

# THE BATTALION

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## UTSA students hope to form gay fraternity

By Eric Ambroso  
THE BATTALION

A group of students is attempting to establish the first gay fraternity at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Alpha Lambda Tau met with UTSA's Interfraternity Council Oct. 15 to apply for an inclusion of their organization. The group must also receive approval from the national chapter of Alpha Lambda Tau before becoming an official fraternity. If approved, the UTSA chapter would become the third Alpha Lambda Tau chapter, along with chapters at University of Nevada-Las Vegas and Arizona State University.

"This is just another diverse group at

UTSA," said Linn Gosnell, associate director of communications at UTSA. "The response has been fairly welcoming, there has been very little controversy."

The IFC's decision on whether to establish the Alpha Lambda Tau chapter will be based upon the contribution the fraternity can make to the university, Gosnell said. The council will consider the fraternity's organization, community service plans and policies before making a recommendation to university officials, who will make the final decision. The council is expected to vote on the matter no later than Nov. 5.

"There is already diversity on campus in many different forms," Gosnell said. "I think this is an organization that some students will

find appealing."

No students have attempted to organize a gay fraternity or sorority at Texas A&M. The University has historically been labeled as a conservative school, said Justin Joyce, an A&M Interfraternity Council representative.

"The IFC is all for diversity, however, I don't foresee a gay fraternity wanting to organize at A&M," Joyce said. "As long as they followed our policies a gay fraternity could petition for admittance to IFC. We would definitely not discourage that."

Some members of the greek life community at A&M say they feel it would be a struggle for a gay fraternity to become accepted.

"I think that A&M might still be too conserva-

tive for a gay fraternity or sorority," said Matt Lowrance, social chair for Beta Theta Pi. "It would be hard for a gay fraternity to get along with some of the people at Texas A&M."

Whether or not the Alpha Lambda Tau chapter is accepted at UTSA, Joyce said it will prove interesting to see how IFC and Greeks handle the situation. The chapter could become the example to which other universities refer when considering how a gay fraternity would fit, perhaps in their own Greek life system, he said.

"I think it's a good experience for their Interfraternity Council to see how UTSA handles the situation," Joyce said. "It will be a learning experience to see how a gay fraternity assimilates into Greek life at UTSA."

## Conflicting views arise over airstrikes

By Josef Federman  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military and Palestinian witnesses offered conflicting versions Tuesday of an airstrike in Gaza, as thousands of mourners called for revenge for the deaths of seven Palestinians purportedly killed in the attack.

Palestinians said the seven dead were civilians killed by an Israeli missile fired into a crowd at the Nusseirat refugee camp. The army said the majority of those killed were militants, releasing part of a video indicating there was no one on the street near the vehicle when it was hit by two missiles. The Palestinians say a third missile caused the deaths.

Brig. Gen. Ruth Yaron, the army spokeswoman, acknowledged there were civilian casualties, but added that "there is no doubt that the majority of those killed yesterday were terrorists." She held the militants ultimately responsible, saying they were using bystanders as human shields.

The airstrikes revived debate inside Israel over targeted killings in populated areas, and the Palestinian prime minister, in a rare criticism of Washington, complained that the United States was doing nothing to stop what he said are

Israel's "ugly crimes."

In Washington, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli expressed regret over the deaths of civilians and said Israel should consider the consequences of its actions. However, he said, if the Palestinians had stopped militants from firing rockets at Israel, "then perhaps Israel would not feel the need to act unilaterally in this way in its defense."

In Nusseirat, the flag-wrapped bodies of the seven Palestinians were carried on stretchers through the shantytown Tuesday.

"Sharon, wait, wait, you have opened hell's gate," the crowd chanted in a threat of revenge. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Monday that Israel's war on terror would not let up.

Explaining the Nusseirat airstrike, the Israeli military said helicopters fired two missiles at a car carrying Hamas militants, and that two men inside were killed. It said the helicopters had chased the car after the men dropped off two other militants near the border with Israel. Those attackers, who were killed by Israeli ground troops,

interviewed in July and August of 2003 said having family with them is what would make the holidays the most special.

David Gest, owner of the Home Instead Senior Care serving the Bryan-College Station area, said the poll results make sense.

"What do you buy someone who's had 75 or 80 Christmases and birthdays?" Gest said. "In the course of a lifetime, what do you give them anyway? We found what they really want is the presence of their family and to be surrounded by family and friends."

See Airstrikes on page 2

## Smooth sailing



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Junior nuclear engineering major and member of the Texas A&M Sailing Club Adam Hoffman tries to attract new members near Rudder Fountain Tuesday afternoon while standing on top of a sail boat. The TAMU Sailing

Club has more than 60 members and hosts events at Lake Bryan, Lake Somerville and Lake Conroe almost every weekend. Some boats they use include Sunfish, Catamarans and Raner 22's.

## Study: Senior citizens prefer family presence over gifts

By Jenna Jones  
THE BATTALION

Students planning for the holiday season should cross their grandparents off their gift lists because, as the findings of a recent survey illustrate, all most grandparents ask for is quality time.

A holiday survey conducted by the national company Home Instead Senior Care revealed that senior citizens value family time significantly more than presents during the holiday season.

Eighty-four percent of the 500 individuals

interviewed in July and August of 2003 said having family with them is what would make the holidays the most special.

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"What do you buy someone who's had 75 or 80 Christmases and birthdays?" Gest said. "In the course of a lifetime, what do you give them anyway? We found what they really want is the presence of their family and to be surrounded by family and friends."

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## PRESENCE OVER PRESENTS

A recent survey shows older people value family time over presents

- 98.6 percent of senior citizens remembered who they spent the holidays with
- 42.4 percent of seniors said they do not know what their favorite holiday gift was
- 91 percent of seniors plan on spending time with loved ones this season

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SOURCE: HOME INSTEAD SENIOR CARE

## Dems want leniency for airline prankster

By Leslie Miller  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and other Democrats criticized federal authorities for prosecuting a 20-year-old college student who the FBI says acknowledged smuggling box cutters and other banned items onto commercial planes.

Nathaniel Heatwole of Damascus, Md., could spend up to 10 years in prison if convicted of taking a dangerous weapon aboard an aircraft. According to an FBI affidavit, Heatwole told the Transportation Security Administration he carried the items on planes to alert authorities to holes in aviation security.

"I don't think he had criminal intent," said Pelosi, D-Calif. "I think what he was trying to do was to show how exposed we are and what our vulnerability was, and he tried to tell TSA — he gave a trail to them. Maybe he should do some community service."

Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., agreed he should do community service with the TSA. Agency officials should listen to him "so they know exactly how to prevent a terrorist from doing the very same thing," Markey said.

Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., chairman of the House aviation subcom-

mittee, said prosecutors should concentrate on people who actually pose a threat.

"I think he shouldn't be the fall guy, but he did violate the law and there has to be consequences," Mica said.

Under federal sentencing guidelines, even if he's convicted, Heatwole could serve no prison time because he has no prior record and it would be difficult to prove intent to do harm.

According to TSA records, 1,018 people have been arrested since Feb. 19, 2002, for attempting to bring banned items onto planes. The agency doesn't have figures on how many were charged or convicted.

Heatwole hid bags containing the box cutters and other items on two Southwest Airlines planes. He sent the TSA an e-mail saying he had done so, but it was never passed on to the airline or the FBI to investigate. The result was the items stayed on the planes for nearly five weeks.

Many people believe the government's decision to prosecute Heatwole is "more to cover the fact that the government dropped the ball," Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said at a Judiciary Committee hearing. He added that the security breach was "not one of the brightest things we've seen."

## Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, allow spot checks of nuclear program

By Ed Johnson  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran agreed Tuesday to suspend uranium enrichment and give inspectors unrestricted access to its nuclear facilities as demanded by the U.N. watchdog agency, a step that could ease the standoff over fears Iran is seeking to build nuclear weapons.

The announcement came after weeks of pressure on Iran to meet an Oct. 31

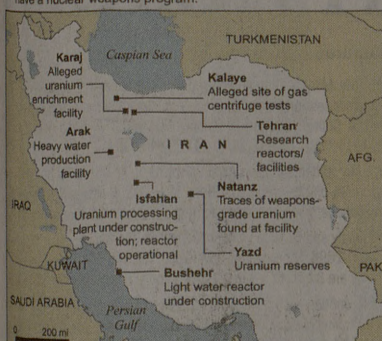
deadline to come clean on its nuclear program, which Washington believes aims to build a nuclear arsenal. The United States — which has led the charge for the U.N. Security Council to take action against Tehran — gave a cautious welcome.

If Iran follows through with its promises, it "would be a positive step in the right direction," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said. "Full compliance by

See Iran on page 2

## Iran says it will suspend enrichment

Iran announced Tuesday that it will suspend uranium enrichment and allow spot checks of its nuclear program, but set no timetable for the steps. The country faces an Oct. 31 deadline which was set by the International Atomic Energy Agency to prove it doesn't have a nuclear weapons program.



SOURCES: International Institute for Strategic Studies; Reuters; Associated Press

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id he once punished his  
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being persecuted  
by authorities  
who do not know  
the truth behind  
the sniper spree.  
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asked the jury to  
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NEWS IN BRIEF  
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