

THE BATTALION

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A&M professor indicted for soliciting sex

By Bart Shirley
THE BATTALION

Andrew Spicer, an associate professor at the Institute of Biosciences and Technology at the Texas A&M Health Science Center in Houston, was arrested Oct. 7 in Weatherford, Texas, on charges of soliciting sex from a minor. He was released Wednesday after posting a \$35,000 bail.

Parker County officials said Spicer had driven to Weatherford with the intention of having sexual intercourse with a 13-year-old he had met in a

chat room. However, the person he had spoken to in the chat room was actually a member of a special task force formed to combat this crime.

"We are all trying to catch up and figure out how to deal with (computer crime)," said Jerry Blaisdell, Weatherford police chief. "This is a new challenge."

Spicer is now the subject of an internal investigation within the A&M System as well.

"He's been placed on paid administrative leave



SPICER

pending the outcome of an internal investigation," said Terri Parker, executive director of communications for the A&M Health Science Center.

Parker said the investigation is being conducted by the Office of Internal Audit, and it will be checking Spicer for any record of misconduct. The A&M System is cooperating with the authorities through the Office of General Counsel, he said.

The task force comprises members of the Weatherford Police Department, the Springtown Police Department, the Parker County Sheriff's Office, the Parker County District Attorney's

Office and the Texas Rangers, and is headed by Chief Investigator Larry Fowler.

Jeff Swain, assistant district attorney for Parker County, said the task force's focus is not exclusive to computer crime.

The group also enforces drug laws and rounds up fugitive criminals in Parker County. The task force is needed because criminal activity is mutating to include Internet infractions, and not just those of a sexual nature.

"Computer crimes are something that take a lot of training," Swain said. "There is a whole lot of computer crime."

Land-ho!



JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

The Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley worker Veronica Weaver of North Zulch reads to children during story time Monday afternoon. More than 600 people will volunteer this weekend for the Fall Fest and

Booseum 2003 this Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., which will include pictures with Reveille, live entertainment and activities such as go-cart races, crafts and a Moon bounce.

Women's center forms mentoring program, promotes leadership

By Dan Orth
THE BATTALION

In response to a perceived lack of women in formal leadership positions across campus, Texas A&M's Women's Center has launched the Aggie Women in Leadership program, which pairs female Aggies with women mentors in the community.

When comparing the number of female undergraduate students in formal leadership positions at A&M to other universities, women leaders at A&M are disproportionately low, despite the fact that just less than half of the student body is female.

The leadership program, modeled after a program from the University of North Carolina, focuses on exposing first- and second-year students to women leaders across the University and from the Bryan-College Station community.

This program's administrators said they hope to use these early connections to increase women's involvement in leadership positions across campus.

Brenda Bethman, the pro-

gram's coordinator, said the program aims to help add women leaders to A&M and to solve the problem of the lack of female students in formal leadership positions.

"The goal of AWIL is to foster women's leadership and increase the diversity of women leaders, both on campus and in the world," Bethman said.

One of A&M President Robert M. Gates' priorities for the University is to strengthen leadership programs across campus, and the women's leadership program is a step toward this goal.

Bethman said there was a definite feeling across campus that this was necessary. The program has been well-received by the University and its faculty, she said.

Each student gets a mentor from her academic field of interest in which she meets with one-on-one regularly throughout the year.

In its first year, 125 students have been paired with mentors. Seventeen mentors came from the community and the rest were from A&M, mostly faculty.

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Egyptian twins remain in coma after separation

By Jamie Stengle
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Two-year-old Egyptian twins remained in a drug-induced coma Monday and doctors said they were recovering well from a marathon surgery that separated them over the weekend.

Doctors have stressed that there are still concerns for the boys born joined at the top of their heads: the possibility of stroke, infection and how the wounds will heal, and long-term questions about brain damage.

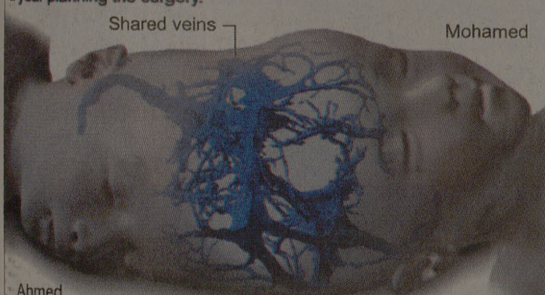
"The longer that you go without the appearance of complications, that's always taken as a positive sign," said Dr. James Thomas, chief of critical care at Children's Medical Center Dallas. "But to let your guard down I think would be a mistake."

The 34-hour surgery to separate Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim began Saturday morning at Children's and ended late Sunday afternoon. They were in adjacent rooms

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Surgery on twin boys

Two-year-old identical twins Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim, who were conjoined at the skull, underwent complicated separation surgery in Dallas with a team of 18 doctors. Doctors spent more than a year planning the surgery.



SOURCE: Associated Press Illustration by Travis Vermilye, Medical Modeling LLC/AP

Tornado Precautions

In the event of a tornado, these safety measures should be taken:

- Leave auditoriums, gyms and other large rooms
- Go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor
- Avoid halls that open to the outside in any direction
- Stay away from glass, both in windows and doors
- Crouch down and make yourself as small a target as possible
- Cover your head with a protective object or your hands

ANDREW BURLESON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: WWW.TORNADOPROJECT.COM

A&M lacks tornado detector despite inclement weather

By Sonia Moghe
THE BATTALION

Though Texas A&M was involved in the development of the Texas Radar Project, the first weather radar network in the nation, there are no sirens in place on campus to warn students of approaching tornadoes.

The University only has a lightning detection system, said Department of Environmental Health and Safety Director Chris Meyer.

"The system that we purchased was for lightning detection," Meyer said. "It was purchased by the recreation sports department to warn people who were out and about."

The University chose a lightning detection and warning system instead of one that warned for tornadoes because of the infrequency of impending

tornadoes in the Bryan-College Station area.

"We've considered (a tornado alert system) on several occasions. I know that the citizens of College Station and Bryan have voted against having one, and the University has chosen not to put it in place," Meyer said. "They need a great deal of maintenance and testing."

Despite the recent tornado that struck a Bryan neighborhood, the University has no plans to purchase a warning system.

"We haven't restarted those discussions (regarding a tornado alert system) in light of recent weather," Meyer said.

The Texas A&M Mobile Severe Storms Data Acquisition team, coordinated in part by Kevin Walter, is trying to convince people otherwise.

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Democrats plan lawsuit to halt new GOP map

By Kelley Shannon
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — They blocked bills at the Capitol, filed a federal lawsuit and bolted secretly from the state to try to kill Republican redistricting. It wasn't enough.

The Democrats lost their six-month legislative battle to stop the redrawing of congressional district lines when the Texas House and Senate approved a map over the weekend that will likely give Republicans a solid majority in the state's 32-member delegation.

But the Democrats aren't finished just yet. They plan to file another lawsuit in hopes of preventing the GOP congressional map from taking effect for the 2004 election. They contend the Republican plan disenfranchises minority and rural voters all over the state.

By splitting Webb County, where Laredo is located, thus cutting from one district tens of

thousands of South Texans living along the Mexico border, the Republicans have turned a previously Hispanic district into a non-minority district, Democrats say.

Democrats also complain about the three-way division of Travis County, home to Austin and the state Capitol, and the destruction of the minority district held by Democratic U.S. Rep. Martin Frost in the Dallas area.

"It's to the courts, now, that we've got to look," said weary Democratic Rep. Jim McReynolds of Lufkin.

But Republicans who pushed for redistricting say they expect the new district boundaries will stand up to a review by the U.S. Justice Department and the courts.

"I, with all confidence, can tell you it not only meets the letter of the law with regard to the Voting Rights Act, but it entirely meets the spirit of the Voting Rights Act," which protects minority interests, said Republican Rep. Phil King of Weatherford.

The map is expected to boost the Texas GOP from its current 15 congressional districts to 21 or 22 seats in the delegation. Democrats want to keep existing district lines and their 17-15 advantage in the congressional delegation.

The new map creates a new Hispanic district and a new black district, said Republican House Speaker Tom Craddick, a key player in defining the final map. But Democrats dispute that. They say the plan results in a net loss of one minority district.

All year long, Democrats pointed to Republican U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay of Sugar Land as the instigator for redistricting and said he mounted a "power grab" in Texas to secure a Republican majority in Congress.

The new Texas Republican seats could solidify the current 229-205 GOP majority in the U.S. House, where there is one independent.

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