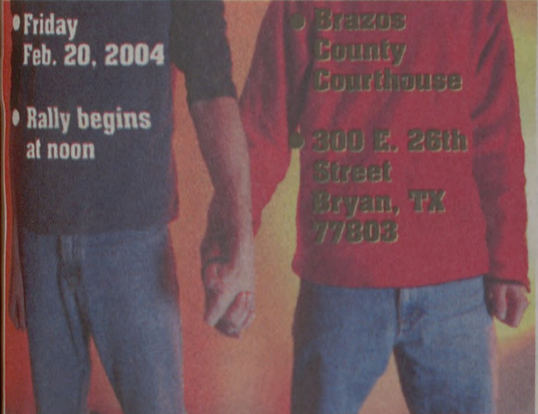




"First comes love, then comes marriage" rally



Friday
Feb. 20, 2004

Brazos
County
Courthouse
300 E. 28th
Street
Bryan, TX
77803

Rally begins
at noon

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
PHOTO BY RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION
SOURCE : KATY STEWART

Locals challenge marriage laws

By Sonia Moghe
THE BATTALION

Local supporters of the legalization of same-sex marriages will gather outside of the Brazos County Courthouse to rally Friday at noon.

The "First comes love, then comes marriage" rally was inspired by two homosexual couples who applied for marriage licenses last week and were rejected.

"We went to apply, but (the courthouse worker) said she couldn't give us a license because of the Texas state law," said Sabrina

Jennings, who along with her partner Lauren Carpenter, was one of the couples that attempted to apply for a marriage license.

The rally will feature speakers including Randall Ellis, executive director for a lesbian and gay rights lobby in Austin, Texas; Texas A&M sociology professor Sarah Gatson; and Nick Stransky, a doctoral student, said Melanie Edwards, a coordinator of the rally.

"We're trying to bring together folks who support equal and civil rights in the area," Edwards said.

Edwards, who is a member of Gay and Gender Representation in Politics, said there

will be a petition at the rally that can be signed in support of same-sex marriages. The petition will be sent to state representatives. Eleven state representatives have joined 112 representatives in signing a bill that will make same-sex marriages illegal and Edwards hopes to change their minds.

"It's empowering to think that (about) 10 percent of the people that are putting this on the agenda are from Texas," Edwards said.

"We want to know why they're supporting

See Marriage on page 2

Cadets visiting A&M from around the U.S.

By Carrie Pierce
THE BATTALION

Seventy-five cadets from all over the country are visiting Texas A&M Thursday through Sunday to participate in the Armed Forces Leadership

Conference. "This is a military leadership symposium for cadets all over the U.S. to hear speakers on current issues as far as military matters are concerned," said Lt. Col. Michael Caudle.

This event is an annual tradition sponsored by the Office of the Commandant and the Corps of Cadets, Caudle said.

Cadets from 17 schools are attending, including Texas Christian University, the Citadel, Mexican Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy and Virginia Military Institute, Caudle said.

The event is also open to A&M cadets. Corps public relations officer Justin

Woods, a senior, said the visiting cadets will tour the campus and attend a military review at Simpson Drill Field put on by the Corps Saturday afternoon and a formal military ball in Sbis Dining Hall Saturday night.

The visiting cadets will also participate in the Navy ROTC obstacle and stamina courses, said Eric Brown, chair of the conference and a senior German major.

The cadets will also attend round tables with guest speakers including Gen. T. Michael Moseley, vice chief of staff for the U.S. Air Force and Class of 1971; University President Robert Gates, former CIA director; and Gen. Montgomery Meigs of the U.S. Army.

Multiple topics will be discussed including the conflict in Iraq, Brown said.

"We pick a topic that is pertinent to us as future leaders in the military," Brown said.

On Thursday afternoon, Moseley gave the

"We pick a topic that is pertinent to us as future leaders in the military."

— Eric Brown
conference chair

See Cadets on page 2

Mt. Everest



Junior bioenvironmental science major Kati Ireland-Stoddard climbs the rock wall in the Student Recreation Center Thursday afternoon. The Rec Center is hosting "Aggie Pump Fest," a national climbing competition, on Saturday, March 6.

ART WRIGHT • THE BATTALION

Cain hall will go from residence hall to office building

By Aerin Toussaint
THE BATTALION

New athletic recruits at Texas A&M can no longer count on living in Wofford Cain Hall next fall because it will no longer be operating as a residence hall, said Bill Perry, chair of the A&M Built Environment Council.

The building will instead house the Student Life office, which currently operates out of the east wing of Sbis Dining Hall. Other offices that currently operate from portable buildings and temporary space may also relocate to Cain Hall in the future, Perry said.

Perry said opening Cain as an office building will create space for about 450 new faculty coming to A&M in the next five years.

This plan to hire new faculty members will help to secure a better faculty-to-student ratio and improve educational quality as part of Vision 2020.

"There is not enough space to do everything we have to do to serve the students academically and in student affairs, so we're revising and realigning our resources," Perry said.

Cain Hall was built in 1972 and is owned and operated by the Athletic Department, not by the Department of Residence Life, which operates all other on-campus residence halls.

"Residence life will offer those that want to stay on campus a place to live," said Ron Sasse, director of residence life. "We will do our best to plug them in somewhere."

Perry said this reshuffling of space was a

chance for the Athletic Department, all branches of academics and the housing department to work together to improve the quality of the University.

"It's a time-honored tradition, so it's kind of a shame to see it shut down," said Frank Messina, a freshman business major and resident of Cain Hall.

Messina said two of his uncles and several of his cousins played football for A&M and lived in Cain Hall.

"It's not going to affect me because I was already planning to move off campus," said Austin Pylant, a freshman cross country runner and agricultural economics major. "It might affect incoming recruits because they thought they would live in this dorm."



SOURCE : TAMU.EDU

Cain Hall will be used next fall as the Student Life office, which is currently operating out of the east wing of Sbis.

Ice breaking ceremony held for skating rink

By Kristin Kemp
THE BATTALION

Ice skating enthusiasts and others in the community gathered at Wolf Pen Creek for the Ice Breaking Ceremony held at the site of the future ice arena Thursday afternoon.

The arena will be profitable to the community, said master of ceremonies Steve Beachy, director of the College Station Parks & Recreation Department.

The \$3.1 million facility will be 40,000 square feet, contains a gallery that seats 500 people and has rooms available for parties and meetings, said Kim Foutz, College Station's economic development director.

Beachy said he is glad to see the construction underway.

Other speakers included College Station Mayor Ron Silvia; John Crompton, a distinguished professor from Texas A&M's Recreation Park and Tourism Sciences department; and A&M Ice Hockey Team Captain Brian

Weylie, a senior biomedical sciences major.

"I enjoyed the ceremony, and I thought it really focused on the impact the rink will have on the community," Weylie said.

The hockey team's current home rink is the Willowbrook Aerodrome in Houston. In September when the Ice Arena is scheduled to open, the team will no longer have to drive to Houston to practice.

Laura Kemp, a junior philosophy major, said she enjoyed ice skating in her hometown in Tennessee before coming to A&M.

"I am so excited about this ice rink," she said.

Karina Handoyo, a member of the Aggie Figure Skating Club and sophomore biomedical sciences major, said her club is looking forward to enjoying the facility.

"I plan to practice at the rink," Handoyo said. "Probably other members of the Aggie Figure Skating Club will too."

West Nile virus rearing its ugly head

By Michael Player
THE BATTALION

The West Nile virus has once again reared its head in Texas. A dead bird found two weeks ago in Harris County tested positive for the deadly virus carried by mosquitos.

Last year in Brazos County, there were five confirmed human cases of West Nile and four cases reported in horses, according to Don Plitt, assistant director for Brazos County Environmental Health Services.

"We want to stress the four Ds of personal protection this year once again," Plitt said.

The four actions, Plitt said, that will reduce human contraction of the virus are using mosquito repellent that contains Deet, limiting outdoor activity to the daylight hours, draining standing water on property and dressing in long sleeves when outdoors.

Plitt said the county uses portable mosquito foggers and "dunks," larvicidal tablets placed in bodies of standing water.

"We received a lot of support from the public last year, and the reporting of dead birds was very helpful to us," Plitt said. "In the areas of the confirmed cases we were able to aggressively treat those areas, and we think that reduced much of the risk."

Plitt said students should report dead birds on campus to help authorities chart high risk areas.

"Weather is a major reason why we have seen a continuation of the virus," said Jim Olsen, professor of entomology at Texas A&M. "Because the weather on the Texas coast is more temperate, there has not been a mosquito die-off therefore the virus is still able to use the mosquito as a vector."

WEST NILE VIRUS	
The 4 precautionary Ds	
DUSK/DAWN	Stay inside at dusk and dawn
DRESS	Dress in long sleeves and pants
DEET	Use a repellent with the chemical DEET
DRAIN	Drain standing water from property

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE : BRAZOS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Last year, Olsen said, he monitored 60 mosquito traps in and around the Bryan-College Station area, and 13 traps caught mosquitos that tested positive for West Nile.

He said he plans to start star testing immediately for the virus this year.

"We will be employing the same tactics as we did last year, find and attack," Olsen said. "We (will) really concentrate our efforts on places that positive mosquitos were found."

The Brazos County Health Department was inundated with calls last summer during the height of the West Nile scare, said Julie Anderson, director of Environmental Health Services Division of the Brazos County Health Department.

"We had a high call volume," Anderson said. "But that is to be expected when you have a virus as dangerous as this, and we are happy to be of help to the public."

Anderson said the health department is planning how it will fight the virus and are organizing public meetings.



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