

ROUNDING UP CAMPUS NEWS SINCE 1900

# THE BAYLOR LARIAT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2007

## Picking a church not easy for your average Bear

By Jackie Hyland  
Reporter

Turning off the alarm early Sunday morning and asking yourself where you should go to church today? isn't just a question for freshmen. Upperclassmen are partaking in the weekly event of "church hopping" just as much as freshmen are.

"As a freshman I just went to churches where I could get rides," The Woodlands junior Kayla Ritter said. "Then when I got a car I started trying places I wanted to go to."

Ritter said her experience in the beginning was dictated by her circumstances of not having a car, but she said she also

believes she has matured and grown and so has her decisions about where she goes to church.

"I think your junior year you are in the groove and you start to know who you are, so people change churches from something they had at home to something they want," Ritter said.

She said she finds herself being involved in different aspects of different churches and is still trying to figure out her role in the church.

Dallas senior Clay Sollers said he hasn't exactly found a "church home" in all his time spent at Baylor. He has spent significant amount of time at three different churches throughout

his four years.

Sollers said he believes the changes in where he went to church are due to personal changes between his freshman and junior years.

"I went to one church for awhile because it was more about my friends who went there, then I went to another because I really felt challenged by the teaching, and then I made the last switch because I really enjoyed the community and real-life application of the sermons," Sollers said.

Sollers said he believes frequently changing churches isn't ideal, but he was grateful for the time he spent at each church. Sollers said they each were a

good fit for the "drastic changes" he made between freshman and senior year.

Rockwall junior Matt Yarbrough said he believes students are changing so much they are unsure of who they are or what they believe, and that makes it difficult to find a place to go to consistently.

"I've been all over," Yarbrough said. "I really haven't found a place where I can serve or connect."

University Ministries has many resources for students in search of a church. They have a Web site with a directory of all of the churches in Waco and a pamphlet titled "7 Steps To Choosing a Church."

Amanda Horton, office manager of University Ministries, said they also have a network of church people they know in the Waco community, so if a student is seeking advice they can direct the student to specific people to talk to in a particular church community.

Ben Dudley, community pastor at University Baptist Church, said it's better for students to try and stay at one church.

"Just think about our culture and the divorce rate," Dudley said. "People have a hard time with commitment, and if you encourage people to try a lot of different places, as soon as something wrong comes up they will probably leave."

Dudley also said he believes we need to get rid of the "consumer mindset" when looking for a church. "I think if people approached it differently and thought, 'what can I bring to this community?' they would have an easier time getting involved in a church," Dudley said.

Likewise, Drew Steadman, college administrator at Antioch Community Church, said he believes there is value in faithfulness to a church.

"You are never going to find a perfect church," Steadman said. "But you will find an amazing church."

Please see **CHURCH**, page 4

## Group allotted \$800

Student Senate funds Beta Chi Theta fundraiser event

By Anita Pere  
Staff writer

At Thursday's meeting, Student Senate officials discussed the allocation of student life funds to Beta Chi Theta fraternity's Gridiron Games charity fundraiser.

In the first allocation of the year, the government voted to provide \$796 to the fundraiser instead of the requested \$1,358.

Some Senate members said they believed the fraternity asked for too much money for an event that may not raise more than a couple hundred dollars. Kansas City, Kan., senior Thomas Herndon, president pro-tempore, had mixed feelings on the government's decision.

"I'm glad the bill still passed and I believe (Beta Chi Theta) will do their best with the money given, but I'm concerned as to the cooling effect this may have on groups coming to us in the future," Herndon said.

Some of the concern grew from the finance committee's understanding that the fundraiser's T-shirts would be free.

In fact the T-shirts will only be given away to paying participants and other students would be required to purchase shirts.

The Gridiron Games will be a video-game challenge fundraiser to support the American Cancer Society and the Ronald McDonald House. Participants will play on Play Station 2 games to win the grand prize of a Play Station 3.

New freshman, sophomore and junior class senators took the government oath promising "to uphold the constitution of the Baylor University student body, so help me God."



David Poe/Lariat staff

## Just 'Chil'in'

Albuquerque, N.M. senior Ryan Chilson, "DJChil," mixed music Thursday night at the Delta Delta Delta crush at Bear Park.

## Baylor center to undergo internal audit

By Shannon Daily  
Reporter

Once again New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo is handing out subpoenas to universities for receiving kickbacks from third-party providers. This is causing a nationwide review of collegiate finances in a variety of areas.

Third-party providers perform different types of services for universities, such as setting up study abroad programs, and in return, receive payment from the university. This isn't always illegal, but subpoenas are issued when

the organization provides kickbacks to the universities in exchange for the university steering students toward their programs.

"The last issue that affected the university was the problem with the student loan providers," Juan Alejandro, director of Internal Audit and Management Analysis, said.

In April, instances of universities illegally profiting off student loan choices were exposed. Baylor officials received harsh criticism for their relationship with Education Finance Partners, a student loan provider known

for its kickbacks. However, the situation was quickly dealt with, and the revenue-sharing agreement was reversed, returning \$4,207.48 to Baylor students who the university had profited off of, according to the "Baylor Statement About Education Finance Partners" issued April 13.

This time Cuomo is after athletic and study-abroad programs. As of late August, 40 athletic departments and five study-abroad programs at different universities had received subpoenas, according to The New York Times and USA Today.

Baylor officials are taking this all in stride.

At the request of Michael Morrison, director of the Center for International Education and Jo Murphy Chair, some time over the course of the next year the center will be undergoing an internal audit.

"Anywhere large amounts of cash comes in, you have to be careful," Morrison said.

However, Morrison doesn't believe there's any reason to think the problems occurring at other universities are happening at Baylor.

Please see **AUDIT**, page 4

## Records may break Saturday

Bears look to improve against TCU

By Brian Bateman  
Sports writer

Last weekend's victory over Rice forced Baylor's record-keepers to learn how to spell Szymanski.

But the one name that didn't appear was Whitaker. Brandon Whitaker, the Baylor "F"-back, is just six receptions short of tying the school record for career receptions by a non-receiver.

The Bears will look to get him that record as Baylor (1-1) hosts Texas State University (1-1) 6 p.m., Saturday, at Floyd Casey Stadium.

But head Coach Guy Morriss doesn't want his team gloating.

"Records will come if you are executing the way you need to execute," Morriss said. "We don't want to celebrate too long. I know there are some mistakes that have to be fixed."

And even though the Bobcats are in a lower division, recent history has proven that teams in the Football Championship Subdivision, formerly I-AA, cannot be taken lightly.

"Anytime you step on the field you can't look over or past anybody," linebacker Joe Pawelek said. "Play what your coaches say, play it hard and everything will work out."

Texas State nearly defeated Texas A&M University in College Station in 2005, losing the shootout 44-31.

And earlier this season, the No. 5 University of Michigan Wolverines lost to Appalachian State University 34-32.

And if Baylor has any chance for a bowl game, head coach Guy Morriss knows there can't be any mistakes.

"We have to keep improving and I certainly don't want to end up in a situation like we did in 2004, or a situation Michigan had to go through," Morriss said Tuesday. "If you called Appalachian State, they'd say it wasn't a surprise to them."

That 2004 situation was a last-second victory over the Bobcats.

Baylor raced out to a 21-3 halftime lead thanks in part to linebacker Justin Crooks' 9-yard fumble return.

Please see **GAME**, page 4

## Tsunami kills at least 10 people in Indonesia

By Anthony Deutsch  
The Associated Press

PADANG, Indonesia — The ground shook so hard Yulinar had to grab a table to steady herself. Minutes later, she heard a warning crackling over the speakers of the neighborhood mosque — a tsunami could crash into her fishing village on Indonesia's Sumatra island at any minute.

But despite the inten-

sity of the shallow undersea earthquake, no waves lashed the beach and the family shack was undamaged.

A quirk of nature sent the full force of the tsunami out to sea, preventing a repeat of the 2004 Indian Ocean disaster that killed more than 230,000 people — most of them on Sumatra.

"We heard the mayor's voice and then ran up a hill," said Yulinar, a mother

of five, of the 8.4-magnitude quake that shook Indonesia on Wednesday. "It was very bad. I was so scared a tsunami was coming."

A series of powerful earthquakes and aftershocks followed over a 24-hour period Wednesday and Thursday, damaging hundreds of homes, mosques and schools, and unleashing a 10-foot-high tsunami. At least 10 people were killed.

But the huge mass of wa-

ter spawned by the initial 8.4-magnitude quake was pushed to sea rather than land, said Mike Turnbull, a seismologist at Australia's Central Queensland University.

"It could have quite easily have been the other way," he said, noting that pressure between the shifting Australian Indian and Asian plates has been building up over hundreds of thousands of years and was ready to explode.



Associated Press

An Indonesian man leans Thursday on his house, damaged by a strong earthquake in Lais, Bengkulu, Sumatra island, Indonesia.

# Side order of crazy comes with role of superstardom

Lately I've been noticing a trend in the entertainment headlines: Celebrities gone crazy. And they mean it literally. It seems like the more fame or success celebrities receive, the more they lose touch with reality. There are so many examples of uber-celebrities that have fallen into this trap that it would be impossible to explore them all. Many times, you can just mention a name and the first thing that probably pops into your mind is "crazy" or "insane." Earlier in their careers, these celebrities seemed to be completely normal people with

just maybe a little extra talent or good looks than the average Joe. Take for example Tom Cruise, Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, Whitney Houston—all crazies. Tom Cruise in *Top Gun* or *Jerry Maguire* had girls swooning and critics loving him, but after Scientology came along and he began jumping on couches like a crazed lunatic, opinions changed. Lindsay Lohan was that cute little freckled-face girl who played twins in the 1990s remake of *The Parent Trap*. Oh, you forgot about that, huh? Maybe it was all the coke and car crashes that clouded your



## point of view

BY AMANDA ROBISON

mind. Britney Spears – I don't even need to go there. Even some of the most talented people of our time, after reaching the top of their game in their respective fields, have completely lost touch with reality and gone off the deep end. Whitney Houston captivated audiences with a surpris-

ingly good performance and an unmatched vocal talent in *The Bodyguard*. But in recent years, all we've heard from that knock-out voice is, "Crack is whack." The same can be said for one of my favorite singers of all time, Lauryn Hill from the Fugees, whose immense critical success got the best of her and landed her in looneyville. It's so sad to think that all this talent has seemingly gone to waste, but is it our fault? Did we make them this way by granting them so much success and adoration? Now all we can do is sit around and watch the

train wrecks happen over and over again. And how can we mention train wrecks without mentioning the "Kings" Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson? Were there ever two more famous (or perhaps infamous) celebrities who were undone by their own success? Elvis, God rest his soul, burst on the scene with an enthusiasm, uniqueness and talent that the world had never seen and declared himself the "King." But he ended his reign abruptly (and probably in a rhinestone-encrusted jumpsuit) on a different kind of throne.

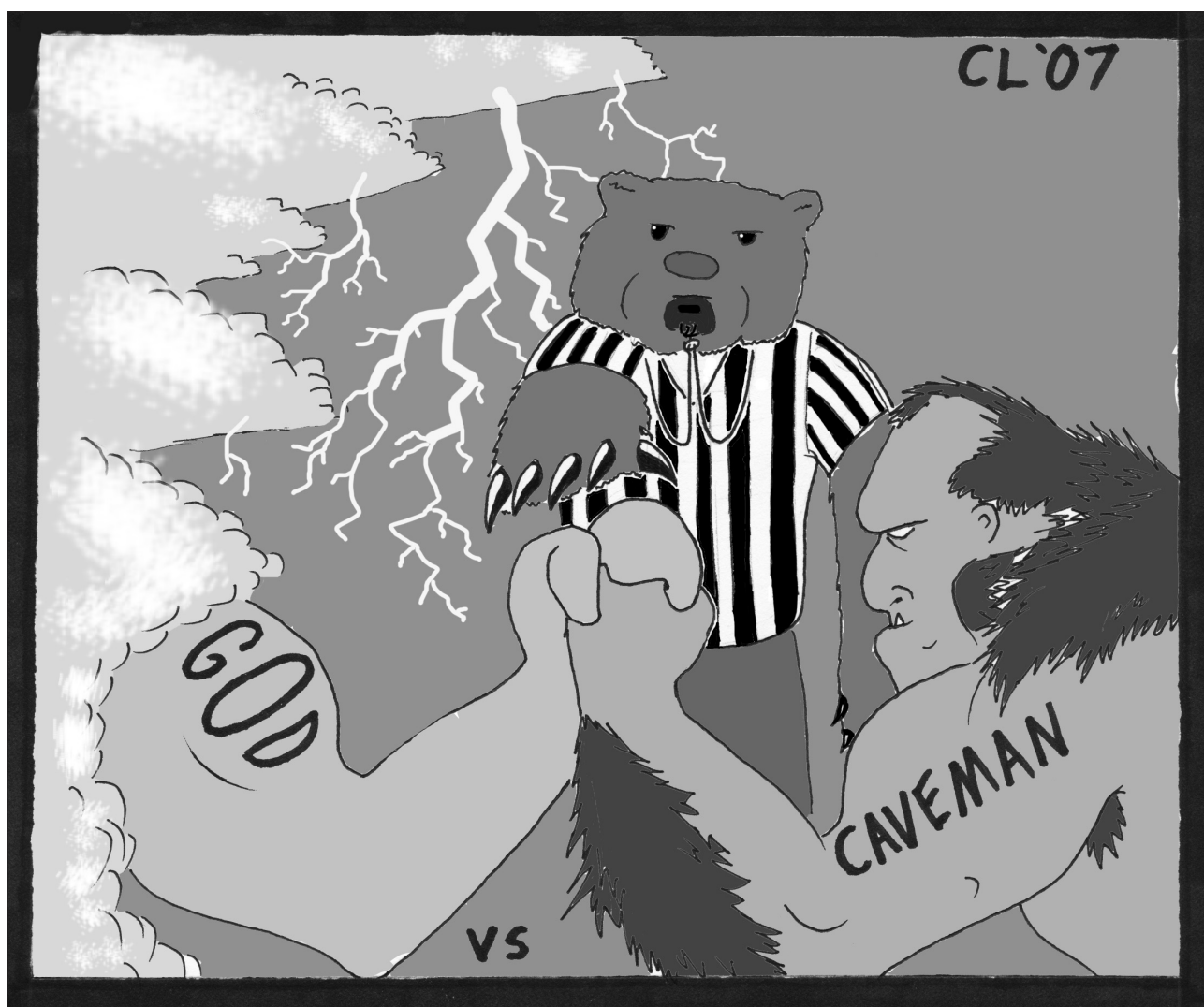
And where do you even start with the "King of Pop," Michael Jackson? He was the enormously talented and adorable youngster who led the Jackson 5 to the top of the charts and then broke barriers on his own with his innovative style and killer dancing. It seems like the success of these artists just went to their heads – and then exploded. It seems like this success essentially caused the loss of their minds. Maybe the idea of insane success really is just that. Amanda Robison is a senior journalism major from Waco.

### Editorial

## BU opens old wounds with Marks

Mark Twain once said the pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple. Sometimes in institutions of higher education, it's easy to see what Twain was talking about. Case in point: Baylor's most recent conflict. The problem began when Dr. Robert Marks, distinguished professor of computer and electrical engineering, posted research relating to intelligent design on his personal Web site hosted by Baylor's server. Marks had no disclaimer on his site disassociating the research from that conducted under Baylor approval, so university officials shut down the site and then met with Marks to discuss the terms under which the site would go back up. It still hasn't gone back up, and conspiracy theories are flying about infringement of academic freedom and administrative hypocrisy. It would be nice to get to the bottom of this.

The official line is that Baylor, being conscientious about its name, is merely protecting itself from being seen as endorsing something it hasn't. And if this were clearly the case, that would be fine. Baylor has every right to disassociate itself from research it has no official hand in. But the fact that this is intelligent design research seems to have something to do with creating this circus. It's a hot-button academic issue, especially with Baylor's history, and for the sake of not only the university's reputation but also its relationship with its professors, it would seem prudent to settle any conflicts as quickly and amiably as possible. Unfortunately, it looks like it's too late for that. Marks and his attorney



have been attempting to reach an agreement with Baylor's general counsel about what will be on the Web site when it goes back up on Baylor's server. As long as it is clear that Marks' research is clearly separate from his officially recognized research, there shouldn't be any further problem. Marks is a distinguished professor pursuing research in his field, and he deserves not only academic freedom, but also the common courtesy of honest and open communication. The Baylor administration has only further exacerbated the situation by not being straightforward about why they

don't want to be affiliated with Marks' research in the first place. Baylor administrators are free to regulate their stamp of approval on Web sites, but if they plan to do so, they should follow this policy across the board. If not, they at least shouldn't pretend this whole thing is merely arising from a technicality. That's insulting the intelligence of all the parties involved and all those who have proudly chosen to associate themselves with Baylor. It is unfortunate that Baylor has come into the academic spotlight for

this controversy. It is unfair to professors not only in sciences, but also in other fields, that their scholarly research and teaching accomplishments get overlooked or overshadowed time and again by occasional drama such as this. Marks, no doubt, would have preferred things to proceed differently, but all professors at Baylor feel the effects of this as well. It is a shame that these disagreements become arenas of administrative politics and cast a misrepresentative light on the academics of the university as a whole.

### Opinion policy

The Baylor Lariat welcomes reader viewpoints through letters to the editor and guest columns. Opinions expressed in the Lariat are not necessarily those of the Baylor administration, the Baylor Board of Regents or the Student Publications Board. Letters to the editor should include the writer's name, major, graduation year, phone number and student identification number. Non-student writers should include their address. Letters that focus on an issue affecting students or faculty may be considered for a guest column at the editor's discretion. All submissions become the property of The Baylor Lariat. The Lariat reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, length, libel and style. Letters should be e-mailed to Lariat\_letters@baylor.edu or mailed to The Baylor Lariat, One Bear Place #97330, Waco, TX 76798-7330.

### Corrections policy

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### Letters to the editor

#### Texas' Religion Act is a sham

Kudos to Brad Briggs for his well-reasoned column on religious liberty and the separation of church and state. Texas has become a major battleground for these issues in the past year, and that's not a good thing. While it may help to get our great state into the constitutional law books more often, the people have to suffer. The worst part is that it's the students who will be doing the suffering. Legislation like the inappropriately-named "Religious Viewpoints Anti-Discrimination Act" is nothing more than a sham perpetrated on the public by a group of lawyers who make their living suing schools for religious

discrimination. Its purpose isn't to broaden free exercise, but to provide more income for these attorneys. Despite the foregoing, however, Mr. Briggs is an example of just how well students can do in our educational system. He displayed a firm grasp of the history, sociology and philosophy of the United States. Lane Haygood Law student

#### 'Under God' column on target

Brad Briggs' comment on politicians' insertion of "under God" into the Texas pledge was right on target. And it suggests two questions: How on earth did Texas manage to make it all the way to 2007 without that

addition to the state pledge? And how did our nation manage to win two world wars against an enemy whose troops wore the motto "Gott mit uns" (God is with us) on their uniforms if Congress did not add "under God" to the national pledge until after the Korean War? Rather than wearing their piety, real or pretended, ostentatiously on their sleeves, politicians should spend more effort dealing with society's real problems. Does God really need their help? Edd Doerr President, Americans for Religious Liberty

#### Ed board uses relativism

When I read through Tues-

day's editorial "So many nukes, so little need," I was appalled by the lack of vision and the cynical gyroscope that this editorial board views our country through. Obviously, careless management of nuclear weapons is unacceptable, but I do not agree with links made to our foreign policies regarding the war on terror and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The board feels that we demonstrated a "lethal ineptitude" when it comes to all issues nuclear. I guess they think Bush and Cheney put those missiles on that plane. Our terrible mistake threatened no other sovereign nation. It threatened our own people. Our country has a major

problem that not only relates to foreign policy, but also to societal issues. Our moral compass is broken. The needle has fallen off and no one is willing to stand up and call someone evil or tell someone they are wrong. Moral relativism is going to be the downfall of us all. When people call us the boogie man of the world and say our country is no better than perverse theocratic and despotic regimes, we are done for. India's help in building democratic institutions was deemed critical for a U.S.-India partnership. While the editorial board has the luxury of looking at everything as black and white, our government does not. Are we using an inevitable event

to our advantage by forming an alliance with one of the up and coming superpowers of the world? Absolutely. I ask the board to please examine its own moral compass to see where the needle points. Jon Antunes Publicizing is Lariat's job Last week The Lariat ran an editorial about how Rep. Chet Edwards, D- Texas, had spoken on campus, but there was a meager turnout because no one knew about it beforehand. Wait a minute, isn't that what the Lariat is for? The same Lariat that was ridiculing the student body's ignorance in this editorial. Chris Bailey Mechanical engineering, 2007

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### su|do|ku

3X3 Sudoku grid with numbers and empty cells for puzzle solving.

### THE Daily Crossword

- Edited by Wayne Robert Williams
ACROSS: 1 Army non-com, 4 Put forth, 9 Way past fat, 14 Fauna display, 15 Intended, 16 Outspoken, 17 SFPD alert, 18 Skirt responsibility, 20 Paraphrase, 22 Military landing field, 23 Baseball's first Hall-of-Famer, 25 Buddy, 26 Crawled, 28 Anti-poverty agcy., 30 Majestic, 34 Crooner Julius, 36 LSAT, e.g., 38 Noun-to-verb suffix, 39 Elec. meas., 40 Copy cats?, 42 NYC theater, 43 Nigerian group, 44 Boondocks assent to a lady, 45 Rustic abodes, 47 Saying, 49 Sine \_\_ non, 51 Prague person
DOWN: 2 Old ruler, 1 Vicar of Christ, 3 Underwater trapping device, 4 Collisions, 5 Old Pac. pact, 6 Japanese port, 7 Young followers?, 8 Singer James, 9 Pitching style, 10 Mishandle, as a grounder, 11 S. Amer. nation, 12 Anatomical pouches, 13 Actress Sommer, 19 Cool or groovy, 21 Clerical errors, 24 Stein, 26 Allegation, 27 Stallone role, 29 Tic-tac-toe loser, 31 Crisp cookie, 32 Tenochtitlan resident, 33 Pet-shop buy, 35 Logger's tool, 37 Rose of Guns N' Roses, 41 Atty. trailer, 42 Timber trimmers, 44 Sang in the Alps, 46 Stop-sign shape, 48 Addison-Steele periodical, 50 Shady retreats, 53 Victory gesture, 55 Golfer Palmer, 56 Mail dept., 57 Old ruler, 58 Evening in Pisa, 59 Old \_\_, CT, 61 Sicilian volcano, 62 Word after 18A, 63A, 3D, 24D and 31D, 64 Science milieu

15x15 crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting points for words.

By Allan E. Parrish Mentor, OH 9/14/07 For today's crossword and sudoku answers, visit www.baylor.edu/Lariat

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# Lady Bears to meet tough competition in California

By Garrett Turner  
Reporter

The Baylor Women's Soccer Team heads to California to play California State University, Northridge Friday and Long Beach State University Sunday for their "toughest" non-conference match-ups this season, according to head coach George Van Linder.

"Going out to California and trying to win two games on the

road will be a good test for us," Van Linder said.

The team has already accumulated five wins, just one short of their total from last season.

"This year we're all good friends rather than just teammates," Mesquite senior Megan Sherrell said.

Not only has the team gotten closer, but there have been two other key improvements from last year.

Last Friday in a game against

the University of Jacksonville, the Bears fell behind early.

In the past, the team might have lost their composure but this year has been different.

"We were excited our team maintained their composure even though they were behind by an early goal," Van Linder said.

Baylor came back and beat Jacksonville 6-2.

The score itself is an indication of another improvement

from last year.

"We are really excited about the potential of the team. We have tremendous opportunities in improving our scoring, which is something we haven't had in the past," Van Linder said.

According to Van Linder, the team is averaging 20-25 shots a game, but the problem is they are only getting 3 to 4 goals per game.

"When we get into bigger games we are going to have less

opportunities. We must capitalize on the shot to goal ratio," Van Linder said.

These bigger games are going to come later in the season when the team meets Texas A&M University and the University of Texas, which are currently ranked 5th and 7th in the nation respectively.

Regardless, this challenge might not be such a bad thing.

The difficult conference play in the Big 12 can only help

Baylor get ready for the NCAA Tournament, Van Linder said.

"Every game is an absolute challenge and test. If we have a weakness they will find it and exploit it," Van Linder said.

The leadership on the team comes from two seniors, Rose Zapata, central defender from Livermore, Calif., and Ashley Noah, goalkeeper from Livermore, Calif. Van Linder said the two are the "bread and butter of the team."

## AUDIT from page 1

But with all of the intricacies of an international budget, he said he wants to make sure everything is running as efficiently as it should.

With constant conversions between dollars, Euros, pesos and pounds, things can get complicated.

The audit could also conceivably save students some money somewhere down the line," Morrison said.

The audit will mainly focus on compliance testing, or making sure that everything is working the way it should with the agreements in the contracts

with the third-party providers Baylor has employed, Alejandro said.

For example, the audit will check, among other things, that study abroad directors aren't receiving illegal benefits from the contract.

"(Morrison) wanted to make sure things were running smoothly, and to have an outside party come in and look at things," Alejandro said.

The athletic department, however, is taking no action at the moment. According to athletic director Ian McCaw, while Texas Christian University and other Texas universities may be involved with the lenders under investigation, Baylor isn't.

## CHURCH from page 1

Steadman also said that just as there isn't a perfect person, but people you can love, so it is the same with the church.

"There's a lot of value in taking time to look around," Steadman said. "But don't float forever." Steadman emphasized the importance of taking the decision seriously, seeking ad-

vice from those you respect and making sure students have the right expectations.

"As people get older and realize what they want, take what others say with a grain of salt and form their own opinions," Chicago junior Ray Small said.

Small has attended multiple churches while at Baylor and realized that his changes were due to "growing up" and taking a different viewpoint on church.

## GAME from page 1

But the second half momentum flipped away from the Bears. Texas State's backup quarterback Chase Wasson brought the Bobcats within four points of the Bears at the end of the third.

Baylor gave up two quick scores in the third quarter, including a 73-yard touchdown reception.

After a late Baylor field goal, Wasson drove into Baylor territory with 1:33 remaining. With the Bobcats moving down the field at will, Baylor linebacker Justin Crooks made his second big play of the game, freeing the ball from Wasson's hands, enabling teammate Maurice Linguist to collect it. Terrence Parks then ran out the clock, giving the Bears a 24-17 victory.

"We still have ten more games on our schedule and for us to be competitive we have to keep on improving," Pawelek said.

And Baylor's defense will need to improve against an offense that has tallied 932 yards in just two games.

"They have a very solid football team, a couple years ago they played us and we had to play hard to win," defensive coordinator Larry Hoefer said.

Quarterback Bradley George and halfback Stan Zwinggi compose the backfield, which functions mainly on the option.

Zwinggi already has five

rushing touchdowns, while George has passed for 401 yards. And head Coach Brad Wright isn't afraid to add trick plays into the offense.

Last week, wide receiver Morris Crosby threw a 52-yard touchdown pass, the second trick play of the night.

Baylor's offense, which showed signs of progression last Saturday, will have to do without wide receiver Mikail Baker.

Baker joins left offensive tackle Jason Smith on the injury list. Neither is expected to return before conference play.

"We lost Mikail Baker for about 4 weeks with a broken collar bone," Morriss said. "It was on a kickoff return, and it looked like the tackle just drove him into the ground on his right side."

But offensive coordinator Lee Hays thinks depth at the position will make up for the loss.

"We're two deep overall, three deep at some spots," he said. "But we've got to keep improving."

### Game Notes

Baylor is 6-0 against the Bobcats - former Texas State head Coach David Bailiff is currently the Rice head coach.

Place kicker Andrew Ireland was the Baylor kickoff specialist for two games in 2005... The Bobcats are -5 in turnover margin while the Bears are -2.



Anti-war demonstrators gather in Lafayette Park, Thursday across from the White House in Washington, as President Bush addresses the nation.

# Bush announces partial troop drawdown

By Terence Hunt  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - President Bush, defending an unpopular war, ordered gradual reductions in U.S. forces in Iraq on Thursday night and said, "The more successful we are, the more American troops can return home."

Yet, Bush firmly rejected calls to end the war, insisting that Iraq will still need military, economic and political support from Washington after his presidency ends.

Bush said that 5,700 U.S. forces would be home by Christmas and that four brigades - for a total of at least 21,500 troops - would return by July, along with an undetermined number of support forces. Now at its highest level of

the war, the U.S. troop strength stands at 168,000.

"The principle guiding my decisions on troop levels in Iraq is: return on success," the president said, trying to summon the nation's resolve once again to help Iraq "defeat those who threaten its future and also threaten ours."

With no dramatic change in course, Bush's decision sets the stage for a fiery political debate in Congress and on the 2008 presidential campaign trail. Democrats said Bush's modest approach was unacceptable.

"An endless and unlimited military presence in Iraq is not an option," said Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, a former Army Ranger, who delivered the Democratic response.

"Democrats and Republicans in Congress - and

throughout the nation - cannot and must not stand idly by while our interests throughout the world are undermined and our armed forces are stretched toward the breaking point," Reed said. "We intend to exercise our constitutional duty and profoundly change our military's involvement in Iraq."

The reductions announced by Bush represented only a slight hastening of the originally scheduled end of the troop increase that Bush announced in January. When the cutbacks are complete, about 132,000 U.S. forces will be in Iraq.

Bush's speech was the latest turning point in a 4 1/2-year-old war marred by miscalculations, surprises and setbacks.

Almost since the fall of

Baghdad, in April 2003, U.S. commanders and administration officials in Washington mistakenly believed they were on track to winding down U.S. involvement and handing off to the Iraqis. Instead, the insurgency intervened and the reality of a country in chaos conspired to deepen the U.S. commitment.

Bush said Iraqi leaders "have asked for an enduring relationship with America."

"And we are ready to begin building that relationship in a way that protects our interests in the region and requires many fewer American troops."

Bush described the withdrawals, and the U.S. forces still fighting in Iraq, as a compromise on which war supporters and opponents could agree.

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