



Rules over reason: NCAA doesn't use good judgment in rulings. Page 1B

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TS director addresses transportation concerns

By Rhiannon Meyers
THE BATTALION

In an open forum Wednesday afternoon in Rudder Plaza, Rod Weis, director of Transportation Services, said TS is working on alleviating transit problems, especially overcrowding on buses.

"We have received complaints that buses are overcrowded," Weis said. "We are aware of this, and we are in the same position this first week of classes that we were the first week of classes last semester."

More than 60 students came to hear Weis discuss options for relieving overcrowded buses. Weis said TS has hired a transit consultant to help find alternatives.

"We're going to fix this," Weis said. "We have a transit consultant hired and on-board."

Weis said one option being discussed is adding more buses to certain overcrowded bus routes at specific times. This option would include adding more buses to the Wehner Express route during peak times.

Weis said one of the problems with this option is

that TS is short on bus drivers, and that the few current bus drivers have been trying to make up the difference. Weis said 38 drivers are in training, and he urged students to consider becoming bus drivers.

"When you talk to drivers on your bus, thank them, because they are doing a good job," Weis said. "We are still 30 drivers short, and if you are looking for work on Tuesday or Thursday, we want to talk with you."

Weis said another option to alleviate bus overcrowding is to educate students about good times to catch buses. Weis said overcrowded buses are usually accompanied by buses that come five minutes before or five minutes after and are only half full. Weis said that if students planned their time accordingly, buses would not be so crowded.

Weis also addressed the problem of overflowing lots at the Student Recreation Center. Weis said that between 6,000 to 6,500 students and faculty members compete for parking spaces at the Rec everyday. Weis said TS plans to eliminate overnight parking at the Rec to open space for Rec patrons.

"We are aware of the problem (with Rec parking), but to be completely honest, due to physical limitations, there is no way every faculty member and student can park in that area," Weis said. "From a space standpoint, we can't accommodate all of y'all, but I think eliminating overnight parking will help this problem."

Weis said he is pleased TS is moving students to new lots ahead of schedule and that more than 2,185 e-mails were sent to students on Monday offering them spots in higher-priority lots. Weis said that because so many students were moved, the \$10 fee to change lots was waived this time. Weis said the students who received e-mails have two weeks to change into the offered lot.

"The goal is as soon as we have space available, we want to move students, even if it's just one student," Weis said.

According to data gathered last week, the number of vehicles towed on campus has gone down 78.5 percent from last year at this time, Weis said. "Seventy-eight-point-five percent is a significant number, and I'm delighted about it because

we don't like towing cars," Weis said. "I think ... y'all are telling us that you have a spot now."

Weis reminded students that permit holders can park anywhere on campus after 5 p.m., excluding reserved spots and residential lots.

In a question-and-answer session following the speech, Weis said the West Campus Parking Garage could not be opened to all permit holders to alleviate parking problems at the Rec Center, because it would cause friction between West Campus Garage permit-holders and TS.

"A number of residents park in there and they would be upset," Weis said. "I'm not opposed to talking about changes as long as there is a way we can administer those changes."

Weis also said he expects the same parking problems this year on game days as TS experienced last year.

"It will be crowded," Weis said. "There are

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Faculty debates new Life Sciences project

By Lacy Ledford
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M faculty gave feedback on issues surrounding the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Complex during an open forum Wednesday.

Those who attended the forum in Rudder 301 expressed concerns on various issues, including motivations, the interdisciplinary nature of the building and the uncertainty surrounding what will be housed in it.

Mike Manson, a biology professor, expressed dissatisfaction about political motivations surrounding the Life Sciences Building.

"There are political and scientific realities here, and I think this process is trying to make it seem like the political reality is the scientific reality, when it's not," Manson said.

There was also friction at the forum about the interdisciplinary nature of the Life Sciences Center.

"When you combine expertise from different things, good stuff happens," Manson said. "The question is: Do you need to put a bunch of different people in that building to make that happen?"

Manson stressed the need for strong departments. He suggested that departments have clear lines of command and encourage interaction between disciplines. Faculty still had questions about who would be using the Life Sciences Complex. Vice Provost William L. Perry said that he recognizes there are certain kinds of expertise that are important to the functioning of the building.

"This doesn't mean a whole department would be in the building, but that expertise from these anchor departments would somehow be represented there," he said. "We recognize the importance of disciplinary sciences and we want to support multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work. We believe that with the assistance of the Research Environment Council, the deans, faculty and the department heads, over a design period, we can develop policies for the use of the building that will really support our faculty."

Perry said he anticipates additional forums as plans for the Life Sciences Complex move forward.

"As a faculty member, I really appreciate these types of forums," said associate biology professor Debbie Siegele.

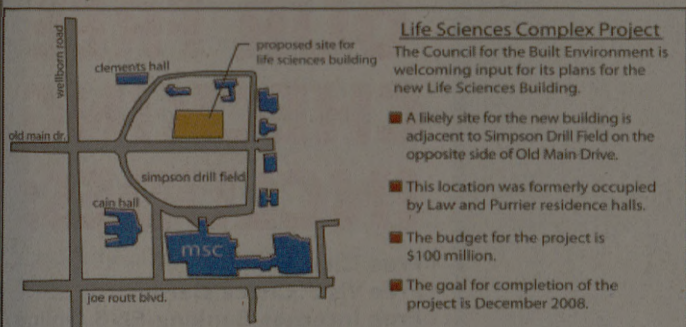
Perry said the meeting was important because it served as a feedback mechanism for the faculty.

Siegele said she likes to know faculty members' input has been considered in the decision-making processes.

"If you tell me you've listened to my input and disagree, I still feel like (I have) been heard," Siegele said.

Perry said that although it has been a long road from the initial discussions about the Complex in 2001, it doesn't mean there's no room for other input. The Council for the Built Environment will review the forum's comments and make a recommendation that will be given to A&M President Robert M. Gates for further consideration, he said.

The goal for completion of the Life Sciences Building is December 2008, Perry said.



ANDREW BURLESON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: BILL PERRY, VICE PROVOST

U.S. warplanes bomb Sunni city

By Hamza Hendawi
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FALLUJAH, Iraq — U.S. jets pounded insurgent positions in Fallujah for a second straight day Wednesday, raising plumes of smoke but leaving no extensive damage or signs of weakening the Sunni militants who have steadily expanded their control of this city about 30 miles west of Baghdad.

After the attacks, bands of fighters, many wearing loose black pajama-like pants and T-shirts, lounged outside abandoned buildings facing the American lines, seeking to escape the intense sunlight of a day when temperatures topped 114 degrees.

Most hid their faces with Arab head scarves or ski masks. Some quenched their thirst with water from coolers beside them. Most appeared

to be in their late teens or early 20s and 30s, but a few looked as old as 50.

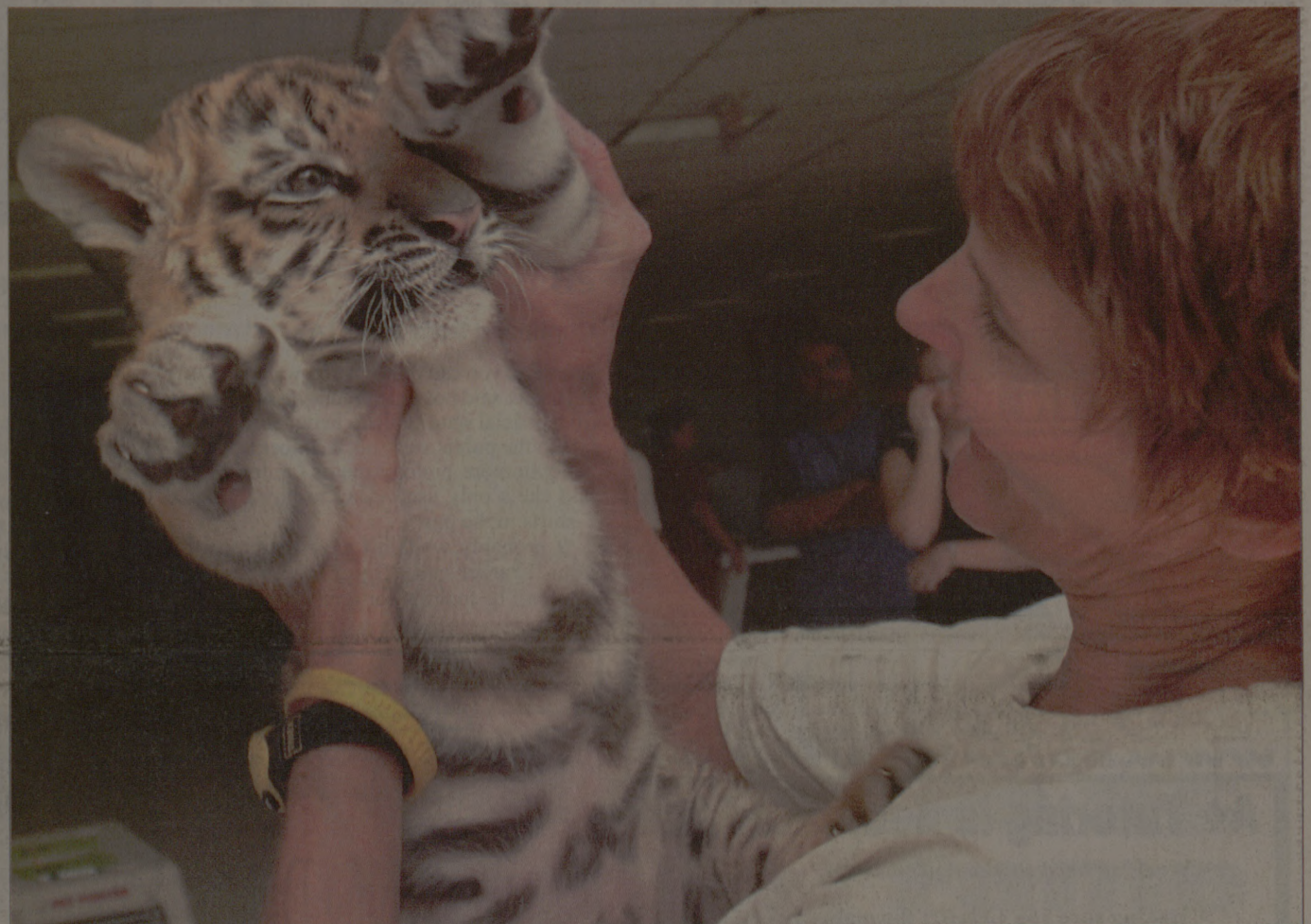
Elsewhere in the city of 300,000, fighters patrolled the streets in new American pickups. One resident, 33-year-old Abu Rihab, said they were part of a 16-vehicle fleet commandeered between Jordan and Baghdad.

The Fallujah Brigade, which the Americans organized in May to maintain security after the Marines lifted a three-week siege, has all but disappeared, along with virtually all signs of Iraqi state authority.

Members of the Iraqi national guard, which was supposed to back up the Fallujah Brigade, fled the city after one of their commanders was executed by insurgents for allegedly spying for the Americans. Local police operate under the tacit control of the militants.

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What's new, pussycat?



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Sully, a two-month-old tiger in the care of the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Science, is held by his caretaker, Dusty Milanes of Bryan, Wednesday inside Blocker Building

to raise awareness and increase the number of tissue and organ donors. The program, Donate Life, will return to campus on Sept. 21 with booths at the MSC, West Campus and Blocker.

Bicycle thefts trouble students

By Jibrán Najmi
THE BATTALION

In the past six weeks, 37 bicycles have been reported stolen from various campus locations. None have been recovered, said Sgt. H. Allan Baron of the University Police Department.

"Among the most popular bikes that are stolen are Mongoose and NEXT," Baron said. "In a little over a month, \$6,405 worth of bikes have been stolen from areas all across campus. The average cost of a stolen bicycle is approximately \$173."

Baron said Diamondback, Roadmaster, Schwinn and Trek bikes are the next most frequently stolen brands.

"The majority of bikes are stolen due to students not following proper security procedures when locking their bikes up," Baron said.

Baron said he recommends using a case-hardened U-bolt lock to secure the bike

through the frame, front wheel and the bike rack. As a further precaution, Baron said he suggests removing the front wheel and securing it with a U-bolt to the rear wheel.

"The second day of my sophomore year, and the first day I had a bike on campus, my bike got stolen," said Jazja Hamid, a junior biomedical sciences major. "I went to the SCC to study, and when I came out, everything but my front wheel had been stolen."

Baron said students who are victims of a bicycle theft should report it immediately to the UPD at 845-2345, so that the UPD can investigate the case.

"A lot of the bikes we recover don't have serial numbers of driver license numbers engraved on them, so it's really hard to get the bike back to its owner," Baron said.

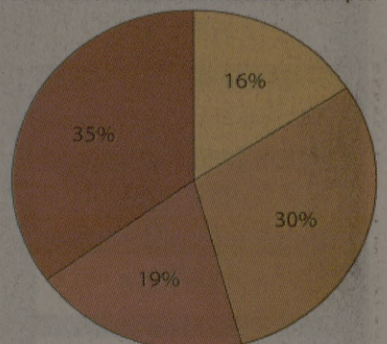
Baron said he encourages students to make

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Bicycle, Bicycle

37 bikes have been reported as stolen from Aug. 1 to Sept. 8, 2004. None of them have been recovered.

Bikes were stolen from various areas on campus:



The total value of the bikes stolen was \$6,405

ANDREW BURLESON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: SGT. ALLAN BARON, UPD

A&M buses auctioned on eBay

By Shawn C. Millender
THE BATTALION

As part of Transportation Services' plan to phase out its older buses, three 1982 Thomas-brand passenger vehicles went up for auction on eBay Wednesday.

"The Internet is a good tool to use for selling items no longer needed by the University or a school district, and we want to explore it more," said Director of Purchasing Services Rex Janne.

Janne said the intent for using eBay was to take advantage of a wider audience than normal auctions get.

An employee for Bus Operations who asked not to be identified said the three non-air conditioned buses were pulled off route as late as the end of the spring semester. They are all in working, driving condition and have already drawn interest from individual groups and individuals in the community.

Assistant Director of Purchasing Services Paul Barzak said eBay has worked well in the past.

"We've been kicking this idea around for a year or two," he said. "We recently sold a bunch of softball jerseys on eBay, and they went for good prices. Aggie memorabilia is a perfect item; we're just keeping up with the times."

Barzak said that as of Wednesday morning all three buses had surpassed their \$1,000 reserve. The auctions close Friday, and Purchasing Services will use the money earned for future purchases.

Barzak said any item Texas A&M would normally sell in a public auction is a candidate for sale on eBay, except used computers.

There are a myriad of uses for a retired bus, Barzak said.

"We've had people ask if they would have to strip off the maroon and white paint," he said. "And the answer is no. Once you buy it, it's

See eBay on page 2A