Development: the Brighter Horizons in Early Literacy project and the Master Reading Teacher program.

The Brighter Horizons project, now in its third year, focuses on promoting youth literacy in the daycare atmosphere. It is a collaborative effort among A&M, Blinn College, the Texas Workforce Commission, Child Care Management Services and Verizon Foundation, a division of Verizon Communications.

In the project's first two years, more than 800 infants and toddlers participated in language enrichment activities that are expected to enhance their ability to learn to read.

"We will have worked with over 400 childcare workers throughout the area by the end of this year," said Jane Conoley, dean of the College of Education and Human Development.

This year, Brighter Horizons will

focus on improving literacy rates among children under 5 years old.

"Specifically, programs will be established to engage more fully the parents of young children to encourage them to spend more time at home cultivating their children's reading skills," Conoley said. "Brighter Horizons will place more than 2,000 books in day care center classrooms for children to take home."

Betty Hanks, the owner of Big Top Day Care, said the program will greatly enhance the literacy and language development of children.

"With this early-age practice, it will encourage them to be more comfortable with speaking up," Hanks said. "It will give them more confidence and help to build up that confidence before they reach kindergarten or first grade."

Of the \$140,000 received, Brighter Horizons was given \$40,000 of the grant money. For the past two years, Verizon has also donated \$100,000 to the project.

The remaining \$100,000 was given

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"This is part of the whole package to get new teachers ready on the literacy side and the latest technology side."

— Dean Jane Conoley, College of Education and Human Development

Puddlin'



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Two-year-old Kendall Heath and his big brother Nathan play in puddles of water at Research Park on Monday afternoon. The boys were there with their mother, Rebecca and other siblings. Rain left Research Park and other places in Bryan-College Station flooded Monday.

Tornado damage surveyed

By Joshua Hobson
THE BATTALION

From uprooted trees to bricks stripped right off of the wall, 25 Bryan homes incurred significant damage from a moderate tornado that touched down between 6:05 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. Sunday.

Meteorologist Charles Roeseler of the National Weather Service in Houston said the tornado registered an F1 on the Fujita scale, which measures a tornado's intensity from one to five, five being the most severe. F1 tornadoes are characterized by 73 to 112 mph winds, Roeseler said.

Bill McBroom, a resident of Midwest Apartments in Bryan, was in his home when the tornado hit.

"It sounded like a big vacuum," he said. McBroom said the sound lasted for about 10 seconds right after 6 p.m., followed by torrential rains.

Winds from the storm were enough to impale a screen door into the McBrooms' wooden privacy fence. Connie McBroom said she discovered their outdoor wall clock had stopped at 6:02 p.m.

As of Monday afternoon, Midwest residents were still without electricity but had water and were buying ice at local convenience stores in an attempt to keep their refrigerated food from spoiling.

Midwest resident Marcelino Ramirez Jr. said he was shocked by the extent of the damage.

"I've never seen anything like this ever ... anywhere," he said.

Monday's rainfall totaled 2.36 inches, which broke the previous record of 1.99 inches for that date in 2001.



JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

With a collapsed porch and an uprooted tree, Marcelino Ramirez inspects his Bryan home Monday afternoon and evaluates the storm's aftermath.

Roeseler said the heavy rainfall caused temporary flooding in the area.

Overall, 200 homes in Bryan experienced minor damage in the tornado's quarter mile wide and four- to five-mile long path, Roeseler said. One injury has been reported, but no fatalities.

Several children were teaming up in the cleaning effort at Midwest Monday helping their parents rake up shingles and

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Wellness fair offers students stress relief

By Sarah Szuminski
THE BATTALION

Free health screenings, body fat measurement and massages will be available to members of the Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station communities today at the Health and Wellness Fair.

The Texas A&M Student Counseling Services and Student Health Services have joined forces this year to offer the "Let's Beat the Hell Outta Stress" fair, complete with prizes, games and food, said Health Fair Coordinator Christy Ahrens.

"This year's event will be bigger than in years past," Ahrens said. "It's definitely a good thing to go to."

Those wishing to have HIV testing or blood pressure checks can do so for free at the fair. HIV testing will take place inside the Memorial Student Center and away from the rest of the fair to preserve confidentiality, Ahrens said.

Puppies will also be on hand for fair attendees to play with, courtesy of the Brazos Valley Animal Shelter, providing an additional way for students to relieve stress.

Health and Wellness Fair

Student Health Services and Student Counseling Services invite all members of the Texas A&M community to "Beat the Hell Outta Stress."

WHEN:	Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
WHERE:	Rudder Fountain, MSC walkway and Flag room
WHAT:	Free blood pressure checks, HIV testing, body fat measurements, chair massages, games, prizes and food

ANDREW BURLISON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

Seven or eight games will be available, and a wide variety of prizes will be given out, said Lori Bienski, lead office assistant for SCS.

"(Last year) students really enjoyed the fair," Bienski said. "They seemed really involved and had a good time."

The fair will be held in the MSC walkway, Flagroom and Rudder Fountain area from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SILVER TAPS



Linh Duy Nguyen
Chemical Engineering

10:30 p.m.
Academic Plaza

Texas legislators ponder moving primary election

By April Castro
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Texas' Republican leaders seem to have no qualms about taking Texas out of the "Super Tuesday" primary next year in order to incorporate still-developing changes in congressional lines onto the ballot.

But as options narrow with

each tick of the clock, some Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature say they are not convinced that delaying the state's primary is in the best interest of Texas.

As Republican House and Senate negotiators continue to toil over a district map that

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