



In the aftermath of tragedy

After apartment fire, residents, students still fear for their safety

By Suzy Green
THE BATTALION

Even though more than a week has elapsed since the July 31 explosion in the U-1 building of the University married student housing, residents remain afraid for their safety.

"I don't feel very safe in the apartments," said Rahul Ribeiro, president of the University Apartments Community Council. "I feel a bit scared."

The explosion, and the subsequent fire it caused, resulted in the death of the 4-year-old daughter of doctoral student Saquib Ejaz.

A report, which will include the cause of the fire, has not yet been released by the State Fire Marshal's Office, said Cindy Lawson, executive director of University Relations.

Ejaz's wife was injured in the fire and is now listed in fair condition at the John Sealy burn unit in Galveston.

Ejaz's parents, who are visiting from Bangladesh were also burned in the fire and are both listed in critical condition.

Many of the residents of University apartments are international students.

Zahir Latheef, president of the Muslim Student Association, is worried about his friends who are living in the apartments.

"A&M needs to pay a lot closer attention to these apartments and their condition," Latheef said.

Ribeiro said the gas leak was reported to A&M maintenance before the explosion.

"There was a smell of gas reported by at least three residents the day before and on the day of the explosion," Ribeiro said.

A maintenance worker changed a hose line inside the apartment, Ribeiro said. Ejaz was told to keep the windows closed until someone could perform a major repair to the exterior leak on the following Monday, Ribeiro said.

U-1 residents are staying at the La Quinta Inn on Texas Avenue, but police are available to escort residents into the apartments to get anything they need, Ribeiro said. A date for them to return to their apartments has not been set.

According to the University Apartments Fire Web site, which can be accessed from the Texas A&M homepage,

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BRIAN WILLS • THE BATTALION

University Police Department security officer **Connie Phillips** escorts a resident past the front of the boarded second-story one-bedroom University-owned apartment to retrieve personal belongings. The University has closed the apartment building where 4-year-old Lamiya Zahin was fatally injured and is currently replacing all of the exterior gas lines in the complex.

Fund established for 4-year-old killed by fire

By Natalie Younts
THE BATTALION

A fund has been established for two Texas A&M graduate students from Bangladesh whose 4-year-old daughter was killed after a July 31 explosion at the University-owned apartment where she lived.

The girl, Lamiya Zahin, died Aug. 2 at the John Sealy Hospital at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston from injuries caused by the explosion.

The Saquib Ejaz Benefit Fund, named for Lamiya's father, will help pay for the medical costs of her mother and grandparents, who suffered severe burns.

The money will also help buy food and clothing, said Zahir Latheef, president of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) and a senior accounting major.

"(Ejaz) lost everything in the fire, including the most precious thing he had, his daughter," Latheef said.

The girl's mother, Lufthansa Kanta, and Ejaz's parents remained in critical condition at the John Sealy Hospital, Latheef said on Sunday.

Checks should be written to Saquib Ejaz and sent to the First American Bank, 711 University Drive, College Station, TX 77840.

"I would like to request, on behalf of the father, for the community to keep the family in their prayers," Latheef said. "They need it at this critical time."

SAQUIB EJAZ BENEFIT FUND

A fund has been established for two Texas A&M graduate students whose four-year-old daughter died from an explosion in a University-owned apartment.

Checks can be written to Saquib Ejaz and sent to:
First American Bank
711 University Dr.
College Station, TX 77840

WILL LLOYD • THE BATTALION

SOURCE: ZAHIR LATHEEF, MUSLIM STUDENT ASSO.

Fish Camp celebrates 50 years of fun

By Joanna M. Jemison
THE BATTALION

It's not just a bus route, a student organization, or a four-day sabbatical for those who volunteer for it, but Fish Camp, for many of its attendees, is a memory of the Aggie family that stays with students beyond their time in College Station. It stays with them for life.

This year, Fish Camp is celebrating 50 years of making memories and welcoming freshmen. From its humble beginnings in 1954 when former student activities director Gordon Gay trudged out to the wilderness with a small group of students, Fish Camp now accommodates 4,500 "fish" and more than 1,000 volunteers and counselors each year.

Hosted in the piney forests of Palestine, Texas, Fish Camp will hold six four-day sessions.

A 50th Anniversary Reunion for Fish Camp will be held at Texas A&M University Sept. 10-11. Those who have participated in Fish Camp in the past are invited to attend. Festivities will include a staff social, First Yell and Midnight Yell Practice on Friday Sept. 10. On Saturday, Sept. 11, there will be a director breakfast, Fish Camp tailgate party and a concert that evening. The fes-

ivities will be scheduled around A&M's football game against Wyoming.

Some of the first students who participated in Fish Camp will attend this year, along with members of Gay's family, to share their memories of the early days.

Fish Camp has evolved into a yearly celebration of new Aggies as their counselors teach the fish Aggie traditions, how to adjust to campus life and how to join student organizations.

"I met a lot of friends, I learned the traditions that prepared me to go to football games, plus, I had a great time," said Chris Teff, senior biomedical sciences major.

Laura Boren, Fish Camp adviser, said she believes said the essence of Fish Camp is freshmen arriving with limited knowledge of Texas A&M and leaving, forever dedicated to being an Aggie.

At the end of each day, camps attend gatherings called "campfires," a program that brings in special guests or motivational speakers. Other programs include themed mixers, small group discussions led by counselors and outdoor activities such as volleyball and ultimate Frisbee.

"I'm excited about going to Fish Camp, meeting

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FISH CAMP TURNS 50

Fish Camp will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. A reunion will be held on September 10th and 11th.

- The camp is in Palestine, Texas
- More than 1,000 volunteers and counselors will participate this summer
- Freshmen will participate in team-building exercises
- Gordon Gay, former student activities director, began Fish Camp in 1954



Junior international studies major Ryan Wolk demonstrates the backstroke while practicing a synchronized swimming skit on the fourth floor of Rudder Tower.

WILL LLOYD • THE BATTALION

PHOTO BY: BRIAN WILLS
SOURCE: LANE STEVENSON,
OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

Parents win settlement from bar in son's death

By Suzy Green
THE BATTALION

The parents of former Texas A&M student Michael Wagener, who died from alcohol poisoning five years ago, were awarded \$5 million in a settlement against the owner of a bar on July 28, but alcohol serving procedures are not likely to change, said the manager of a local bar.

"(This settlement) is not going to affect us at all," said Rob Worrall, manager of Carney's Pub and Blarney Stone. "We know (running a bar) is a risky business; you've got to watch out for your customers because no one else will."

Wagener died on his 21st birthday, Aug. 3, 1999, after a night of drinking on Northgate, capped off by consuming approximately eight shots of hard liquor at the shot bar Coupe De Ville, which is no longer in business. Wagener was later found dead in his apartment with a .48 blood-alcohol level.

Wagener's parents, Thomas and Susan Wagener, will receive their settlement money from the owner of Coupe De Ville, Calvin Dean Coffey.

"A bar's sole responsibility is to regulate the drinking of alcohol," Worrall said. "If you're at a party or behind Northgate, there's nobody controlling the drinking and nobody watching out for people who don't watch out for themselves."

Luke Poindexter, a senior finance major who works as a bartender at Fox and Hound, said he tries to be careful about the amount of alcohol served to customers.

"I'm sure this lawsuit will probably make people think twice, but it's still going to happen," Poindexter said. "As a bartender, we take a lot of responsibility... but sometimes you look back and wish you hadn't served someone so much."

Worrall said that situations like Wagener's are the reason bars have liability insurance.

"If someone gets in a wreck after leaving our bar, we're liable for that, too," Worrall said. "Liability insurance is required and Carney's Pub and Blarney Stone have the highest amount of coverage that exists."

Jared Patterson, a senior political science major, said he thinks College Station bars do a good job of regulating how much people have to drink.

"I've been to places on Northgate where they won't give you certain shots that are really strong unless they know that you haven't been drinking yet," Patterson said.

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell how much someone has already had to drink, Poindexter said.

"Some people are more difficult than others to tell how much they've been drinking," Poindexter said. "It also depends on the amount of contact I've had with them throughout the night."

Carney's Pub and Blarney Stone try to keep track of how

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Bush forum celebrates the 'Year of the Woman'

By Chelsea Sledge
THE BATTALION

Lynne Vallone, English professor and author, spoke for a small crowd on Thursday evening at the George Bush Presidential Library. To commemorate the Bush Library Issues Forum's "Year of the Woman," Vallone spoke about the portrayal of 19th century women in photography with a special focus on the work of Charles Dodson and Julia Margaret Cameron.



VALLONE

"Photography explores a literal relationship between the subject and the viewer," Vallone said. "It holds past and future time and explores things in the subjects' worlds that are not here anymore."

Dodson, whose pen name was Lewis Carroll, wrote several children's books in-

cluding "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and also photographed Alice Little, for whom his book was written. He was one of the most outstanding photographers of the Victorian Age although only four of his photographs were published, Vallone said.

Cameron, however, was a renowned photographer in the 19th century. Unlike Dodson, her photographs were widely exhibited. Her style of large, close-up photographs also juxtaposed Dodson's work, Vallone said.

"Both Dodson and Cameron had interests in capturing the beauty of young girls and young women," Vallone said. "Although their constructions of girlhood, both in poem and portrait, were very different."

These photographers' intense fascination with girlhood and exploring childhood innocence seemed a little strange to some members of Vallone's audience.

"I just find it strange that (Dodson) was so obsessed with taking pictures of little girls," said senior finance major Tom Yarrington. "Where were the kids' parents when this was

going on?"

Many of the photographs, especially those of Cameron, did have a resigned, nostalgic and sensual mood, Vallone said. She believes viewers today are moved by them because they remind us of the loss of childhood in ourselves.

With modern developments, such as the digital camera, Vallone said the types of pictures will change.

"Digital processes make it easy to just delete (pictures)," Vallone said. "Any moment can be captured now."

Vallone also discussed the differences in how girlhood is portrayed in photographs today, such as those taken by Lauren Greenfield in her book *Girl Culture*. In the Victorian Age the photographs depicted a more natural girlhood, and today, there is more of an artificial beauty for a consuming audience, Vallone said.

Vallone specializes in children's literature

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