



Victim of University apartment fire dies

By Jibran Najmi
THE BATTALION

The mother of a Texas A&M doctoral student, whose apartment caught fire this summer, died Monday afternoon at approximately 1:30 p.m. Rabeya Chaudhry had been recovering from burn injuries that covered 50 percent of her body sustained in the July 31 explosion at the University Apartments off Hensel Drive. Chaudhry had come to College Station from Bangladesh to visit her son Saqib Ejaz, a doctoral student at Texas A&M, when the incident occurred.

Ejaz had left to meet some friends on the evening of July 31 when his apartment exploded in flames, injuring his parents, pregnant wife and 4-year-old daughter. Ejaz's daughter Lamiya Zahin

died Aug. 2 at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston.

"(Saqib's) father remains in critical condition, but is making major improvements, as (...) I'm told (he's) now able to sit up," said Rahul Ribeiro, president of the University Apartments Community Council and a close family friend.

Ribeiro said Ejaz's wife is walking again, her overall health is improving and her unborn child is doing well.

"We are very saddened to learn of the death of Rabeya Chaudhry, Saqib Ejaz's mother," said Cynthia Lawson, executive director of the Office of University Relations. "Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with them during this difficult time."

Jerry Higgins, spokesman for the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office, said on Tuesday that the fire marshal is continuing to investigate the cause of the fire.

"We still need to complete follow-up interviews with

the victims and other survivors and tie up some loose ends before we can issue a final report," Higgins said.

No date has been set for the completion of the fire marshal's report.

Meanwhile, Brazos County District Attorney Bill Turner has opened a criminal investigation into this incident and requested that A&M suspend its Presidential Task Force investigations until the criminal investigation is complete.

"Public release of records related to the University Apartments at this time will interfere with the investigation and detection of crime," Turner said. "However, as soon as our investigation is complete, the public will be made privy to all of those documents."

Faisal Chaudhry, president of the Islamic Community of Bryan/College Station (ICBCS) told The Battalion that Muslim funeral services for Rabeya Chaudhry

would be held in Houston on Wednesday at the South East Zone Mosque. Chaudhry said the funeral would follow Duhr, the early afternoon prayer in Islam.

"In Islam, it is recommended that the deceased be buried within 24 hours of their death. Sometimes it's out of our control, and it cannot be helped, however it is recommended," Chaudhry said.

The Janaaza funeral services will be held at 8830 Old Galveston Road, Houston, Texas 77034. Chaudhry will be buried in Houston at the Forest Lawn Cemetery. The Duhr prayer is scheduled for 1:20 p.m. on Wednesday.

"Events like this are heartbreaking and part of the continuing tragedy that's unfolded upon this family," Chaudhry said. "Our prayers are with the family, and with Saqib, of course, during this excruciating part of his life."

In perspective



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Freshman environmental design major Heather Holly, freshman environmental design major Tess Kroeger and sophomore architecture major Steven Castaneda work on their 2D perspective drawing for ENDS 115 on the second floor of the Langford Architecture building Monday afternoon.

A&M weather radars enlisted to track Frances

By Liang Liang
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M was called on for its weather expertise to help Florida monitor Hurricane Frances, which reached the Florida Panhandle Monday morning and has cut power and water for six million residents in Florida in the past few days.

Two Shared Mobile Atmospheric Research & Teaching (SMART) radar units, designed by Jerry Guynes and Rick O'Neill, instrumentation specialists at A&M, were being used in a research project at Texas Tech before the arrival of Hurricane Frances. The SMART system is a joint operation of A&M, Texas Tech, the University of Oklahoma and the National Severe Storm Lab in Norman, Okla. The operation system has reserved fees for a prompt action to dispatch its radar system where it is needed.

The radars, which are housed at A&M, were called on by the National Weather Service Radar Operations Center to replace the main radar system of the National Hurricane Center in Miami, which was disabled by a lightning strike before the arrival of Frances. Most parts of south Florida were in a desperate need for a complete radar system to monitor the hurricane.

"It's a scary situation when you realize you have a Category 4 hurricane heading your way, and you have no radar," said Richard Orville, professor and interim chair of the Department of Atmospheric Sciences in Texas A&M's College of Geosciences. "The SMART radar system is the only one of its kind that can get to Miami in a hurry."

The two SMART radars are housed on two flatbed diesel trucks, and were ready to go on call.

SMART Radar

Texas A&M's SMART radar is the only mobile radar of its kind.



The SMART radar:

- Can withstand 100 m.p.h. winds
- Has extremely sensitive electronics that minimize noise
- Is part of a joint operation between Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Oklahoma University and the National Severe Storm Lab

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SOURCE & PHOTO COURTESY OF: JERRY GUYNES, INSTRUMENTATION SPECIALIST AT A&M

"Being mobile also enables the SMART radars to get very close to storms and catch (the motion of) the bottom of storms (and) therefore perform tasks that other radars can not perform," Guynes said.

"The SMART radars are designed to withstand 100 mph wind speed of a land-falling hurricane. The higher output power not only enables the radars to penetrate storms, but also enables the systems to be deployed at a safer distance during a tornado research. In

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Playhouses to be raffled to help raise money for Voices for Children

By Pammy Ramji
THE BATTALION

Six playhouses, five of which were designed and built by Texas A&M affiliates, will be raffled off Sept. 25 at Post Oak Mall to help raise money for Voices for Children, Inc., Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of the Brazos Valley.

Four of the playhouses were donated to Voices of Children from the A&M construc-

tion science department; two were first-place winners in a judging competition. The Texas A&M Chapter of the National Association of New Homebuilders and Stylecraft Builders, Inc. built two other playhouses.

The proceeds from the raffle will go to support CASA, an organization that trains and supports volunteers to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children under

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Aggie Marine teaches calc in Iraq

By Lacy Ledford
THE BATTALION

A Math 151 textbook from Loupot's Bookstore is currently en route to Iraq. Texas A&M Class of 2005 electrical engineering major and U.S. Marine Reserves Cpl. Charles Holland recently requested a textbook to guide him in teaching calculus to his fellow marines.

His mother, Marti Holland, received his call about the textbook the night before his deployment Aug. 23.

"Some of the other soldiers there wanted to CLEP out of calculus when they got back from Iraq," Marti Holland said. "Charles absolutely loves anything to do with math, and loves teaching calculus."



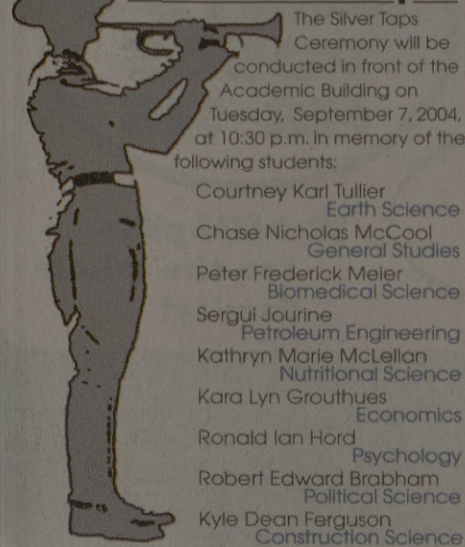
HOLLAND

Marti Holland and her daughter Rebecca, a freshman general studies major, asked a College Station bookstore for a book donation and were instead offered a 20 percent discount. Declining the offer, they next went to Southgate Loupot's.

"I thought I might as well ask," Marti Holland said. "Before I could barely finish my sentence, the manager said 'absolutely.'"

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Silver Taps



The Silver Taps Ceremony will be conducted in front of the Academic Building on Tuesday, September 7, 2004, at 10:30 p.m. in memory of the following students:

- Courtney Karl Tuller, Earth Science
- Chase Nicholas McCool, General Studies
- Peter Frederick Meier, Biomedical Science
- Sergui Jourine, Petroleum Engineering
- Kathryn Marie McLellan, Nutritional Science
- Kara Lyn Grouthues, Economics
- Ronald Ian Hord, Psychology
- Robert Edward Brabham, Political Science
- Kyle Dean Ferguson, Construction Science

Gates keeps students informed of University improvements

By Lacy Ledford
THE BATTALION

A&M President Robert Gates sent an e-mail Thursday with the full text of his State of the University Address made at the end of August to keep students abreast to the significant improvements to the University.

"I think Dr. Gates sending out a mass e-mail is an obvious statement that he wants students to know what's going on in the University," said Student Body President Jack Hildebrand.

In addition to other issues affecting students, Gates announced progress on the priorities of elevating the faculty and improving undergraduate and graduate education, diversity and space.

Gates said A&M's diversity enrollment efforts have been a major source of controversy over the past year, but that they ultimately resulted in success and recognition as minority enrollment has increased across the board over the past year.

Gates said that based on enrollment data of Aug. 14, of the 6,800 incoming freshman, there has been a 39 percent increase in African-American student enrollment, a 26 percent increase in Hispanic enrollment and an 18 percent increase in Asian-American enrollment.

"Dr. Gates has supported diversifying the student body philosophically, and he has included resources to recruit previously underrepresented

students," said Interim Assistant Provost for Enrollment Alice Reinartz.

Over the past months, more than 600 of the new Regents' Scholarships have been awarded. These scholarships aid first-generation college students and low-income families.

Reinartz said the new scholarships have improved recruitment.

"I think we have momentum and we are going to be putting enormous energy into building that momentum to further increase the diversity of undergraduate and graduate populations," Reinartz said.

In the convocation address, Gates said faculty reinvestment, a program designed to hire 447 net new tenured or tenure-track faculty by

the year 2008, is going well.

More new faculty has been hired in the past 18 months than the 115 positions that were lost between 1992 and 2002.

One goal is to help ensure a common academic experience for all students during their freshman year. The efforts made to accomplish this include the expansion of learning communities such as the freshman Aggie ACCESS program.

In the convocation address, Gates said progress has also been made in eliminating the space shortage at A&M. Space issues have been addressed through the addition of the

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