



**Sports:**  
First win slips away as Aggies lose to Baylor. **Page 1B**

## 'The Passion of The Christ'

### Students react to bloody film

By Brad Bennett  
THE BATTALION

Despite being one of the bloodiest films of the year, moviegoers at Cinemark Hollywood U.S.A. said they were pleased with the "The Passion of The Christ" and stayed in their seats through the credits.

"Passion" opened Wednesday and sold out all nine shows.

"No one wanted to get up," said College Station resident Andrew Lowry.

Theater officials were unable to comment on ticket sales, regarding company policy, but allowed reporters into the complex to speak to patrons.

Jessica Bilhartz, a senior history major, said it was one of the most gruesome and moving films she has ever seen.

"I have never seen that much blood in a movie in my life," Bilhartz said. "I didn't think the human body had that much blood."

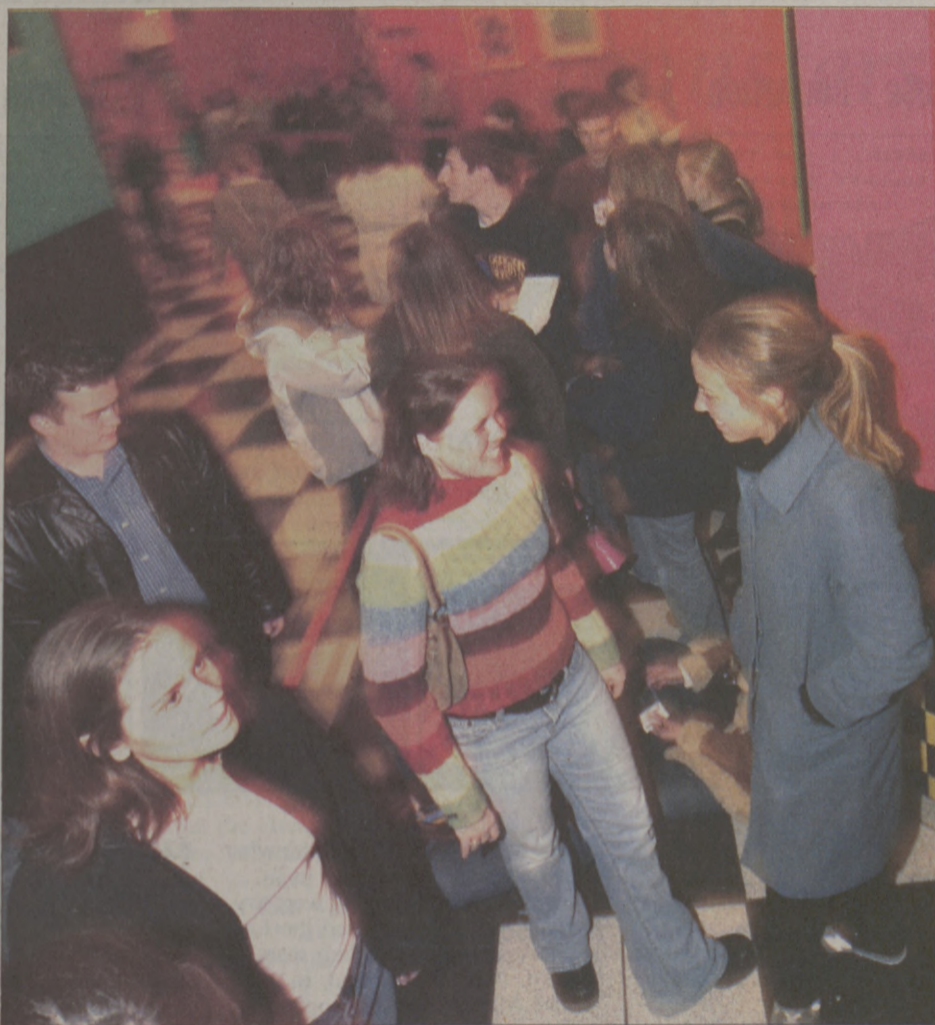
People began to line up inside the theater two hours early for the sold out shows.

Shayna Whiteside, a junior speech communication major, said she bought 14 tickets two weeks ago to ensure she and all her friends could see the movie.

Whitney Andrews, a junior English major, said she was there with 34 people, including Whiteside and her 13 friends.

Andrews said she had mixed feelings

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JOSHUA L. HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Movie patrons await the 10:30 p.m. opening day showing of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of The Christ" at the theater in College Station Wednesday night. The 233 seats at screen nine, one of the two screens showing the movie, sold out yesterday. Lines for the 10:30 showing started two hours before.

### Moviegoers flock to see controversial movie

By Bobby Ross Jr.  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PLANO, Texas — The people streaming out of the movie theater looked as if they'd just attended a wake — and many said they felt as if they had.

Red eyes and muffled crying were common as Christians and the merely curious flocked to theaters nationwide for the Ash Wednesday opening of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of The Christ."

"It's a little bit more brutal than you would think," said a sobbing Kim Galbreath, 29, as she left a theater in this Dallas suburb. "I mean, there were times when you felt like it was too much. But I dare anybody not to believe after watching it."

In Los Angeles, Joseph Camerieri said Gibson's much hyped epic about the torture and Crucifixion of Jesus left him shocked and physically weak.

"I think if you're a Christian, it will increase your faith tenfold in what Christ has done for you," the 39-year-old paralegal student said after a midnight showing. "If you're not a Christian, you'll probably treat

others with more love."

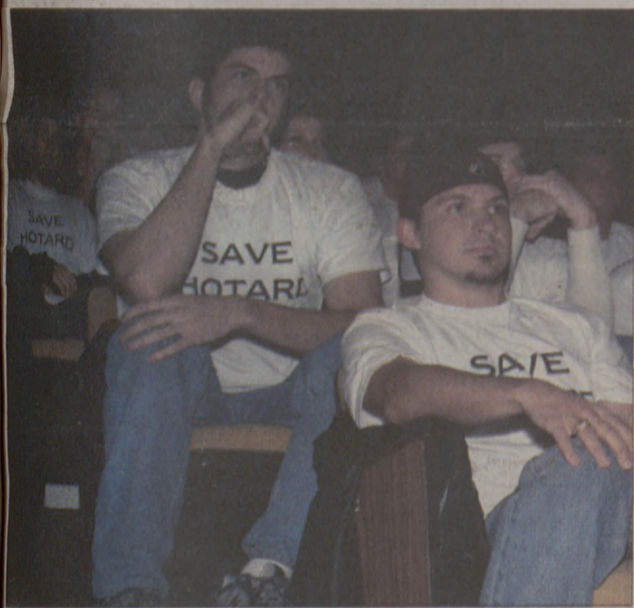
"The Passion" opened in more than 3,000 theaters — an unusually large release for a religious film with English subtitles to translate the Latin and Aramaic its characters speak.

Directed, produced and co-written by Gibson, the film has received mixed reviews from critics. Some have praised Gibson's commitment to his subject: The Oscar-winning "Braveheart" director says the movie is both an attempt to render the Gospels faithfully and a personal vision. Others see it as excessively bloody, obsessed with cruelty and unfair in its portrayal of Jews.

About 50 people in the central Pennsylvania community of Bellefonte attended a showing after midnight. Viewers groaned as Jesus was nailed to the cross, and soft cries could be heard during more than an hour of Jesus' torture, Crucifixion and death. In the end, as Jesus rises from the grave, some in the audience quietly celebrated.

"To me, that was the important part," said Aaron Tucker, an English major at Penn State.

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EVAN O'CONNELL • THE BATTALION

Senior accounting major Guy Faith Jr. (right) and sophomore electrical engineering major Andrew Arnold listen to Dr. Terry lecture about plans to convert Hotard Hall into office space Wednesday afternoon in Rudder Theater.

## Decision to convert Hotard final

By Sonia Moghe  
THE BATTALION

Bill Perry, vice provost for Texas A&M, said in the Council for Built Environment's heated forum Wednesday, that the decision to turn Hotard residence hall into office space for 447 new faculty and staff was final.

"It was not an easy decision," Perry said. "(The council) was aware that every residence hall gives something to the University."

The council's decision to convert Hotard into office space upset its residents, who demanded to know why students weren't involved in the decision making process and why Corps dorms were not considered for use, said Kurt Fisher, a senior poultry science major and former Hotard resident.

"There are as many empty rooms on (the Corps') side of campus as there are on (Hotard's) side," Fisher said. "Their numbers

have been decreasing. Some of the best guys at A&M are in the Corps; they really respect tradition. I'm just saying that the CBE made this decision very quick and didn't cover their tracks well."

A lack of communication was deemed the reason why students weren't informed of the Hotard decision until February. Perry said Student Body President Matt Josefy will aid in selecting a student representative to better future relations between the student body and the council.

"The biggest thing is this is a way for SGA to better represent in decisions of this nature," Josefy said.

Josefy said the responsibility is like any of the 60 appointments he makes a year. Anyone interested is asked to send Josefy an e-mail.

"I think (having a student on the council) is great so long as the student has real influ-

ence," Fisher said.

Perry said the decision to convert existing buildings into office space, such as Cain Hall and Hotard Hall, instead of building new ones was influenced by the high cost of building on campus. He also said the administration was attempting to keep building "infield" so that the campus wouldn't become too spread out.

The academic corridor is one of the many goals of the CBE's implementation of its master plan, and would involve having buildings frequently used by students closer together.

"I like the idea of the academic corridor," Fisher said.

Perry said that the University is already short 350,000 square feet, even before the new faculty and staff start coming to campus next year.

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## Settlement reached in voting rights case

HOUSTON (AP) — As part of a settlement of a federal lawsuit filed by a college NAACP chapter seeking voting rights, the Waller County district attorney apologized for his "threatening" behavior toward Prairie View A&M students.

U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal approved the settlement Tuesday night, and it was filed Wednesday in federal court in Houston.

"I want the PVAMU community to know that I apologize, and I welcome them as participants in the democratic institutions in Waller County," District Attorney Oliver Kitzman said.

He said he never intended to be threatening but later realized that students perceived his actions that way, given the "historical context in which they occurred."

In November, Kitzman advised the county's election administrator, Lela Loewe, that Prairie View students were not automatically eligible to vote in county elections because of state-mandated residency standards.

The district attorney, who is

white, was accused of having racial and political motives in challenging the large voting bloc that the mostly black 5,000-student Prairie View campus represents.

It triggered a protest march, complaints to state and federal officials and a civil rights investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Loewe's office ignored Kitzman's letter, which was rebutted by the Texas governor, secretary of state and attorney general.

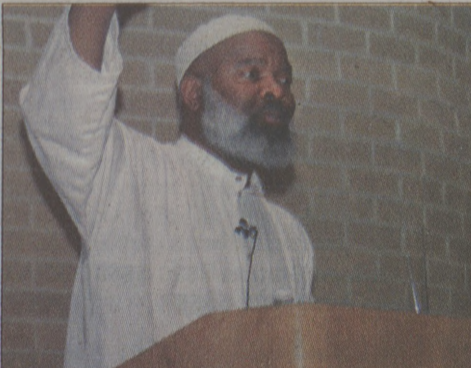
Jonah Goldman, an attorney representing the students, said the settlement "goes a long way to addressing our clients' concerns."

Students wanted Kitzman barred from interfering with student voter registration and election participation.

As part of the settlement, Kitzman will create an internship in his office for a Prairie View student and will meet monthly with a liaison named by the school's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter. He also said he would meet with students during the next two weeks.

## Muslim leader speaks about Malcolm X

By Rhiannon Meyers  
THE BATTALION



EVAN O'CONNELL • THE BATTALION

Imam Siraj Wahhaj speaks on "Struggling for Truth and Justice: the Legacy of Malcolm X" to the Muslim Students Association Wednesday night.

Muslim leader Imam Siraj Wahhaj said Wednesday that we can learn to be a better society by studying the legacy of the militant, black civil rights leader Malcolm X, who was assassinated in 1965 at age 40.

"I think it is wrong to study a man just to glorify him," Wahhaj said. "We need to use the legacy of Malcolm to make our society better."

Wahhaj, a founder of Masjid Taqwa in Brooklyn and former minister of the Nation of Islam, told an audience of about 250 that although Malcolm X had a terrible past, he was able to turn his life around and leave

behind a legacy of unity.

"The legacy of Malcolm is the brotherhood of mankind, for sure," Wahhaj said.

Wahhaj was invited by the Muslim Student Association to give his speech "Struggling for Truth and Justice: The Legacy of Malcolm X" in honor of Black History Month. Wahhaj said Malcolm XI was a revolutionary black leader who had a tremendous love for black people worldwide.

"Malcolm X was articulate, charismatic, bold and courageous," Wahhaj said. "Malcolm was not just concerned about black people, he was concerned about the

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## Officer produces DUI video

By Michael Player  
THE BATTALION

A former police officer from Tennessee has produced a controversial video to show drivers the procedures used by police departments to prosecute people they accuse of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Tim Stone was a municipal police officer in Tennessee for seven years and said he has extensive knowledge of the police's driving under the influence enforcement procedures. Stone said he wants to enlighten people on how the law works so they can be prepared and not incriminate themselves.

"Most cops prey upon people's ignorance of the law," he said.

Stone said he thinks that just because a person has a driver's license does not mean it gives the police consent to draw a blood sample or conduct a breath test.

"I think that the implied consent law is unconstitutional," he said. "They should not force you by coercion."

Stone said the video shows drivers what happens if they do certain things, such as taking a breathalyzer test, by showing different scenarios.

"The main thing to remember is not to do anything to incriminate yourself," Stone said.

Currently in the state of Texas, the maximum

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### DUI / DWI facts

• 1,669 citations issued in 2003 by CSPD that involved alcohol

• 74 alcohol-related accidents in College Station in 2003

• UPD reported 70 DWI arrests in 2003



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