



THE NAUTILUS

Serving Texas A&M University at Galveston since 1972

MARCH 19, 2025

www.tamug.edu/nautilus

@nautilusnews

The votes are in for SGA and Yell Leaders

By Bubba Smith, '25

The Senior Yell Leaders for the 2025-2026 school year are Scott Lyons, Joshua Swasey, and Patrick Cizek. The new Student Body President and Vice President are Lily Chabot and Mattias Kotz respectively.

Since the change to match College Station's 3 seniors and 2 junior yell leaders, this means that Patrick Cizek has never been a yell leader before.

In an interview with Cizek, he stated that he is "very proud of himself" and that, "of course, I feel underprepared; I've never done this before," but that he has "two senior yell leaders that will help me become the best version of myself."

Wyatt Mills and Anthony Garza were elected for Junior Yell.

The Student Government Association and its student body president and student body vice president elections have concluded with a runoff election after the first election failed to finish with anyone having a 50% majority vote. Holly Pawlowski won the runoff but lost in the final election, making Lily Chabot our new student body president.

Chabot's vice president, whom she ran with, Mattias Kotz, also won his election against Deacon Fortenberry. Although the candidates ran together, it is important to remember that any vice president could have won.

In an interview with Kotz he stated that he "isn't worried about being a sophomore" and stepping into the vice president role. Specifying that, "If you put in the work, no matter your age, you can get stuff done, so get involved."

He is excited to work more in the greater Galveston community, and when asked about how he will feel working with Chabot, Kotz stated that Chabot "knows exactly what she wants to do and how to do it," further stating that she is "a girl boss that gets stuff done."

With the elections concluded, the newly elected will undergo intense training to ensure they are well prepared for their roles in the 2025-2026 school year.

Calling for help is now more reliable than ever

By Thomas Yarbrough, '27

Of the 13 existing Blue Emergency Phones, 11 have now been upgraded and are fully operational as of writing.

A new software has been implemented that will monitor the real-time operational status of each phone, allowing Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to track their functionality and ensure everything is working as it should.

In previous semesters, many of the Blue Phones on campus have been plagued by disrepair or dysfunction, leaving students and staff without a reliable

means of communication in emergencies.

There are 13 total blue emergency phones stationed across campus, providing a reliable means of communication for students and staff in emergencies.

In the next two months, two additional Blue Emergency Phones are set to be installed: one in the Sea Aggie Center (SAGC) parking lot and another at the intersection of the new Central Utility Building and Gti Boulevard.

Additionally, a new phone will be added upon the completion of the new Engineering Building.



Left: The Blue Emergency phone outside of ASEC after being replaced.

Right: The Blue Emergency phone outside of TAMMA Hall prior to being replaced.

Photos by Briana Maltez '28

Two of the existing phones will be relocated, but they are expected to be back up and running before classes resume after spring break, according to Assistant Director of EHS Mike Phillips. One by the bridge going to the Texas A&M Maritime Academy Hall (TAMMAH) and another next to the Mary Moody

Northern Student Center (NSC) in The Quad.

A resource detailing the locations of all Blue Phones on campus can be found at the TAMUG Emergency webpage.

This expansion and upgrading of the Blue Phones system is part of a broader effort to continue enhancing campus safety and accessibility for everyone.

With these improvements, students and staff can rest assured knowing that help is just a phone call away, no matter where they are on campus.

Aggie Basketball: Primed for success

By Cooper Lee, '28

On Tuesday, March 4, Texas A&M men's basketball made history after taking down the #1 ranked Auburn Tigers at Reed Arena in College Station. This marks the highest-ranked opponent to be defeated in the history of the basketball program.

All in front of over 12,000 fans in the heart of Aggieland.

It is no secret that we Texas A&M Aggies are obsessed with football. From the midnight yells to the war hymn, football runs through the veins of every part of our culture and identity.

Despite this, the football team has consistently struggled to get over the hump, so to speak, leaving much of the enthusiasm unrequited. Hence the running joke of Texas 8-4, mocking the above-average end-of-season record the Aggies usually find themselves at.

However, athletic excellence is not absent from Texas A&M; the ball just has a different shape.

Their win against Auburn breaks a 4-game losing skid and improves the team's overall record to 21-9 on the year, with a date with another group of tigers in Baton Rouge this Saturday to close the regular season.

With the beginning of the March Madness tournament right around the corner, what better time is there to build some football-level excitement for some of the other Aggie athletes?

For those unfamiliar, March Madness is a massive 68-team single-elimination tournament that ends with a championship game for the whole of college basketball.

The Aggies participated in this tournament last year and were handed a second-round defeat at the hands of the Houston Cougars in a five-point overtime loss.

The culprit of their defeat was poor free throw shooting, missing numerous opportunities for free points in a close contest, an issue that has also resurfaced this season. This season is still quite a positive one overall; however, the Aggies are currently ranked #22 in the nation in a division of over 300 teams.

This ranking has been earned thanks to key victories over Purdue, Missouri, T.U., and most recently Auburn.

This will help our team out on March 16, which acts as Selection Sunday. On this day the 68 teams will learn of their place in the bracket and what their road to the national championship looks like.

Regardless of what their path looks like, they will need to count on big performances from players like Wade Taylor IV, Zhuric Phelps, and Andersson Garcia. Particularly on the offensive side.

For the team as a whole, ensuring they are taking proper advantage of their free throw opportunities will be important to prevent a repeat of last year. They will also need to ensure rebound proficiency to control the game and ensure they possess the ball as long as possible, which is what made the difference in the game against Auburn.

Despite some of the team's struggles this season and in the past, there is much to look forward to late this month, and the Aggies have everything they need to make an impressive run.

All fans have to do is give them the time of day and pour their maroon hearts out just as they would at Kyle Field.

The safety of oysters rests on TAMUG's shoulders

Professor Mona Hochman explains the importance of her lab

By Anna McCollom, '28

If you have ever ordered oysters at a restaurant, there is a high chance that the oyster has been tested and FDA-approved by Texas A&M University Galveston. The Seafood Safety Lab processes and tests oysters nationwide for harmful bacteria to ensure they are safe for consumption.

Before an oyster can make it to a plate, it must undergo a long process of testing and regulation to be deemed safe. Professor Mona Hochman, who oversees the lab, explains why this testing is necessary.



Photo by Briana Maltez, '28

How does Galveston's Mardi Gras compare to New Orleans?

By Audrey Theiss, '28

As most of us know, Mardi Gras on the Strand took place during the last two weekends of February. For those of you who attended, you saw the extravagant festival full of music, beads, and spectacular food.

At the same time, Mardi Gras was taking place on the busy and beautiful streets of New Orleans. Mardi Gras in New Orleans and Mardi Gras in Galveston both offer incredible experiences, reflecting the cultural backgrounds of each city while celebrating the same party spirit.

New Orleans Mardi Gras is globally renowned for its grandeur, with massive parades, elaborate floats, and a rich history that dates back to the 16th century, with its first parades occurring in 1857, according to the official Mardi Gras New Orleans website. And, of course, my personal favorite part: king cake.

The streets of the French Quarter and Canal Street are packed with people all month long, as the entire city pulses with music, dance, and elaborate costumes. People line the balconies on the streets and throw beads, bouncy balls, and may even dump milk on you if you're on the unlucky side of the street that day.

According to Rosenberg Library, the Galveston, Texas, Mardi Gras has been celebrated almost every year since 1867 with the emergence of two rival krewes by 1871, Knights of Momus and Knights of Myth. The celebrations still continue to this day despite high costs thanks to a revival in the 1980's thanks to George and Cynthia Mitchell.

While it too features fun parades, colorful beads, and costumes, the festivities are much smaller in scale, mostly confined to Strand Street apart from a couple of parades that run along the seawall before making their way to the Strand.

Galveston's Mardi Gras is characterized by its coastal charm, with the Gulf of Mexico serving as a backdrop for many of the celebrations. The city's parade floats, while still colorful, tend to be less extravagant than those in New Orleans, and the atmosphere is more relaxed.

Additionally, Galveston's Mardi Gras includes a strong focus on live music, with genres like country, jazz, mariachi, and rock resonating through the streets.

MARDI GRAS CONT.

While both cities share a love for partying, New Orleans' Mardi Gras stands as the iconic month-long celebration, with locals given time off from school and even work. Galveston offers a more accessible, community-oriented take on the celebration.

I attended Mardi Gras at both locations this year, and while I love Galveston, New Orleans definitely takes the king cake this time for its sheer dedication to celebrating and partying.

Looking to make a SPLASH in the industry post-graduation?

Stopping Plastics and Litter Along Shorelines (SPLASH) local project highlight with Kiara Carrasco

By Bubba Smith, '25

Wondering what kinds of things students who graduate from TAMUG do? Some work at NASA, others work for shipping companies, and Kiara Carrasco, Marine Biology class of 2024, has gone on to do something that she is both passionate about and that she is well-experienced with.

SPLASH is a project dedicated to working in the greater Houston and Galveston area that focuses on "coastal conservation, education, and outreach," Carrasco specified. It was created by Blackcat GIS, American Bird Conservancy, and Gulf Coast Bird Observatory.

The SPLASH project does many beach cleanup projects, assesses events to ensure they are conservation-friendly, and provides field trips and lessons.

Carrasco, Conservation Fellow with the American Bird Conservancy, states that her favorite part of working at SPLASH is that she "gets to work with many different groups around Galveston, people of different backgrounds."

Something she did in the College of Marine Sciences and Maritime Studies is being very involved in the community, happy to continue doing something that she loved.

When asked how Texas A&M University Galveston (TAMUG) may have prepared her for her current position, she stated that she "took full advantage of the opportunities available at TAMUG" and that "heavy student involvement" proved to be extremely valuable.

She has been involved in various roles such as student body president, research presentations, and SALT Camp director, to name a few. She emphasized that they "were a big help learning the soft skills and professionalism" that she uses every day. She also mentioned the valuable connections she established with the faculty and staff at TAMUG.

She noted that Briana Zabawa, the current Marine Biology advisor, was a former student who had asked her to volunteer and lead a marine debris site with her.

LAB HIGHLIGHT CONT.

"A lot of oysters have really bad bacteria in them: *Vibrio vulnificus* and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*," Hochman said. "This is something that occurs naturally. I mean, that bacteria has been around longer than we have."

Due to the dangers associated with consuming oysters, the FDA has established a process they must undergo to be considered safe.

"A lot of people will harvest oysters and they'll do something called a 'post-harvest process' to the oysters," Hochman said. "They will freeze them, pasteurize them, or gamma radiate them, all to reduce those harmful bacteria numbers in the oyster. A lot of restaurants will only purchase these post-harvest oysters because they're safer."

Once the oysters are "post-harvested," the Seafood Safety Lab steps in.

"In order to prove they're safer, these post-harvest processors must have their products tested by an FDA-certified lab before they can be sold to the public," Hochman said.

Hochman also described the unique way the lab tests the post-harvested oysters.

"We have to extract the bacteria from the oysters by putting them in a blender and making the grossest oyster smoothie, they're disgusting. And we extract the bacteria and we can identify it," she said.

For the past 26 years, the Seafood Safety Lab has been the only lab in the country certified to conduct this testing. Every FDA-approved oyster consumed nationwide has been processed at this campus lab.

Hochman said the ideal candidate for an undergraduate position in the lab is a student eager to gain proficiency in a lab setting.

"If you can work in the microbiology lab and learn our techniques, you can work in any lab," Hochman said. "[Our undergraduates] generally need to be student workers who are at least a sophomore because they need to have some of that beginning lab experience."

Overall, the Seafood Safety Lab offers a unique research opportunity for marine biology students. Stay tuned for the next issue of *The Nautilus*, where we plan to share more information about lab events on campus.

Zombies aren't real... Right?

Global Warming and COVID-19 increase the future possibility of Cordyceps infection in humans

By Audrey Theiss, '28

For those of you that have seen or played the popular animation series and videogame, "The Last of Us" (new season releasing April 13th), you probably know the fungus that started the end of the world, Cordyceps. For those that don't know the show/video game, Cordyceps is a fungus that infects the brain and turns humans into zombie-like beings.

This fungus is not just a fictional virus for a TV show. It is real and has the same effects as it does in the show/video game.

However, in the real world, it only affects insects. This is because it cannot survive at the temperature of the

human brain; it is only able to handle temperatures between 80 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit, as stated by LabXchange.

When Cordyceps infect an insect, they feed on the proteins in the organism's body, eventually killing it.

After the victim is dead, the fungus blooms out of the base of the insect's head and uses it as a dispersing system to infect organisms passing by.

But what would happen if the earth got warmer because of factors such as climate change or global warming?

Changes like these would hypothetically cause this adaptation-inclined fungus to evolve to survive in a warmer

environment.

With that being said, this fungus living in an environment of about 98 degrees Fahrenheit (ca. 37 °C), such as the human brain, may not seem so fictional after all.

Now, one might think that the human immune system is much stronger than an insect's, so it may have no effect on humans.

Maybe that would be the case if we had not just experienced a worldwide pandemic that compromised almost the entirety of the human population's immune system.

Procedures like amputation, organ transplantation, skin grafts, and especially COVID-19 can weaken the immune

SPLASH CONT.

Carrasco cited this as a pivotal moment in the development of her career and the connections she forged through a seemingly simple and straightforward act of volunteering.

SPLASH is a project focused upon the sustainability of the Houston and Galveston region. They do so through outreach programs, lessons, cleanups, and more.

Their next event is March 11, 2025 and is called "Nest Fest."

Carrasco stated that "students really need to pay attention to volunteering, but the people you meet and the network you will build from volunteering is worth so much more than what you may even find at an internship."

If you would like to learn more about what SPLASH is about, feel free to email Kiara Carrasco at kiaracarrasco@abcbirds.org

ZOMBIE FUNGUS CONT.

system, thereby making it easier for fungi to infect the brain.

Memorial Sloan Kettering Library touches more on the effects that COVID-19 has on the human immune system if you're interested.

That being said, the idea of a full-blown apocalypse is far from imminent.

As for this current moment, there is zero chance of cordyceps infecting humans, so the human species is in the clear for now.

That is, unless we continue the way we have been with climate change. If we don't take action, perhaps the fiction will turn into reality. The human race is just waiting to see.

NAUTILUS STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Bubba Smith, '25

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Jason Osburn, '25

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Anna McCollom, '28

SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHERS
Audrey Theiss, '28
Briana Maltez, '28

SENIOR REPORTERS
Anna McCollom, '28
Thomas Yarbrough, '27
Analisa Jennings, '28

CARTOONIST
Joaquin Perucho, '28

WRITERS & REPORTERS
Quentin Young-Rittenhouse, '25
Cooper Lee, '28
Sean Holmes, '28
Logan Trujillo, '27
William Ferraz, '27
Clayton Syfert, '28
Zachary Holland, '28
Ethan Brown, '27
April Garza, '25
Douglas Gonzalez, '28

SOCIALS

TWITTER
[@the_naut](https://twitter.com/the_naut)

INSTAGRAM
[@nautilusnews](https://www.instagram.com/nautilusnews)

ADVISOR
Dr. Tim Ballingall

SPONSORS
Department of Liberal Studies
Division of Student Affairs

PUBLISHER
TAMUG Copy Center



THE NAUTILUS

The Nautilus strives to represent all information accurately and fairly. If we made an error please let us know. Contact us at tamugnautilus@gmail.com.



Photo by Audrey Theiss, '28

PICNIC Surf Shapes offers art, sustainability, and community

By Ian Blanchard, '29

Galveston boasts a rich history and a unique connection to the sea, particularly its surfing community.

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Greg, a co-owner of the new PICNIC Surf Shapes, in their shop. He was enthusiastic about sharing their mission and the journey that led them to this point.

Originally from Houston, Greg got his start as an artist in North Texas. Greg felt a growing desire for a more sustainable and fulfilling career.

The 2020 pandemic, with its profound impact on many lives, provided the opportunity for a significant change.

Greg found himself crafting paddleboards for a conference, and through this experience, he discovered a deep passion for surfboard making. This newfound interest quickly evolved into a profession that combined his artistic talents with his love for the ocean.

PICNIC Surf Shapes is not just a typical surf shop; it is a sustainable, art-focused project that aims to foster a creative community. Located conveniently near the campus, PICNIC is dedicated to creating high-quality, handcrafted surfboards that reflect both artistry and functionality.

But their offerings do not stop at surfboards. PICNIC also provides other services, including ding repairs, custom designs, and community events, all designed to bring people together and celebrate the art of surfing.

Greg's vision for PICNIC is to create a space where art, sustainability, and community intersect, offering a unique and enriching experience for all who visit. **TAMUG students that bring a copy of this issue into his store may receive the secret Sea Aggie discount.**

If you take one thing away from this article, it should be to get out and enjoy our island's waters. Celebrate Galveston's rugged and historic landmarks. Indulge in the beaches while keeping them clean, and remember that if you're going to surf, surf local.

BRING THIS ARTICLE WITH YOU TO PICNIC SURF SHAPES FOR YOUR SECRET AGGIE DISCOUNT!!