

THE BATTALION

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PAGE BY TORI FOSTER



Opinion:
Check out the two-page special section devoted to campus parking issues

Drinking on promenade may be prohibited



SHARON AESCHBACH - THE BATTALION

Students congregate at the promenade Monday night to eat, drink and socialize. A proposal that would prohibit drinking outside Northgate bars is making its way to the College Station City Council.

By Jibrán Najmi
THE BATTALION

The College Station Police Department (CSPD) has begun to consult with several bars in Northgate, as a proposal to ban open containers along the promenade makes its way to the College Station City Council.

"There is a rumor floating around that after Oct. 1 it will be illegal to have an alcoholic beverage on the promenade in Northgate," said Scott McCollum, assistant police chief of operations for CSPD. "I want to emphasize that at this point in time, that it is just that, a rumor; nothing has been decided yet."

The promenade, a popular area for college students to socialize, is located behind The Dixie Chicken, Fitzwilly's and other bars on Northgate. Currently, alcohol consumption on the promenade is allowed, but this may change.

McCollum said the issue is under consideration due to severe liability and safety issues.

"The problem we've had noticed is that people bring kegs, coolers full of beer and sometimes even couches," McCollum said. "It is completely unregulated and unsupervised, and it's gotten to the point where individuals are drinking such large quantities of alcohol that it has become a public safety issue."

Several bar managers share McCollum's sentiment. "We don't mind people drinking on the promenade at all," said Scott Friedman, a manager at Gatsby's. "It's the fact that people can drink themselves into an oblivion, and then come into our bar to use the bathroom and fall and crack their head open. Now it's on us, even though we didn't know they were drinking."

Cory Freeman, a manager of The Dixie Chicken, agrees with Friedman's assessment of the situation.

"People haul kegs and coolers full of beer out there, and it contributes to a lot of different things, such as fights," Freeman said. "It's completely unsupervised, and there is no accountability."

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Commons Dining closed due to repairs

By Ji Ma
THE BATTALION

Equipment that was unable to meet regulations played a primary part in the closing of the Commons Dining Center during the summer.

"There were physical needs in the common dining hall," said Assistant Director of Food Services Cynthia Zawieja. "The equipment was really old (and needed) to be replaced. It no longer met all of the regulations."

The Commons was plagued by a host of physical and structural problems, including the plumbing and the exhaust systems.

The plumbing has been a long-time inconvenience. According to Director of Food Services Ron Beard, it has been an issue since the building was constructed in the 1970s.

"It was too big of a problem," Beard said. "We continue to get groundwater in the buildings."

Beard said more than \$1.2 million has already been spent to correct these hindrances, and

that the costs are quickly becoming too great to handle.

"The plumbing pipes were also being replaced. Some were starting to wear out," Zawieja said. "At the time, about 80 percent of the pipes were replaced."

However, Zawieja is not sure whether the projects will be completed or not.

The exhaust and hood systems, however, played a greater role. "Because we are in the basement, the exhaust pipes need to make a lot of 90-degree turns to reach the second floor," Zawieja said. "They can catch grease."

Beard said the dining center was given a few months to correct the problem, or it could be closed down.

An original estimate on the cost of the repairs were about \$4 million, but after facility planning performed a more detailed study, the figured totaled more than \$16.2 million, Beard said.

"Once we start, all ADA compliances, all plumbing,

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Ross Volunteers inducted



SHARON AESCHBACH - THE BATTALION

Senior history major and Ross Volunteer **Kyle Modell** of Squadant 17 pins a Ross Volunteer medal on junior electrical engineering major **Juan Jurado**, a newly inducted Ross Volunteer, at the Clayton B.

Williams Alumni Center Wednesday evening. The top 80 juniors in the Corps are selected to become Ross Volunteers, making it one of the most prestigious honors in the University.

COMMONS PROBLEMS

Commons Dining Hall, located in the basement of the Commons, shut down due to equipment problems.

Plumbing

Basement gets ground water and pipes are worn out

Exhaust System

Could not be certified by fire marshal as operable

Costs

To fix these problems, the Commons would need \$16 million, including other renovations to parts of the building

WILL LLOYD - THE BATTALION

SOURCE - RON BEARD, DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICES

Rep. Bell angered by redistricting

By Stacy Thompson
THE BATTALION

On Saturday, the Democratic U.S. Rep. Chris Bell, who claimed that majority leader of the House, Tom Delay, violated rules, visited Bryan to discuss politics with the Aggie Democrats.

For some Democratic students, the meeting with Bell was important because of the personal ties they had to Tom Delay.

"I'm from Sugarland," said sophomore mechanical engineering

major Amy Rabb. "And Delay is from my district."

Daniel Shaw, a graduate in management studies, said he does not believe that many Republicans knew about the event.

"They are pretty engaged in Wolhgemuth," Shaw said. "I don't think it's on their radar."

Bell is known for filing a complaint against House Majority Leader Tom Delay about his redistricting of Texas voting areas. He claims Republicans illegally misused money to facilitate their

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Hurricanes hurt U.S. economy

By Justin Pope
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

While Florida's economy will get the biggest jolt from the improbable string of hurricanes this year, consumers around the country may notice the effects in coming weeks and months when they buy a gallon of gas, a carton of orange juice or a bag of peanuts.

The storms seem likely to impact Americans outside Florida in a variety of ways, most of them subtle, but a few with potentially bigger consequences.

A rebuilding boom could suck construction materials and labor southward, pushing

up prices in the rest of the country. While Florida's insurance market has its own disaster fund, damage elsewhere could cause companies to raise premiums. And Florida's tourism woes could further harm already teetering airlines, perhaps forcing them to pull out of even more markets.

On the other hand, vacation destinations outside Florida could benefit from skittishness about visiting the state. So could Northern states hoping to stem the flow of people and businesses who have been moving full-time to Florida.

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Kellstedt: Swing voters key in 2004 presidential election

By Erin Price
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M professors informed the public about political platforms Wednesday in preparation for the presidential debate on Thursday.

The MSC Wiley Lecture Series presented "Road to the White House" Wednesday night, where speakers emphasized the importance of the 2004 presidential elections and the pressing issues involved in them.

The open forum, moderated by Kurt Ritter of the communication department, featured two speakers from the department of political science: Paul Kellstedt and David Peterson.

Kellstedt said this election is more polarized than previous elections with few undecided voters. The events during President Bush's four years in office has allowed more voters to either like him or not, he said.

"This election is much more spunky and vivacious than other years involving an incumbent," Kellstedt said. "There are a lot more passionate people on either side who really want him to stay or want him gone."

The key in this election is which party can mobilize the few "swing" voters, Kellstedt said, and whoever gets that last 3 to 4 percent of voters will win.

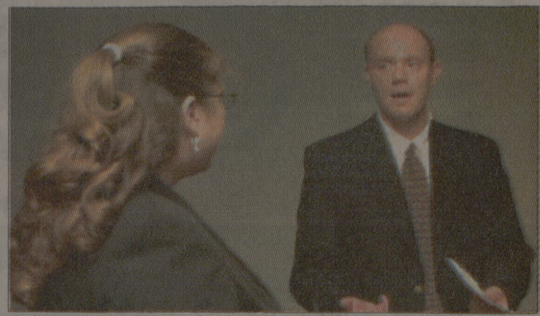
The first presidential debate is at 8 p.m. Thursday on every major network, and Ritter said that

it will frame the perception voters have of the candidates and also reinforce the support they already have.

"The tendency is for viewers to see the debate as a sporting event, cheering for their side," Ritter said. "The important thing is for voters to listen and learn about where the candidates stand."

However, where candidates stand on issues is exactly what Bush and Kerry need to work on, Peterson said. Voters do not see the distinctions between the candidates, and sides are being blurred, he said.

Voter interest is a high level that hasn't been



Political science professor **Dr. Paul Kellstedt** speaks with students following the MSC Wiley Lecture Series presentation "Road to the White House."

ALISON COZBY - THE BATTALION

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