



SHARON AESBACH • THE BATTALION

Volunteers douse a fire Wednesday morning at the Texas Engineering Extension Service's fire fields for the spring training convention.

Attendance for the convention includes 330 volunteer firefighters who will learn methods for extinguishing fires.

## Volunteer firefighters learn the ropes at A&M

By Kyle Ross  
THE BATTALION

With the sound of a beeping pager, suddenly their lives change.

They are volunteer firefighters, ordinary individuals who race into burning infernos to save people they may have never even met.

This week, many of these volunteer firefighters, as well as their full-time counterparts, are on the Texas A&M campus for the 16th annual spring fire training school.

All week, men and women from Texas, to the United Kingdom are reporting to the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) training fields, all trying to learn to save lives.

Deloss Edwards, a training instructor, said he has seen the fire training school grow over the years to what it is today.

"I've been training guys here for 28 years, but I'm just a rookie," Edwards said. "There's a couple guys that have been here a year or two more than me."

Edwards said in the early years he would arrive a few days before classes and help paint the shelters, mow the grass and set out the hoses. He said the school has changed drastically since then.

The 120-acre training site now boasts 132 life-size training props, various covered outdoor classrooms and a \$70 million "disaster city" complex.

From a derailed gas tanker to a

crashed helicopter and a burning chemical plant, the students are given hands-on training.

"Coming to this school has been an asset to me," said Donny Williams, a volunteer firefighter from Navasota. "We do some amount of training in my hometown, but we can't actually go out and practice first hand in the field like over here. It's given me great confidence in what I do."

Vernon Rerich, a volunteer firefighter from Weimar, Texas, said the world is consistently changing and one must be prepared.

"We just put out an enormous fire on this building," Rerich said, "and I think after lunch there's a pretty big chemical fire we are going to get after."

With the world changing like it is, you just never know what might happen, and I can't get this kind of training anywhere else."

Casey Flinn, from the Texas Forest Service, said financial obstacles stood in the way of volunteers until 2001, when the Texas Forest Service formed a partnership with TEEX that would provide tuition grants to people like Williams and Rerich.

"Volunteers were a bit frowned upon in the past (by the paid municipal firefighters) because of their lack of training," Flinn said. "But now with these grants they're all being

trained together. We're getting more of an equality among the fighters."

This spring, through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program, 130 firefighters were given full tuition grants. Last summer 500 trainees were given paid tuitions, and the number of grants is estimated to rise for the upcoming summer sessions.

In addition to training, the Texas Forest Service has also supplied almost \$25 million worth of equipment to volunteer fire departments, Flinn said.

"The most important thing is making sure that the volunteers are trained to use the equipment," Flinn said. "We can supply all the equipment in the

world, but if they don't know how to use it then it's worthless."

The trainees take part in various demonstrations on the correct ways of handling gear such as hoses, nozzles and air packs. They learn different pump operations, how to climb an assortment of ladders and are even given lectures on the chemical makeup of fire itself, said Jason Cook, communications director for TEEX.

"Tomorrow my group is going to be doing some hands-on work with putting out fires," Williams said. "That's the fun stuff."

**"I can't get this kind of training anywhere else."**

— Vernon Rerich  
Volunteer firefighter

## Virus hits University computer system

By Melissa Sullivan  
THE BATTALION

A new computer virus wormed its way into the Texas A&M computer system Tuesday morning, causing users to open what looks like legitimate e-mail attachments.

The virus, dubbed Beagle.J or Bagle.k, is spread through a zip attachment that requires a password to open, said Jeff McCabe, associate director of A&M's Computer Information Services.

"One main thing it does is drags any e-mail address and replicates it to other people you have e-mail addresses for," he said.

David Sustaita, a senior associate for information technology issues management, said the pass-

word is given in the body of the e-mail and is usually numerical.

Sustaita said the difference between the Beagle virus and the MyDoom virus, which spread around campus in January, is that the Beagle virus is more aggressive in urging someone to open the attachment.

"The MyDoom virus tries to trick someone into opening an infected attachment, but in a less persuasive way," Sustaita said.

The new variant to the Beagle virus is that its elaborate and attempts to lure someone into performing an action, and if it is not done, it threatens to close the e-mail account, Sustaita said.

The subject lines of infected e-mails will try

to fool the receiver into thinking the e-mail is a legitimate message. The body of the message may also include "please read the attached for further details."

**BATT LINKS**  
more info @  
[www.thebatt.com](http://www.thebatt.com)

Several departments may have been hit with the virus, causing e-mails to be sent out without their knowledge.

Rob Stewart, promotions and game operations coordinator for the Athletic Department at A&M, sent out a campus-wide e-mail Wednesday stating that e-mails sent from his mailbox to all students with sports passes did not intentionally go out.

"I assure you that these messages did not

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### Beagle.J VIRUS

Also known as the "Beagle.K," "Bagle.j" and "Bagle.k" virus. It began infecting TAMU computers Tuesday morning.

- Seeks e-mail addresses on one's computer and uses own e-mail client to send itself to other computers
- Subject line may vary, but it will attempt to fool the receiver into believing that the e-mail is legitimate
- Body of message may include "please read the attached for further details"

Visit <http://problem.tamu.edu> for status updates

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

SOURCE: DAVID SUSTAITA, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ISSUES MANAGEMENT

## Computer access fee may increase

By Natalie Younts  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M System Board of Regents will consider a proposed \$3.25 per semester credit hour increase in the student Computer Access/Instructional Technology fee (CA/IT) during its meeting March 25 and 26.

The fee for a student taking 12 credit hours would increase \$39 per semester.

The CA/IT fee pays for equipment and services for student access to computing, networking and instructional technology. It also buys classroom instructional multimedia equipment and supports faculty in using instructional technology.

The fee increase would generate an estimated \$3.7 million per year in additional income, according to the proposal by Pierce Cantrell, A&M associate provost for information technology. The proposal said \$2.3

million per year would be used to replace the Student Information Management System (SIMS).

Cantrell said SIMS is the key to running the University. SIMS incorporates admissions, registration, financial aid and other student records.

Cantrell said A&M has used the old system since 1985 and the outdated technology needs to be replaced. The University has saved 40 percent to 50 percent of the estimated total cost for a new system in the past five to six years.

"SIMS is really not in any imminent danger, but it's going to take us three years to replace it from the day we start," he said. "We are worried that five years from now SIMS will not be viable."

Scott Smith, a student senator and senior

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## ADEP urges caution during spring break

By James Twine  
THE BATTALION

Stephanie Miller, a sophomore human resources major, is planning to go to South Padre Island for spring break.

Miller and her friends are preparing for a fun-filled week of relaxing in the sun, going to parties and enjoying the night life.

While they look forward to having fun, Miller said that she and her friends realize they need to be cautious of the potential dangers they face while in Padre.

"When we go out anywhere we always look out for one another," Miller said. "And while in Padre we will especially make an effort to stay together, so nothing bad might happen."

The Alcohol and Drug Education Program (ADEP) at Texas A&M will promote safety and alcohol awareness during its spring break safety informational with the "Watch Your Booty" events Thursday through Tuesday at locations around campus.

"We want everyone to look out for their personal safety," said Jennifer Ford, program-

ming coordinator of ADEP.

Tonight the "Watch Your Booty" events kick off at the Student Recreation Center at 9 with information available on spring break safety, prize giveaways and free pizza.

"We want students to be aware of their surroundings, protecting themselves and their personal belongings while having fun and relaxing on their week off," Ford said.

Rodney Shields, vice president of collegesafe.com, warns students about the repercussions of their actions or accidents that may occur while on spring break.

Drinking excessively, getting robbed, date rape drugs, sexual assault, violence, a hospital visit, jail time in a foreign country and even death are all common problems during spring break, Shields said.

"There is a perception that what happens at spring break stays at spring break, and that is just not true," Shields said.

Shields said there is always a risk of physical harm or property theft while trying to

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## Aggie represents region for fraternities

By Carrie Pierce  
THE BATTALION

An Aggie was elected as National Southern Region Director of the Mid-American Greek Council Association (MGCA) for the first time at its conference in Chicago.

Grant Soderberg, a sophomore business administration major and a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon, will represent 150 schools in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

MGCA oversees all Greek systems in the

nation, said Julian Methony, a senior industrial distribution major and Interfraternity Council president.

"It represents schools from Michigan to Texas to Kansas to North Carolina," Methony said.

To be elected this position, Soderberg said he had to be on the Interfraternity Council and a good candidate.

Soderberg said he ran for this position because he saw it as an opportunity to meet new people, participate in activities he wouldn't normally get to do and to represent Texas

A&M Greeks.

"I felt that it would help bring A&M's Greek system to the forefront of the national stage," Soderberg said. "It helps us to increase our acknowledgement of Greek systems."

The position will make Soderberg the face and communicator of Greek systems for the region, he said.

A&M, which is usually not thought of as a "Greek school," could now attract students that usually seek out those types of

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