



A&M to close Commons dining facility

By Natalie Younts
THE BATTALION

The Commons Dining Center, the cafeteria in the Commons basement serving residents of Texas A&M's Southside dormitories, will permanently close at the end of August.

A temporary establishment, the Commons Food Court, will open on the first floor of the Commons building Aug. 22.

A committee of five students and three faculty members will brainstorm ideas for long-term plans for Southside dining in September, said Student Body President Jack Hildebrand.

"We can have a very impressive facility that will have all Southside students dining there,"

Hildebrand said.

Rick Floyd, executive associate vice president for finance, said an acceptable long-term solution for Southside dining has not been developed yet.

"We've tried to come up with a good interim solution that will allow us to reduce our losses and that will give us an opportunity to see how the students accept the new concepts," Floyd said.

Hildebrand said the temporary food court is not a good long-term solution because it cannot accommodate enough students.

The Commons Food Court, which cost \$50,000 to create, will be on the first floor of the Commons building.

Commons Xpress will offer the food formerly served in Commons Dining Center, including hot entrees, side dishes, salads and cookies.

A coffee bar, Common Grounds, will be open 7 a.m. to midnight.

"(Common Grounds is) a really super coffee kiosk-type operation, kind of a miniature of what you might see at Poor Yorick's (Coffee House)," said Ron Beard, executive director of food services.

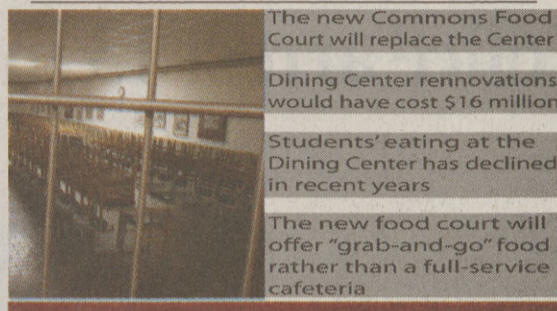
Mexican food will be served from Olla Roja, which also operates at the MSC 12th Man International cafeteria.

The current establishments on the first floor,

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COMMONS CLOSING!

The Commons Dining Center will permanently close at the end of August.



The new Commons Food Court will replace the Center

Dining Center renovations would have cost \$16 million

Students' eating at the Dining Center has declined in recent years

The new food court will offer "grab-and-go" food rather than a full-service cafeteria

WILL LLOYD • THE BATTALION
PHOTO BY: DAVE MORRIS
SOURCE: RON BEARD, EXEC. DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICES

Try these genes on for size



BRIAN WILLS • THE BATTALION

Karen Harris, a third-year graduate student in biochemistry, resuspends the RNA from a sorghum plant she previously isolated for use in research that can be used to

enhance crops. Harris uses sorghum, because of its high drought resistance, to test the changes in gene expression due to abiotic, or non-living, stress.

Ford to be in engineering symposium

By Chelsea Sledge
THE BATTALION

David Ford, associate professor, holder of the Kenneth R. Hall Professorship in Chemical Engineering at Texas A&M and recipient of the P.E.C.A.S.E. (President's Early Career Award for Science and Engineering) award, has been selected to attend the National Academy of Engineering's (NAE) 10th annual Frontiers of Engineering Symposium on Sept. 9-11, 2004, along with 85 of the brightest young engineers in the nation.

"It's an honor to be chosen and a recognition

which I'm grateful for," Ford said. "I'm really hoping to bring back some motivating examples that I could use in the classroom."

The three-day symposium will be held in Irvine, California. Chosen out of more than 170 applicants, the 86 engineers come from varying backgrounds including government, industry and academia. They are pioneers in their field, performing cutting-edge engineering research



FORD

and technical work, and are between ages 30 and 45. The engineers will meet together at the symposium to explore topics in multiscale modeling, designer materials, engineering for extreme environments and engineering for entertainment.

"Today's engineers and their work are very diverse," said William A. Wulf, president of NAE. "At the same time, many of our most significant recent advances involve contributions from more than one field. (The symposium) exposes engineers to ideas outside of their specialties to

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Democrats knocked off balance by terror alerts

By Ron Fournier
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The politics of terrorism has Democrats tied in knots. Each time President Bush raises fears of a possible attack, the political debate shifts from his most troublesome issue (Iraq) to one of his strongest (the war on terrorism) while Democrats fight their impulse to question the president's motives.

The advantages of incumbency were in full display Sunday, when Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge warned of possible al-Qaida terrorist attacks to financial institutions in New York City, Washington and Newark, N.J.

The information was obtained in the past 36 to 72 hours, officials said Sunday, increasing anxieties about a potential strike. The Bush adminis-

tration let a 24-hour news cycle pass before acknowledging that most of the intelligence, while recently obtained, was three or four years old.

"I am concerned that every time something happens that's not good for President Bush, he plays this trump card, which is terrorism," former Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean said Sunday.

Similar doubts were raised privately by John Kerry's senior advisers, top Democrats in Congress and even some senior Republicans who privately questioned Ridge's timing. The announcement came three days after the close of the Democratic National Convention, which helped increase Kerry's terrorism-fighting poll ratings and less than two weeks after a scathing report by the Sept. 11 Commission.

The administration on Tuesday issued a blanket condemnation of anybody

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A&M-Galveston hosts academy training ship

By Shawn C. Millender
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M at Galveston is hosting the Texas Maritime Academy's training ship, the Texas Clipper II, Tuesday through Thursday as part of a recruiting effort by the Academy.

The visit will culminate Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. as the ship will be open to the public for tours and presentations by the academy and several marine/maritime entities like Texas A&M-Galveston, Sea World San Antonio and the U.S. Navy.

A&M-Galveston Director of Institutional Advancement Teri Fowlé said recruiting students to the school and academy is traditionally a challenge.

"When people think of Texas, they usually think of cowboys and cattle," Fowlé said. "We want to get the word out that there is a maritime academy here."

Fowlé said the event is targeted mostly toward area high school students. She said the 40-year-old maritime program sends a lot of graduates to places like Sea World.

The Texas Maritime Academy is one of six state maritime academies in the country and the only one on the Gulf Coast. Much like the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M, military service is optional for cadets, who can go into either the Coast Guard or the Navy.

According to its Web site, the Academy's mission is to provide its cadets "with an exceptional education along with hands-on training resulting in the cadets being recognized as the future leaders of the United States Merchant Marine."

Jeremy Sinclair, a third-year cadet from New Orleans, Louisiana, said he would like to work with the Military Sealift Command upon graduation from the Academy, though he does not count himself as one of the roughly 10 percent of the 200 cadets with military aspirations.

Sinclair said the Academy is not looking for normal college-bound high school seniors.

"Life in the Academy is different. It's not going to be normal college life in a normal college environment," Sinclair said. "It will place hardships on them they wouldn't get normally."

Sinclair said while there are similarities to the Corps, life in the Academy is very different.

"It's a lot more laid-back. These are some of the greatest guys I've ever met in my life. We have a lot of fun here," Sinclair said.

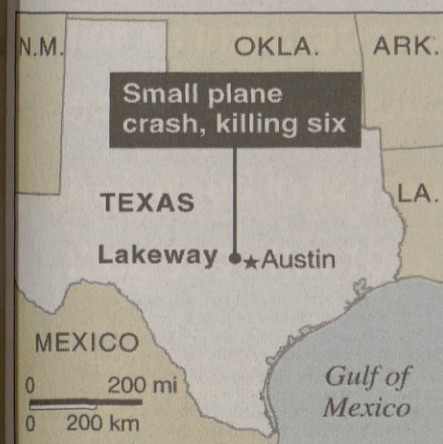
Career opportunities in the maritime industry are the biggest draw for potential cadets, Sinclair said.

"People are usually pretty shocked when we tell them we can make \$60,000-\$70,000 a year out of the Academy," Sinclair said. "It's a very unconventional lifestyle. Not your normal 9 to 5 desk job."



PHOTO COURTESY OF: TERI FOWLE

The Texas Clipper II is used for training future merchant ship officers and engineers.



SOURCE: ESRI AP

Four adults, two children dead in crash near Austin

By Jim Vertuno
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAKEWAY — A small plane crashed Tuesday into a luxury home bordering a golf course just outside Austin, causing an explosion and killing the six people aboard.

Four adults and two children were killed; their identities were not immediately known, Texas Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Tela Mange said. Three adults inside the two-story home escaped unharmed, she said.

The house, which backs up to the Hills of Lake-

way golf course, is less than two miles away from Lakeway Airpark, a privately owned airport created by residents of the Austin suburb.

There were conflicting reports on whether the plane crashed while trying to land at the airport or after having trouble gaining altitude following takeoff. Mange said she understood the plane refueled about 15 minutes before the noon crash and was headed to Oklahoma City. Federal Aviation Administration spokesman John Clabes said the TF60 Smith AeroStar, a twin-engine prop plane, crashed as it made its second approach to land at the airport.

Bert Brown, a pilot with American Airlines for 34

years, was playing golf with a friend about 300 yards from the house when he saw the plane go down. He said the plane didn't make an unusual noise before crashing, but appeared to be struggling to stay airborne.

"We just looked up and saw the aircraft and it was going slow, wings level," said Brown, who retired in 1993. "I saw him try to either make a left hand turn or stalling out. ... With that, he lost lift and crashed right into the ground."

He said he'd seen crashes in training films, but never personally.

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