

THE BATTALION

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A Texas A&M Tradition Since 1893

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Page design by Lauren Rouse

Aggie dancer remembered

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Brooke Marie Blevins always had a smile on her face, even at 7 a.m. dance practice every day. However, on the night of Jan. 16, Blevins was killed on the way to Odessa when the truck she was riding in with her boyfriend, Jason Kendrick Lovell, hydroplaned and collided with an 18-wheeler on Highway 36 near Jonesboro. Both died upon impact, according to the Department of Public Safety accident report.

Blevins, a 21-year-old junior marketing major from Nacogdoches, graduated from Nacogdoches High School and was a member of the A&M Dance Team. She was remembered at her funeral service Monday as a beautiful and bubbly girl.



BLEVINS

A&M Dance Team instructor Jennifer Hart said Blevins was a team player and was always encouraging the other team members to perform their best.

"She was the kind of girl you wish you had 20 just like her," Hart said.

"She was a neat, neat girl."

Hart said when Blevins did not make the team the first time she tried out, that she did not get discouraged, and when she made it the next time she was excited.

"You wondered how she did not make the first time," Hart said.

Emily Brock, a senior chemistry major and dance team captain, said Blevins left her mark on everyone.

"We will be thinking of her all the time, regardless," Brock said. "And that will definitely continue the rest of the year."

Hart said Blevins was such a caring person that when Hart's boyfriend was deployed to Iraq, Blevins wrote her a note to tell Hart she was thinking of her.

"She had this way of saying my name when she needed

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A&M prof returns after accident

By Eric Ambrosio
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M mechanical engineering professor Ozden Ochoa has something special to be thankful for this new year: her life.

Ochoa was hit by a drunk driver on Nov. 22 in Dayton, Ohio, while working on a two-year research assignment as a senior scientist with the Wright Patterson Air Force Base Research Laboratory. She left her apartment around 7 p.m. to see Dayton's Harmonic Symphony in concert when the driver of an SUV failed to stop at a T-intersection.

"I do not remember even seeing him," said Ochoa, who said she could not remember anything between the time of her accident and Dec. 2.

In fact, Ochoa was not identified until Nov. 24, when her friends and boyfriend Henry Genezko arrived at the hospital.

"The hardest thing was that they didn't know who I was," Ochoa said. "It's the typical Jane Doe story."

The most serious of Ochoa's injuries were a 14-inch wound on the side of her head and a punctured intestine. Doctors left her body open from Nov. 22-25 to repair damage to the intestine and to prevent infection. To do this, they subjected her to medically-induced paralysis, which left her unable to move for four days.

"It is incredible to me because not knowing anything for 12 days, it's a pure example of the grace of God," Ochoa said. "If I would have known of my condition, I might have had a heart attack on the spot."

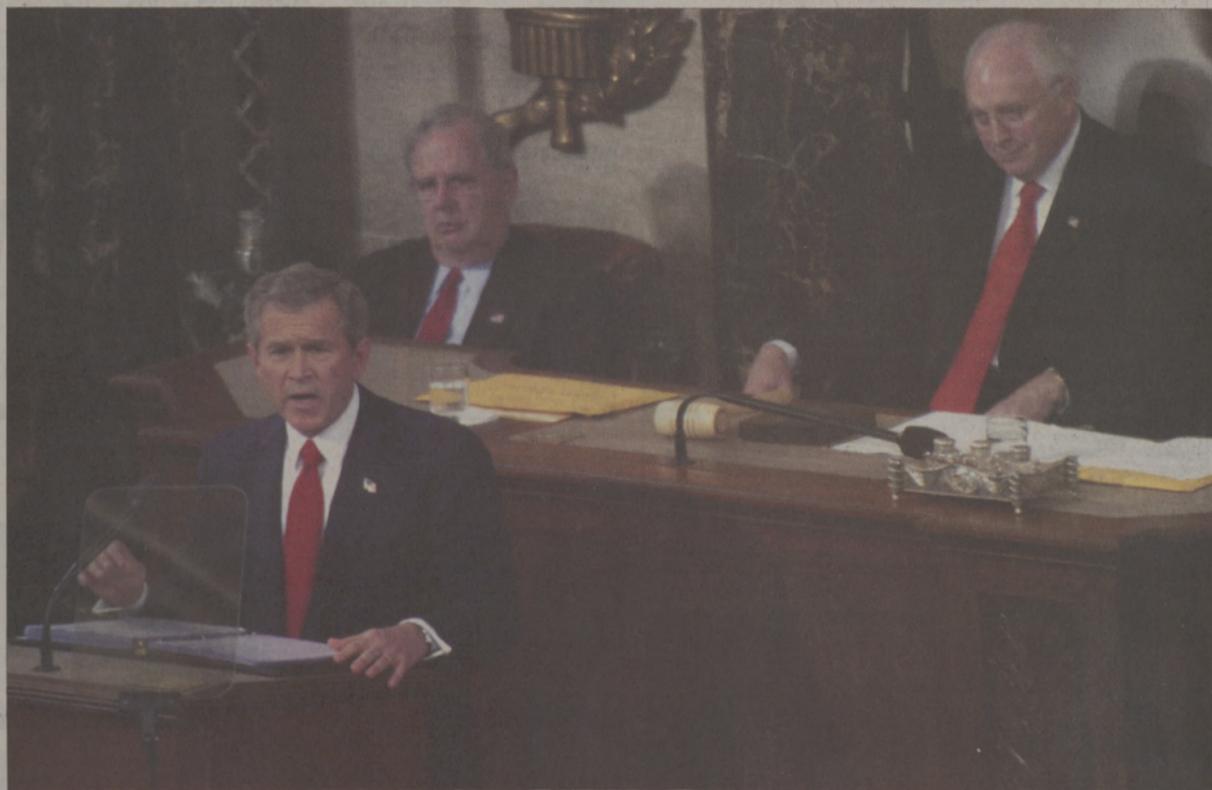
During treatment, Ochoa's heart stopped and one of

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OCHOA

Addressing the nation



GEORGE BRIDGES • KRT CAMPUS

Vice President Dick Cheney, right, presides at the joint session of Congress. President George W. Bush as the president delivers his State of the Union address to the 108th Congress at the U.S. Capitol Tuesday night. Bush appealed to Congress not "to falter and leave our way unfinished."

Bush focuses on re-election, war

By Terrence Hunt
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Bush, wrapping the themes of his re-election campaign in his State of the Union address, asserted Tuesday night that America is strengthening its economy and successfully combatting terrorism. "We have not come all this way — through tragedy and trial and war — only to falter and leave our work unfinished," he said.

In a stay-the-course appeal to a joint session of Congress, Bush said the nation faced important challenges and choices.

He said it was tempting — but wrong — to think the danger of terrorist attacks had passed even though it has been more than two years since America was attacked.

"We have come through recession and terrorist attack and corporate scandals and the uncertainties of war," the president told lawmakers at the opening of a campaign year. "And because you acted to stimulate our economy with tax relief, this economy is strong and

growing stronger."

Democrats were quick to take issue, noting that 2.3 million jobs have been lost under Bush, that deficits are soaring and casualties are climbing in Iraq. Democrats sat silently through most of Bush's 54-minute speech while Republicans applauded repeatedly.

Bush's speech was designed to cast him as the commander in chief, grappling with the nation's problems and above politics while Democratic rivals for his office race around the campaign trail trading charges.

With a \$500 billion budget deficit limiting his options, Bush offered a handful of modest initiatives: a \$23 million pilot plan to encourage student drug testing in public schools and a \$300 million training and placement program to help newly released prisoners find jobs.

He urged major league sports leagues and athletes to end the use of performance-enhancing drugs, to set an example for young people. Their use by even a minority of elite athletes sets a dangerous example for the millions of young Americans, encouraging them to take

dangerous risks with their health and safety, Bush said. He also proposed doubling federal spending on programs to promote sexual abstinence among teenagers.

Touching on a politically sensitive issue, he said he would support a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages if the courts struck down a law saying marriage should be between a man and woman.

The speech fell one day after the one-two finish of Sens. John Kerry and John Edwards in the Iowa caucuses threw the Democrats' race into a wide-open contest going into next week's New Hampshire primary.

"America this evening is a nation called to great responsibilities," the president said. "And we are rising to meet them. ... We have not come all this way — through tragedy and trial and war — only to falter and leave our work unfinished."

"Our greatest responsibility is the active defense of the American people," he said.

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Students more passionate about social issues

By Sonia Moghe
THE BATTALION

President George W. Bush's 54-minute State of the Union address Tuesday received mixed reactions from Texas A&M students and faculty, representing different political facets present at the University.

"(The speech) was decent. I support him on most issues," said Mark McCaig, communications director for the Young Conservatives of Texas (YCT) at A&M. "I don't blindly follow someone just because they're of a certain party."

Bush's speech, which included 70 interruptions from audience applause, addressed issues involv-

ing tax cuts, healthcare, the war in Iraq, redefining marriage and other acts of legislation.

"Terrorist nations declared war on this country," Bush said. "And war is what they got."

That statement alone provided the basis of much of the rift between dissenting student voices.

"I disagree with the whole Iraq situation," said Kristen Welbourn, vice president of the Aggie Democrats. "I don't see how (Bush) can justify over 500 troops dying."

McCaig disagreed, stating that he supported Bush on his actions with the war. Despite their age, McCaig said, college students' political opinions are just as valid as those of other adults.

"For the most part, A&M is

one of the more (politically) involved campuses. But people don't necessarily do a lot of in-depth research on all the issues," McCaig said. "I'm a news and politics junkie. I live on this stuff."

After the speech, students such as McCaig and Welbourn discussed fundamental political differences with their friends through media such as America Online Instant Messenger.

"I really felt that most of (the speech) was propaganda," Welbourn said. "(Bush) brings up these ideas but he doesn't give us any way to make them happen. He doesn't back them up."

Students reacted more passionately to social issues than fiscal ones.

"I don't see how (Bush) is going

to promote the sanctity of marriage," Welbourn said. "It's not his place — it's our own social issue."

McCaig agreed that the issue of redefining marriages was one of controversy, especially on A&M's predominantly conservative campus. The YCT's position on marriage is that it is the union between a man and a woman, McCaig said. He said most political issues rarely had a uniform reaction from any politically affiliated student group.

"Political labels — I don't like them," McCaig said. "I think most people on campus identify with the Republican party, but I think it's dangerous to agree with a party 100 percent."

Former POW: Pride, patriotism greatest assets

By Jason Hanselka
THE BATTALION

Former prisoner of war and retired Air Force Col. Edward L. Hubbard urged listeners Tuesday to go above and beyond what they believe they are capable of doing.

"No matter what you've done in your life, you've only scratched the surface of what you're capable of doing as a human being," he said.

Hubbard spoke to more than 100 people at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum Orientation Theater.

Hubbard's speech was part of the Bush Museum Issues Forum that took place at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Hubbard was a POW in North Vietnam for

six years, seven months and 12 days, from July 20, 1966, to March 4, 1973. He said the first few months were the worst.

"Sit down, face the wall and feel sorry for yourself for the next 150 days," Hubbard said. "That's how the first five months of prison were, and it nearly cost me my life."

Hubbard urged listeners to close their eyes for several minutes as he described his surroundings in prison. Hubbard said he stayed in a six-by-six foot cell and took in only 300 calories a day.

He said the POWs were afraid to talk because they feared they would be killed.

Hubbard said that if people instill small changes in their lives and the lives of others everyday then together everyone can change the world.

Teamwork, he said, is the most underused free resource.

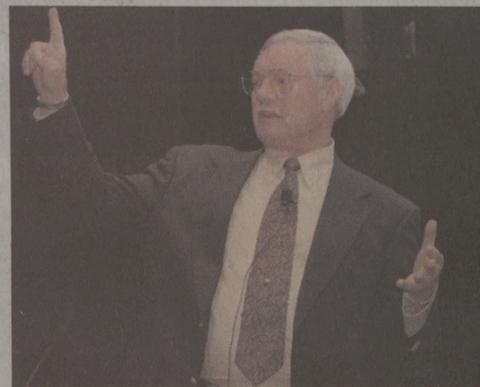
"Competition gives your life meaning and makes you more productive," Hubbard said. "You have no idea of your mental and physical capacity."

Hubbard said that by the end of his imprisonment he could do 300 push-ups nonstop, and he learned a 46-verse poem by tapping in prison code on the walls.

A positive attitude, he said, will help everyone to become leaders in their community.

Hubbard encouraged everyone to stand and sing "God Bless America" as loudly or as softly as they wanted.

"Personal pride and pride for your country," Hubbard said, "are the greatest assets you have."



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Col. Edward L. Hubbard discusses his war experiences as a prisoner of war in Vietnam at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum Orientation Theater Tuesday evening.