



Hildebrand's financial report questioned

By Kyle Ross
THE BATTALION

Aaron Kinsey, a senior accounting major, has accused the Election Commission of improperly disclosing elected president Jack Hildebrand's budget of campaign expenses.

At a hearing Monday night, Jonathan Platt, a member of McAdams' campaign staff, said Hildebrand failed to disclose shipping and handling expenses and inappropriately disclosed the expenses of stickers and wristbands used.

During his campaign, Hildebrand used wristbands and stickers to advertise his candidacy and political stances. The items were purchased at bulk prices.

According to campaign financial reports, Hildebrand bought 1,000 wristbands for 22 cents apiece and 1,000 stickers for 6.89 cents apiece from Scarborough Specialties Inc, based in Lubbock, Texas.

However, Hildebrand did not use all of the wristbands or stickers, Platt said. Only 750 of the wristbands were used and only 704 of the stickers were used. When the items were dispensed, Hildebrand requested that they be prorated to the amount actually used.

Platt said prorating the unused items allowed Hildebrand to use the 1,000 sticker and wristband amounts, but not have to account for them.

"If he used them or not he, still needs to give record for the entire expense,"

Platt said. "If he had chosen to buy only 500 wristbands they would have cost 26 cents per wristband, and if he had chosen to order only 500 stickers it would have cost 11.04 cents per sticker. For the amount Jack actually used and at that rate the wristbands and stickers would have cost, it would have caused him to be \$51.31 over budget."

Hildebrand also assumed he didn't have to pay for the shipping and handling expenses when he bought the wristbands and stickers from Scarborough Specialties, Platt said.

"If he had to include shipping and handling he would have gone over the \$1,000 budget limit even without the prorating," Platt said.

This year, the Election Commission allowed candidates to prorate the items they used during their campaigning, said Brittany Golden, a sophomore business administration major and finance chair of Election Commission.

"It was an option given by me, and I

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A country welcome



ERIC DRAPER • KRT

President George W. Bush, left, escorts Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak after he arrived at Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas Monday, April 12 to talk about Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan for a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

A&M's top lawman, Wiatt, steps down

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

In his more than 50 years in law enforcement, Bob Wiatt has been shot, stabbed and held hostage, but he said that all-in-all he is thankful to still be alive.

After 21 years as director of the University Police Department, Wiatt will step down to travel with his wife Ann and spend more time with his grandchildren.

"I am thankful that I am in reasonably good health and so blessed to have been here," he said.

Wiatt said his ailing health over the past two years has forced him to work half days, and it is time to let someone else handle the job.

"I can't chase or shoot anybody anymore, so I figure I might as well let some younger people have a shot at it," he said.

Wiatt said he had many memories while working at A&M, but the 1999 Aggie Bonfire Collapse is the worst one.

Wiatt said he is proud that Texas A&M has been ranked the least violent campus in the nation.

Wiatt said he remembers two cases occurring after 1995 involving



WIATT

the rape of two women, but A&M is now the most secure and safe campus in the country.

Matt Josefy, student body president and a senior accounting major,

said most students take for granted that A&M is one of the safest campuses in the nation and that Wiatt is responsible for it.

"Most students don't know that (Wiatt) is working on their behalf," Josefy said.

Wiatt began his career in 1951 as an FBI agent serving in places such as Atlanta, New York, Puerto Rico and Houston, before transferring to Bryan in 1958. He served two years as chief investigator for the Brazos County District Office in Bryan before coming to A&M.

Wiatt received the spotlight for his role in a 1974 prison siege at Huntsville, where three convicts held 16 people hostage for 11-and-a-half days, resulting in a gunfight. Wiatt said he killed one of the

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A&M honored as School of the Year at RHA conference

By Carrie Pierce
THE BATTALION

The Residence Hall Association has taken many strides in different areas, dubbing this year one of its most successful years in its history at Texas A&M, said Chris Mahaffey, RHA president and senior civil engineering major.

Last month, the RHA received several honors at the Texas Residence Hall Association Annual Conference held at A&M University-Kingsville.

At the conference, all the RHAs in the state came together to share ideas and programs and compete for various awards, Mahaffey said.

This year, A&M's RHA, the largest RHA in the state, received awards for School of the Year, Most Philanthropic and Best Roll Call, as well as numerous individual member awards, Mahaffey said.

"The School of the Year award is the most prestigious award at the conference," said Chanille Dunbar, RHA national communications coordinator and sophomore biomedical sciences major.

To receive the School of the Year Award, the RHA had to compose a 30-page bid paper detailing why it was qualified to receive the award, Mahaffey said.

"A major determinant was focusing our attention and energy on individual halls," Mahaffey said.

The RHA's involvement with on-campus residence halls has played an important role with the bid, said sophomore journalism major Emily Allen, director of public relations for RHA.

The RHA received the Most Philanthropic award for having the

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RHA Awards
Texas A&M's RHA was recognized for its various achievements during the 2003-2004 school year at the Texas Residence Hall Association conference last month.

- School of the Year
- Most Philanthropic School
- Best Roll Call
- Won five of the top 10 program awards



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: CHRIS MAHAFFEY, RHA PRESIDENT

FULL SPEED AHEAD

A \$284 billion transportation bill was recently approved by the U.S. House of Representatives that includes building a high speed rail from Killeen to Houston.

- Trains could be set 20 feet above the ground.
- Trains could run between 300 and 400 miles per hour.
- The rail line would connect the south-central corridor, which connects San Antonio, Austin and Dallas, to the Gulf Coast Corridor, which runs from Houston through New Orleans and Mobile, Ala.

ANDREW BURLISON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: TEXAS HIGH SPEED RAIL CORPORATION

High-speed rail expected in approximately 20 years

By Jason Hanselka
THE BATTALION

The ability to go from College Station to Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport in less than 20 minutes could be a reality with a high-speed rail project that is expected to come through the area in about 20 years.

A \$284 billion transportation bill, recently approved by the U.S. House of Representatives, includes a proposal to study the feasibility of building a high speed rail from Killeen to Houston that would run through the Bryan-College Station area.

Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, chairman of the Texas High-Speed Rail and Transportation Corporation (THSRCTC), said the rail line would connect the south-central corridor, which connects San Antonio, Austin and

Dallas, to the gulf coast corridor that runs from Houston through New Orleans and Mobile, Ala.

"This would be an opportunity for people in Houston to have better access to the research facilities at the George Bush School and Texas A&M," Eckels said.

Eckels said people at A&M, in turn, could have better access to the business and academic environment in Houston.

Ernie Wentreck, THSRCTC board member and Bryan city councilman, said the primary benefit will be mobility for the community to quickly travel to Dallas, San Antonio or Houston.

"This would also benefit Texas A&M in that more students could reside outside of Brazos County and attend the University,"

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Universe expansion is accelerating, astronomer says

By Rhiannon Meyers
THE BATTALION

Robert Kirshner, president of the American Astronomical Society, said Monday afternoon that the expansion of the universe is accelerating over time.

A group of 150 scientists, professors and students packed into a small room in Rudder Tower to listen to Kirshner's speech, "Supernovae and the New Cosmology." The audience chuckled as Kirshner, a world renowned astronomer and author of "The Extravagant Universe," cracked jokes and featured handmade drawings in his presentation to explain his research.

Kirshner said that through the observation of supernovae, or exploding stars, it has been possible to determine that the expansion is speeding up. Kirshner said this evidence refutes the early scientific opinion that the universe was static.

Kirshner said he hopes to revive Albert Einstein's idea of a cosmological constant, or a term in his theory of general relativity associated with empty space which, over time, has been dubbed Einstein's "greatest blunder."

"I call it the blunder undone," Kirshner said. "I want to dive into Einstein's dumpster, pick up his crumpled idea, smooth it out and make it new again. My proposal is to fix his equation by sticking the cosmological constant back in."

Kirshner also refuted the early idea that the universe was mostly made up of matter, showing research that the universe is comprised of 73 percent dark energy, 23 percent cold dark matter and 4 percent atoms. Kirshner said this large percent of dark energy is the main reason that the expansion of the universe is accelerating.

"This is not your father's universe," Kirshner said. "This is a very odd picture of



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Robert P. Kirshner from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics spoke about cosmology Monday afternoon in Rudder.

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