

THE BATTALION

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Buenger named head of history department

By Jenna Jones
THE BATTALION

Walter L. Buenger, the recently named head of the Department of History at Texas A&M, said he plans to increase research and improve teaching within the department.

One step Buenger has taken to help the history department accomplish his set goals is his involvement in the Carnegie Initiative for the doctorate program.

The Carnegie Program is a nationwide initiative that encourages graduate programs to rethink the nature and purpose of the Ph.D. education in history, said Jim Rosenheim, director of the Melborn G. Glasscock Center

for Humanities Research and a history professor.

The initiative guides graduate programs to train "stewards of disciplines" and works to improve the kind of training graduate programs give.

"It was Walter, as a department head, who encouraged us to apply," Rosenheim said. "He will also make sure we do it successfully."

A task force within the history department is part of the initiative, Rosenheim said. A&M is one of 10 universities in the nation involved in the Carnegie Initiative.

"It is a great honor and great opportunity for our department," Rosenheim said.

Buenger has been involved with A&M for

more than 20 years. Since he's been at A&M, Buenger has served as a professor, associate graduate adviser, associate department head and interim department head. He also served on the steering committee that established the Faculty Senate at A&M.

"Dr. Buenger is energetic, thoughtful, and dedicated to broadening and developing the department's strengths in every area, in teaching, research and service," Rosenheim said.

Buenger said his desire to maintain the quality of the undergraduate program is strong, and the department has a plan to hire nine non-U.S. native faculty members within the next three years.

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JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Newly appointed History Department Head Walter L. Buenger stands near his lakefront property in Bryan.

RHA condemns hall grode yells

By Carrie Pierce
THE BATTALION

The Residence Hall Association passed a resolution during its General Assembly Wednesday night discouraging offensive yells in residence halls after a group of male residents participated in "grode yells" at Fish Pond following the Pittsburgh football game on Sept. 27.

Robert Garza, RHA vice president of relations, defined "grode yells" as any yells that contain obscenities and are associated with cut and Aggie banfire.

The yells were brought to the attention of RHA executives and the Texas A&M administration by a hall president who heard a group yelling "we rape women" and "we do drugs," Garza said. RHA executives reacted strongly to this account and decided to pass a resolution that, if approved, would state the RHA's position in dealing with grode yells, Garza said.

The resolution states that the RHA does not support and is not affiliated with any

yell that contains any reference to any act of violence or discrimination." This resolution complies with Texas Disorderly Conduct Law, which lists specific offensive disorderly conduct such as a person intentionally using abusive or profane language in a public place. The RHA Offensive Yells resolution, however, has nothing to do with state law, said Jennifer Heiner, RHA vice president of programs.

"This resolution does not stop anything, it just directs residents to proper authority. If a woman walks by a group of guys yelling 'we rape women,' we want her to know that we support her going to authorities," said RHA President Chris Mahaffey.

The resolution went under strong debate at the meeting before passing with a 35-23 vote, with many hall presidents and delegates voicing concerns over passing the resolution.

Michael P. Vargo, president of Aston Hall, said he did not see the relevance of passing

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Punky ballerina



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Four-year-old Mallory Volk of College Station examines pumpkins at the Aggie Habitat for Humanity's pumpkin patch off Rock Prairie and Wellborn roads Wednesday afternoon. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of pumpkins of all sizes will benefit Aggie Habitat.

New Texas law relieves minor offenses from record

Nondisclosure Law

A new Texas law enacted Sept. 1 allows those completing deferred adjudication to clear the conviction from their public record.

- » There is a \$28 filing fee for an order of nondisclosure
- » After a judge has ordered nondisclosure, the defendant may deny the occurrence of the arrest.
- » An arrest covered by a nondisclosure order may still be used against you in federal court
- » Felony offenders must wait 10 years after deferred adjudication to file for nondisclosure

ANDREW BURLISON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: WWW.BENNETTANDBENNETT.COM

By Bart Shirley
THE BATTALION

A new Texas law enacted in September allows those with a deferred adjudication conviction to expunge the conviction from their public record.

Senate Bill 1477, proposed by Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas, amended the Code of Criminal Procedure so minor offenders who received only deferred adjudication and probation are not required to disclose this information to employers, lenders and others who routinely perform background and criminal checks as part of their screening process.

"It's not a conviction, but people are still being punished," said Calvin Bass, press secretary for West.

The new law is specifically designed to help first-and-only-time offenders. Deferred adjudication is typically offered to low-risk offenders who do not pose a threat for repeated infractions. Attorney Lane Thibodeaux, who operates out of Bryan, said he believes the law is almost specifically designed for college students.

"I really believe that this law is a real victory for students," Thibodeaux said. "When I went down (the list) of who would benefit the most, I've got to tell you, it's university students."

He said people often plead to deferred adjudication believing there will be no lasting impact on their records.

"It doesn't go away," Thibodeaux said. "There's always a record of the fact that the person plead guilty."

The new law allows the individual to essentially deny that they were ever convicted. The law is especially germane in College Station, said Rebekah Placke, Class of 1999, who works in Thibodeaux's office. With so many tickets being given to students by the College Station Police Department, many

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Gaza explosion kills 3 Americans in U.S. diplomatic convoy vehicle

By Ibrahim Barzak
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip — A remote-controlled bomb exploded under a U.S. diplomatic convoy Wednesday, ripping apart an armored van and killing three Americans in an unprecedented deadly attack on an official U.S. target.

President Bush blamed Palestinian officials for the attack, which wounded another American. "Palestinian authorities should have acted long ago to fight terror in all its forms," Bush said. The State Department identified the slain Americans as John Branchizio, 36; Mark T. Parson, 31; and John Martin Linde Jr., 30 — all employees of DynCorp, a Virginia-based security firm.

Palestinian officials condemned

the bombing and promised to help the investigation. But they will likely now come under intensified U.S. pressure to take action against militants.

If Palestinian militants were to blame, it could signal a dramatic change in strategy. While targeting Israeli soldiers and civilians for years, the main militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad have not attacked U.S. officials.

Both groups repeated their stance Wednesday that they don't attack Americans, and there was no claim of responsibility for the bombing.

The attack targeted a convoy of U.S. Embassy diplomats heading to Gaza to interview Palestinian candidates for a Fulbright scholarship, Bush said. The three dead and the wounded man were American security personnel working on contract with the embassy, said U.S. ambassador Dan Kurtzer.

The U.S. Embassy advised U.S.

citizens to leave the Gaza Strip after the attack.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat condemned the bombing as an "awful crime." The Palestinian prime minister, Ahmed Qureia, called Secretary of State Colin Powell to express his condolence and promise swift action.

An FBI legal attache is investigating, the FBI said. A team of investigators who photographed the charred van was pelted with rocks by Palestinians and had to cut short the visit.

The Israeli Supreme Court on Wednesday temporarily blocked the expulsions of 15 Palestinians accused of militant activities until the court can hear their appeals, expected within a week.

The Israeli army on Tuesday ordered the 15 Palestinian detainees to

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U.S. diplomatic convoy targeted

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SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

Perry appoints general counsel to A&M regents

(AP) — Gov. Rick Perry has appointed his general counsel to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

Bill Jones, a 1981 Texas A&M graduate, has been general counsel since Perry took office in December 2000, but he'll resign and seek employment in private practice after his appointment takes effect.

"Bill Jones has been a wonderful friend and a trusted advisor," said Perry, also an Aggie. "Bill embodies the character, spirit and service that make Texas A&M special, and he will help provide the leadership to ensure that the university honors its past while preparing for an even brighter future."

Jones is a member of the Texas A&M Former Student's Association Board of Directors and serves on the board of directors for Memorial Hermann Healthcare System Foundation, the largest nonprofit healthcare organization in Texas.

Jones' term as a regent will run through Feb. 1, 2009.