

The Battalion

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Public reacts to National Service Initiative debates

By GENEEN PIPHER

The Battalion

Debate began not only in Congress but also on the Texas A&M University campus as lawmakers began last week considering the National Service Trust Act, a key component of President Bill Clinton's National Service Initiative (NSI). The NSI consists of two bills. The first bill, the National Service Trust Act, would provide a \$5,000 education award to any student agreeing to perform 1,700 hours of approved national service. The students would also be paid a \$7,200 stipend, as well as be provided health and child care if necessary. The estimated to-

tal cost to the federal government is \$15,000 to \$20,000 per student.

The Student Loan Reform Act, the second of the two bills, would allow students to borrow money directly from their college or university.

Those in support of the NSI say the program will bring about an increased sense of pride and service to others while allowing students to finance their higher education.

Dr. Bryan Jones, head of the department of political science, said he is in favor of the National Service Trust Act.

"That act is the essence of his (Clinton's) community service program," Jones said. "I like that. I think it's a good

idea. I think we lack the old Kennedy thing which was kind of a cliché then, but I think it's what we need now. What can we do for our country?"

Jones said people need more ways to serve their country.

"I think the National Service Trust Act is aiming in the right direction by not just limiting national service to military service which we don't really need right now," he said. "This is something broader, housing for the poor and things like that."

Dr. Norman Luttbeg, professor of political science, said programs similar to the NSI have been successful in the past.

"This program is like the old National Defense Loan Program," Luttbeg said. "It

was a program that existed in the '60s and early '70s. You could get college loans and for each year taught in kindergarten through 12th grade or at the university level you got 10 percent of your loan discounted. This was community service in effect."

But opponents of the NSI say it will create new programs at a time when existing student loan programs are being scaled down and cut back.

Christy Strawman, legislative assistant to U.S. Rep. Jack Fields, R-Humble, said Fields is opposed to the NSI in its present form.

"He agrees with the right of every American to have a higher education and the right to be able to afford it," Straw-

man said. "But the way this bill is written, it covers very few students for an extremely high price tag, and it's duplicative. It duplicates a lot of programs that are already there."

Strawman said Fields believes current student loan programs need to be funded before considering new ones.

"He feels that right now we have short falls in our Pell Grant program and other financial aid programs that we can't seem to find enough money for," she said. "Some students have already been promised awards that are going to be canceled for lack of money, and at the same

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Visiting firefighters boost area economy

Training school brings in \$5.3 million

By STEPHANIE MARTIN

The Battalion

Firefighters visiting the Bryan-College Station area every summer to attend Fire Training School bring about \$5.3 million to the local economy, said Susan Gandy, the director of convention services at the Convention and Visitor Center.

"This event has a major positive impact on our community, and we are very grateful that the A&M fire school continues to be successful and that these people continue to come to our community," she said.

Approximately 4,500 participants attend the Fire Training School for three weeks every summer, Gandy said.

"Because of the increase in number of people each week, the fire school is one of the best tourist-type businesses, and one of the best economically," she said.

The firefighters spend their money on hotels, restaurants, gas stations and entertainment, Gandy said.

Local businesses also advertise in the Convention and Visitor Bureau's Welcome Packets that are distributed to all of the visiting firefighters. These packets provide community information on special events for the firefighters, as well as discount coupons for local businesses.

Many establishments display signs welcoming firefighters to the area.

Binesh Patel, general manager for the Ramada Inn in College Station said, "We held a pool party out by the swimming pool to welcome the firefighters."

There is definitely more business in the hotel restaurant during the weeks that the firefighters are in town, he said.

Carol Hill, manager for La Quinta Inn, said the firefighters book rooms a year in advance and make reservations for the next year when they check out.

Ty Harnsberry, assistant manager for Pelican's Wharf, said the two hotels around the restaurant bring in many firefighters.

"We hand out free shrimp cocktail appetizers to the firefighters at the two hotels, and they come to redeem those and usually decide to eat here too," he said.

Harnsberry estimated Pelican's Wharf has seen a 20 to 25 percent increase in business since the firefighters have been in town.

Red Lobster, which also displays a welcome sign for the firefighters, sees an increase of about a hundred customers a day during these three weeks, said Mary Schroeder, the Dining Room Manager. The restaurant prepares in advance for the extra business by supplementing about ten more people to its regular staff.

Cooling it



NICOLE ROHRMAN/The Battalion

John Collingwood, a senior aerospace engineering major from Houston, beats the heat with an ice cream cone while studying in the sculpture outside the Engineering Physics building Tuesday afternoon.

College drug use rises; remains same at A&M

By JANET HOLDER

The Battalion

Although a University of Michigan survey found national college drug use not decreasing as it has in past years, but increasing by 1.4 percent, a Texas A&M survey shows Aggies have maintained the same level of illicit drug use.

Dr. Dennis Reardon, coordinator for the A&M Center for Drug Prevention and Education, said less than 10 percent of the A&M student population uses illicit drugs. Alcohol remains the main problem, with more than 80 per-

cent of all students in a 1991 survey using it.

Sgt. Mark Ricketson, team leader of the Street Crime Apprehension Team (SCAT) for the Bryan Police Department said, "We've seen every social economic group using crack cocaine from the lowest poor and unemployed to the very educated professional people and college students."

Reardon said, "The largest group of drug users in the country are white. They are the white middle class, which breaks the myth of the socio-ethnic group, of minorities being the main group

using drugs."

Drug use at A&M does not match up to national statistics.

"Drug use at A&M is not as high at universities of equal size," Reardon said.

He said the reason may be in part because A&M is "a conservative University in a conservative state."

The small amount of drug users also may be because of the drug busts made by the police in the last six years, he said.

Ricketson said the general decrease in the amount of drug use in the past 18 months is partially

because of the effectiveness of the tactics used by the SCAT.

"In the last 18 months the SCAT team has made 480 arrests with the SCAT's five team members and one drug dog," Ricketson said. "We started the 18 months in October 1991 by identifying 21 major street dealing locations. Now there is only 8, so there is not near the volume (of drugs) as before."

"Because of the decrease in drug locations, students wanting drugs will have to look harder

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DPS uses volunteers to test alcohol's effects on driving

By JAMES BERNSEN

The Battalion

Volunteers at Texas A&M University are driving under the influence of alcohol as part of a program by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to test the effects of driving while intoxicated.

The health and safety division of the health and kinesiology department is promoting DWI education in cooperation with the DPS.

Dr. Maurice Dennis, coordinator of safety education programs in the department of kinesiology, said the program is attempting to determine the effects of alcohol on drivers.

In the program, volunteers are trained in a variety of maneuvers and then are tested performing them under the influence of alcohol.

Dennis said that at .03 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC), drivers perform 9 percent worse than sober, and at .11 BAC, just above the legal level of intoxication, they are 26 percent worse.

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Campus dorm rates increase 4 percent

By JAMES BERNSEN

The Battalion

Students living on campus at Texas A&M will be paying 4 percent more for their dormitory room beginning this fall.

The increase was suggested by the Housing Office and approved by the Board of Regents at their meeting in June.

Bill Kibler, assistant director of student affairs, said this increase is the first in four years. The Housing Office has tried to meet rising costs, but Kibler said there is a point at which the rates must be raised.

"It's our desire not to raise the rent until it's necessary," he said. "Across the history of our residence halls, we've seen the need periodically to increase the rent."

Tim McGinty, Residence Hall Association (RHA) vice president for student development, said the increase will not amount to much.

"It's just a 4 percent increase," he said. "That's not that significant, especially when you think about inflation."

McGinty said RHA is trying to get legislation passed that will mandate a percentage of further increases to go to each residence hall's budget.

The room rents are the only source of funds for the Housing Office and are applied to utilities and bonded indebtedness, or paying for the building and maintenance costs.

Kibler said the 4 percent increase is not a result of the construction of any new facilities or renovations.

Two new computer labs, one for the northside and one for the southside were approved last summer, but have not been begun because of space problems.

But Kibler said these projects are taken into account when yearly budgets are made, as are maintenance and improvements.

Repairs are currently being made to several halls as part of a five-year maintenance and renovation plan.

Rates for Modular Style rooms will now be \$992 a semester, Commons Style will be \$962, Legget and Balcony Style will be \$708, Corridor Style will be \$645 and Non-Air Conditioning Style will be \$399.

Because the residence halls are currently over assigned, students wishing to cancel their housing contract will be allowed to do so and will be refunded their entire \$200 housing deposit.

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WEATHER

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*Forecast for Thursday: partly cloudy, highs in the 90s to near 100. Hot!!

*Your Battalion extended forecast: Same old stuff, partly cloudy, highs in the 100s, lows in the 70s

Tomorrow in Aggielife

A look at:
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Theater's production of "Cotton Patch Gospel"

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