



Senior nursing students **Anessa Sibai** and **Rudy Bauder** stabilize a patient's head during a transfer.



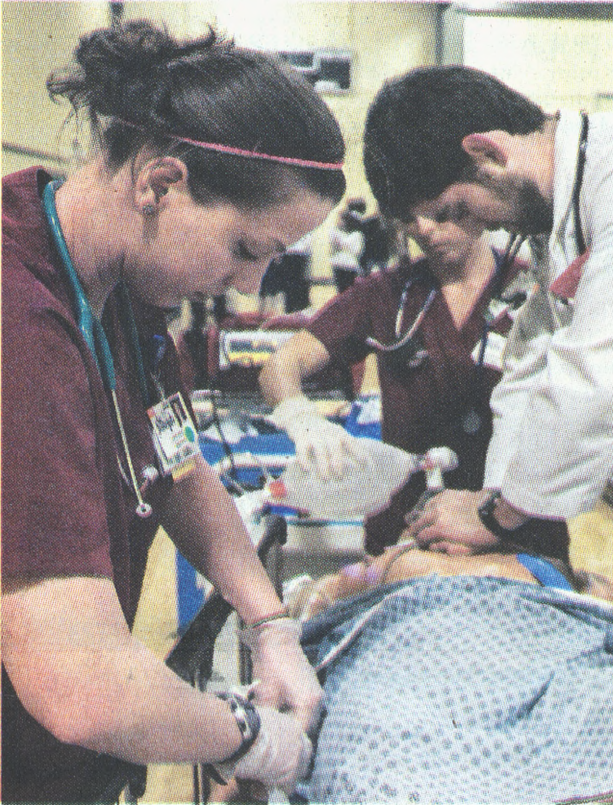
Junior nursing student **Remmington Coutts** treats burn victim.



Senior nursing students **Jessica Stauber** and **Kelsey Sutterfield** assist a woman during labor.



A local high school student participated by pretending to be impaled by a piece of shrapnel.



Senior nursing student **Alexis Widacki** administers CPR to a victim.



After a local high school student coded and died a friend mourns her loss.



A local high school student waits for medical attention for her burned leg.

Photos by Shelby Knowles — THE BATTALION

VIEW

A&M has a niche in training students for chaos and disaster



Jennifer Reiley
@jreiley1

The tension in the room is thick. Quick thinking attempts to push away the stress and panic as long as possible. Adrenaline and automatic response take over as patient after patient is treated. The after effects of the disaster are apparent, and this is just a training scenario.

Disasters occur every day throughout the world. Whether it is a wildfire-turned-fuel-tank explosion — as was Thursday's Disaster Day scenario — or a hurricane that leads to structural collapse, incidents will occur, and first responders need to be prepared.

At Texas A&M, the amount of disaster preparedness training facilities is, in a word, impressive. From Disaster Day to the Fire School and Disaster City, A&M has created and maintained programs to prepare for disasters and the variables that make each catastrophe unique.

While every disaster or emergency is unique, the first steps in responding are likely to be the same. Each role is going to have a protocol that it must follow, no matter the scenario. If responders go untrained and disaster strikes, a sense of panic may take over in the adrenaline rush as they struggle to get through the preliminary required tasks.

With training, however, comes "rote memory" — the process of learning or committing something to memory through mechanical repetition. Proactive training simulations create this memory, so when faced with a real-time disaster, stress can be reduced.

Disaster preparedness is extremely hands-on. Reading about how to triage caregivers in a temporary emergency room set up in a church is

very different than actually working in the triage process. The page just has words — the real world has emotion, stress, sounds that can all overwhelm someone in a matter of minutes. Students put through training scenarios are going to be more aware of how they react in a stressful situation, and learn how to carry on with their job in the midst of chaos. Interacting with real people, both victims and other responders, also promotes a certain focus on the person.

Training also promotes a culture of safety. Many mistakes in industrial accidents can be attributed to a lack of safety precautions or concern for safety. If regard for workers is placed low on the priority list and a disaster does strike, human life is not as protected as it could be. To address this, training facilitators insist that responders think of safety first, so much so that at some point it becomes secondhand nature.

One example that stands out is training at Disaster City. Responders to a disaster are trained that as they approach a disaster zone, safety has to be considered. First, is the safety of the responders themselves. While that may seem selfish, if the responder is not safe they cannot respond effectively and may create a new incident. Next is the safety of any victims and then last, the safety of the material items. Human life is of top priority.

One of the Aggie core values is of leadership, and disaster preparedness continues to create leaders ready to face the challenges that come with catastrophes, one simulation at a time.

Jennifer Reiley is a telecommunication senior and assistant managing editor for The Battalion.

DISASTER DAY CONTINUED

"[Our] goals are to improve the outcomes of patients by allowing our students to learn whether they successfully treat a patient or if they make a mistake," Cooper said. "We do have debriefing sessions after the simulations and, no matter what, they're going to be constructive for each student, and we're going to take away learning points."

To create a more realistic experience in treating injuries such as burns, wounds and fractures, stage make-up was applied to the victims, played by volunteers. Caretaker students dealt with a wide spectrum of medical emergencies, from cardiac arrest to child birth.

Callie Davis, nursing senior, said the actors stuck to their scripts and made the experience as realistic as possible.

"It definitely helps to get to apply it in quick situations like this where it's like real life," Davis said. "The actors really played their parts well and they didn't cut us any slack."

Cooper said volunteers have to strictly follow their "cases," or scripts detailing the victim's medical problems, in the order they unfold.

"If the nurses and the doctors and the pharmacists do the right interventions, the patient may get better," Cooper said. "If something is not corrected in that time frame, the patient is going to decline and then at some point the patient may start to have a heart attack, may have a seizure or possibly may even die."

This year's Disaster Day included several new players — representatives from the School of Public Health, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences' Veterinary Emergency Team worked along-

side nursing students.

"This year the School of Public Health is involved. They have [an] interesting role — they're going around and looking for people who break infection control measures, or who have bad posture when moving and manipulating patients," Cooper said. "We also have vet-med outside. We're just trying to get really interdisciplinary so that everybody can communicate and work better together."

Angela Mountain, a College of Nursing faculty advisor for Disaster Day, said students need to be able to work well with a team.

"They need to be able to prioritize patients, they need to be able to respond if there's an incident, so we want to make sure that they can address who's the most important patient and where are they needed," Mountain said.

Brooke Morgan, student in the College of Nursing, said the gym was quartered into four

pod — groups of healthcare students — that functioned independently.

"Each pod has a charge nurse, it has its set of staff nurses, it has its attending physician, and they are their own unit," Morgan said. "Before they came out they were in a team building room and they were discussing how they were going to run their unit and the roles that each person was going to be having."

The day's schedule ran through student team building sessions and two disaster simulation sessions followed by debriefings and a presentation by a Red Cross speaker.

Trisha Sheridan, assistant professor in the College of Nursing and faculty advisor to Disaster Day, said the event was sponsored by the A&M Health Science Center, the American Red Cross, USMD Health System and local businesses.

FOOTBALL

Price, Obioha: team still adjusting to Chavis' new system

By Cole Stenholm

▷ The sun set on spring practice number nine Thursday evening for the Texas A&M football team, and new defensive coordinator John Chavis was the topic of discussion for defensive end Julien Obioha and defensive end coach Terry Price, who stopped for interviews after the team was dismissed.

"You just got to look at it, everybody gets a clean slate," Obioha said. "All spots are open. You got to make your claim to a spot. You know it doesn't matter if you started two or three years, or are a returning starter, it doesn't really matter. A new scheme, all the spots are open, so you just got to study your playbook like you're a freshman."

Obioha acknowledged a clear transformation in Chavis's system and admitted that he has had to alter some of his own defensive techniques so as to mesh with the Chavis prototype for his position. But, Obioha believes he's coming along just fine, and coach Price echoed that.

"I tell you what, he's really improved," Price said. "He's had a lot of time to work at it, that's one thing we've stressed more than anything this spring. He's worked at it. Obviously, I don't think he's blessed with the skill set that some of those other guys have, speed, quickness, an



Lenae Allen — THE BATTALION

Defensive end **Julien Obioha** answers questions concerning new defensive coordinator John Chavis.

extra first step, but to me, what he lacks there, he makes up with technique and some hand speed, and some upper body techniques.

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year's SEC tournament is in its backyard at the recently completed Hildebrand Equine Complex.

"Our athletes are incredibly proud of their facility," said McKay. "They know they are very blessed to have this facility. They also know what it is like to not have a home and a locker room, so having this facility for them has been a tremendous addition to our team. It is always nice to compete where you feel comfortable."

The Aggies, who have yet to lose a home match this season, are a perfect 6-0 at Hildebrand. Despite the homefield-ad-

vantage, McKay said the Aggies will not be riding the same horses they ride during the regular season.

"To make the event as neutral as possible, all four schools bring horses for post season meets," McKay said. "Each team ride horses from schools that are not in their bracket to ensure the competition is fair. Therefore, the traditional home field advantage is not as large as it can be during regular season meets. Still, we are very excited to showcase our fabulous facility."

The Aggies take on the Gamecocks at 10 a.m. Friday. The consolation match starts at 9 a.m. Saturday and will be followed by the SEC finals at 1 p.m.



Cody Franklin — THE BATTALION

Junior **Logan Pluhar** rides in horsemanship competition against Auburn.