



## Bonfire Coalition schools the Class of 2008

By Erin Price  
THE BATTALION

Rachel Wright was in the eighth grade when Bonfire collapsed on Nov. 18, 1999 and remembers hearing about it on the news. She said she had no idea what Bonfire was really about, but now that she has a brand new outlook on the Aggie Spirit.

Wright, an incoming freshman biomedical sciences major, was one of the many new students who stopped at a table set up by the Bonfire Coalition for Students at her New Student Conference this summer.

Roger Abshire, BCS president and senior political science major, said many new students, like Wright, do not know what Bonfire is really about and that he hopes to educate them on the tradition.

BCS is a University recognized organization whose goals include exemplifying the Bonfire spirit and ensuring that safety is the primary concern of all Aggies with regard to the return of Bonfire, according to the organization.

"We want the new students to know as much as they can about Bonfire," Abshire said. "The more they know, the better educated their decisions will be in the future regarding Bonfire."

Laura Laubach, public relations coordinator for BCS and a senior English major, said there has

been enormous support from new, current and former students for the program.

"We have had people tell us how glad they are that there are students who still want Bonfire back on campus," Laubach said. "We basically want the new students to know who we are and what we do."

Laubach said there is a large number of people, including current students, who have never heard of Bonfire.

"Most of those who don't know about Bonfire are from out of state or out of the country," Laubach said. "That is why it is important that we are out there."

Jack Hildebrand, student body president and

senior accounting major, said his class never witnessed a Bonfire and that it is important to educate students on the tradition.

"(BCS) has been doing a great job working hard this summer to educate the new students on Bonfire," Hildebrand said.

Hildebrand said that when Bonfire is brought back to campus, the younger classes will need to know what the tradition was truly about.

Abshire said new students can join BCS in the fall and help promote Bonfire's return to campus.

BCS will have tables setup by Rudder Fountain on June 16, 23, 25 and 30 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and also throughout the fall semester.

## A&M singer featured at Corps center

By Natalie Younts  
THE BATTALION



SPRAGUE

Few Aggies know that Carl T. "Doc" Sprague was America's first singing cowboy star. Fewer know that Sprague graduated from Texas A&M and lived in Bryan until his death in 1979, said Dennis Williams, president of the Carl T. "Doc" Sprague Foundation.

An exhibit featuring Sprague will be on display at the Sam Houston Sanders Corps of Cadets Center through June 19.

"(Sprague's) hometown and his alma mater ought to be recognizing him as an important contributor to our American culture," Williams said.

Sprague, Class of 1922, recorded a hit song, "When the Work's All Done This Fall," in 1925 that sold more than 900,000 copies.

Sprague was the first working cowboy to record a cowboy song, and had the first hit record by a cowboy singer, Williams said.

Lisa Kalmus, curator for the center, said she was impressed with Sprague's accomplishments.

"For people now, to sell close to a million copies is

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## Got game?



BRIAN WILLS • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M women's basketball assistant coach Kelly Bond instructs campers during the elite scrimmage round of the Women's Basketball Camp. Bond, along with several players from the Aggie women's basketball team, helped about 115 aspir-

ing players improve their game. Bond, formerly an assistant coach at Arkansas under Gary Blair, came to A&M after Blair, A&M's women's basketball head coach, offered her a position on the A&M staff.

## A&M leads Texas schools in six-year graduation rates

By Joanna M. Jemison  
THE BATTALION

A new study shows that Texas A&M continues to produce six-year graduation rates that are higher than any other Texas university. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, A&M surpasses other state schools in minority six-year graduation rates as well.

74.9 percent of A&M students enrolled in 1996 graduated by 2002, improving on the previous year by approximately two percentage points. In the report, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board allows students a six-year time frame for graduation. The

University of Texas came in second place with 70 percent.

A&M also led other state-wide universities among black students, with a 63.91 percent rate of graduation, and Hispanics, with a 62.38 percent graduation rate. Hispanic and Black categories were well above the state averages. A&M did not lead with Asian students, but held a 70.45 percent graduation rate.

With white students, which represent more than 75 percent of the student body, Texas A&M had a 77.24 percent graduation rate.

In 2002, A&M awarded 9,965 undergraduate degrees for students in their first major,

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### A&M LEADS IN GRADUATION

According to a recent study, Texas A&M's graduation rates are higher than other state schools:

Within a six-year time frame to graduate, 72.9% of A&M's students received diplomas, the highest of any Texas University

Texas A&M led minority graduation rates among Texas schools with a 63.91% graduation rate among African-Americans and a 62.38% graduation rate among Hispanics

Texas A&M led the state among Caucasian graduation rates with 77.24% receiving diplomas

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SOURCE • TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

## Scholarship promotes diversity in education

By Carrie Pierce  
THE BATTALION

In the early 20th century, Col. George W. Brackenridge wanted to give young people the opportunity to advance themselves in their personal and professional lives through higher education.

Brackenridge set up the Brackenridge Foundation, which offers thousands of scholarship dollars to students each year, said Emily Thuss, a member of the Brackenridge Foundation board of trustees.

This year, The Brackenridge Foundation has partnered with Texas A&M to offer scholarships to two incoming freshmen, said Dale Suel, scholarship coordinator and teacher certification officer for the College of Education and Human Development.

The scholarship is for students pursuing a teaching certification from the College of Education who are from San Antonio or Bexar County, said Mary Ullmann, coordinator of the Foundation Excellence Award Program.

"(Brackenridge) has a particular interest in young people who otherwise might not get a higher education," Thuss said.

Brackenridge was president of the San Antonio Water Works Company, president of a trust company, director of the Express Publishing Company and president of the San Antonio school board, Thuss said. The Foundation was his main form of philanthropy.

"Education was the interest of the whole family," Thuss said.

Brackenridge's sister, Eleanor, was the founder of Texas Women's College, Thuss said.

The Brackenridge Foundation Scholarships are Foundation Excellence Award scholarships, which are offered through the Texas A&M Foundation and are primarily need-based, Ullman said.

Ullman said there are currently 180 Foundation Excellence Award scholarships granted each year. An average of 800 students apply.

"The scholarship requires that students make a minimum 2.5 GPR," Ullman said.

The Brackenridge scholarships are designated for students from underrepresented ethnic groups and are a part of the One Spirit One Vision Campaign, Suel said.

"The program is designed to help promote diversity,"

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## Alleged al-Qaida statement warns of attacks

By Mohamed Khalifa  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, Egypt — An Internet statement signed by an al-Qaida cell in Saudi Arabia warned Monday that the terror network will target Western airlines, military bases and residential compounds and told Muslims to stay away from Westerners.

The warning of attacks in "the near future" appeared on a Web site known for posting messages from militants, including the video in which a terror group with al-Qaida links executed Nicholas Berg, an American kidnapped in Iraq.

The authenticity of the statement, signed "Al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula," could not be confirmed. Al-Qaida uses the term "Arabian Peninsula" to refer to Saudi Arabia because it rejects the

rule of the Al Saud dynasty, after whom the country is named.

A spokesman for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Brian Roehrkasse, said "this particular threat appears to be focused on Westerners in the Arabian peninsula."

"While al-Qaida has demonstrated its ability to attack Westerners, there is no indication from this information that al-Qaida is currently targeting airliners in the United States," Roehrkasse said.

The statement did not specify that airline attacks would be limited to Saudi Arabia — but suggested that more attacks on Western targets in the kingdom were imminent.

It warned that everything associated with "crusaders" — the term used by militants for Americans and Europeans —

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— Brian Roehrkasse  
spokesman,  
Dept. of Homeland Security

including "compounds, bases and means of transport, especially Western and American airlines,

will be the direct targets of our next operations in the path of holy war ... especially in the near future."

The world's second-largest travel firm, Carlson Wagonlit Travel Inc., said such threats are not new and the industry had already upgraded its security.

"If in fact this is a legitimate statement from al-Qaida, we are certainly not going to change the way we do business," said Steve Loucks, a spokesman for the Plymouth, Minn.-based company. "We definitely believe this government is working to strengthen and secure our skies."

State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli noted that existing U.S. travel warnings call attention to possible threats to commercial aviation in Saudi

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