

# THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## Corps leaders announced

By Melissa Sullivan  
THE BATTALION

The Corps of Cadets announced Thursday that juniors A. Spence Pennington and Travis Nichols will lead the cadets during the 2002-03 school year to carry on the 125-year tradition of Corps leadership. Pennington will serve as Corps Commander and Nichols will serve as Deputy Corps Commander.

"The Corps is not intended to be easy, and has high standards but leaders have even higher standards," said Commandant of Cadets Maj. Gen. Ted Hoppood. "The candidates have met all demands asked of them." The two were chosen from a total of 35 cadets by an 18-member board, consisting of military officers and current cadet leaders. Pennington is an agricultural economics major and currently serves as sergeant major of the

Corps of Cadets. He will become the highest ranking cadet in the 2,000-member Corps of Cadets and will lead the largest uniformed body of students outside the U.S. service academies. Pennington is enrolled in Air Force ROTC and seeking a commission as a second lieutenant after graduation. "The Corps is on the way to great things," Pennington said. "I look forward to carrying on the vision and working with an amaz-

ing person like Travis." Nichols is an animal science major and serves as sergeant major of the 1st Brigade, a Corps unit of 400 members. After graduation he will pursue a civilian career, as approximately 70 percent of graduating cadets do. "I am excited to work with the new commandant and the new University president," Nichols

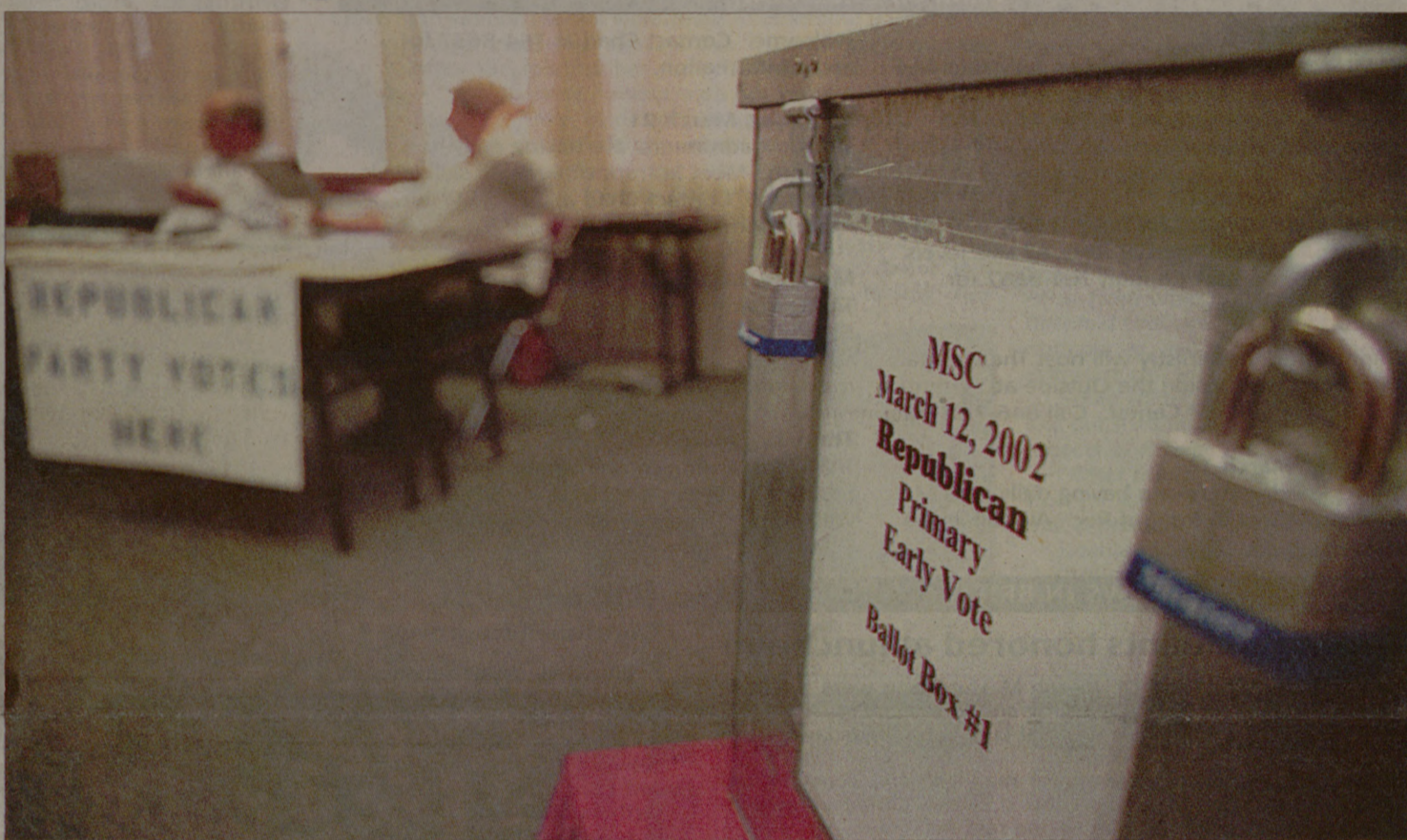
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ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Junior agricultural economics major A. Spence Pennington is congratulated by a friend after being named Corps Commander.

### Early voting



JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Brazos County election officials Marvyn Emshof and Betty Nall and Democratic primary early voting is available at the first floor meeting rooms. Early voting will end March 8.

## Freeze hurts Texas crops

### Unexpected cold weather worries Texas farmers

By Sarah Szuminski  
THE BATTALION

Temperatures dramatically dropped into the teens late Tuesday night, breaking the record low and bringing concern to farmers across Texas.

Bryan-College Station temperatures reached 17 degrees early Wednesday morning, shattering the previous Feb. 27 low of 31 degrees that was set in 1977.

Associate professor in the Department of Horticultural Sciences Dr. Mike Arnold said many crops may have been damaged from the unexpected temperature drop. Arnold said peaches, melons and squash are especially sensitive to freezing temperatures.

"I suspect that a lot (of crops) were harmed. We got unlucky this year," Arnold said.

Associate professor and extension fruit specialist Jim Kamas was assessing the bud damage to crops in Gillespie County Thursday. He mainly deals with fruit crops such as berries, peaches and grapes.

"There was a 71 degree drop in temperatures over a 30-hour period," he said. "I'm concerned." Kamas cut open dormant flower buds to view the extent of the harm caused by the freeze and is predicting damages ranging from 50 to 80 percent.

Still, Kamas said there is hope to produce a full crop even with the loss, because growers eliminate approximately 90 percent of plants in a crop each year to thin out the fields.

Because of this, there may not be any serious loss because of the freeze. Damage to crops is being assessed and will be complete in the next two to three days, Kamas said.

Two rules of thumb used in crop growing are the 50 percent and 90 percent "frost-free" dates, Arnold said. The 50 percent frost-free date is March 1, meaning there is a 50 percent chance there will be a freeze after that date. March 15 is the 90 percent frost-free date, predicting a freeze after this date only one out of every 10 years.

"One thing you can bet on in Texas is fluctuating temperatures," Arnold said, but added that such a severe temperature drop is abnormal for this time of year.

Domestic plants such as flowers can be safe from cold temperatures if they are near a wall or fence, Arnold said. Most of these types of plants should not have been damaged, but tomato plants are not likely to withstand a freeze, he said.

## Health center to adjust excuse guidelines

By Sarah Darr  
THE BATTALION

Physicians and nurse practitioners at the A.P. Beutel Health Center are following strict guidelines in adhering to Texas A&M University Student Rules when providing students with class excuses, officials said.

"The student rules about missing class because of illness are not being changed, we are just trying to apply it more consistently," said interim Student Health Director Terry Pankratz.

Pankratz said the biggest problem the health center faces with excuse notes is when students ask for a note to be excused from a missed class after they have been sick, without

having seen a doctor at Beutel. Beutel employees cannot issue a medical excuse without witnessing the problem, because they cannot determine if the student was really sick, Pankratz said.

He said it is at the physician's discretion whether an excuse will be issued. Student

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### 2002 ELECTION

## Brown challenged by Brazos judge in District 14

Al Jones, Brazos County judge, is challenging state Rep. Fred Brown, R-College Station, in the March 12 Republican primary for the State House District 14 seat. The winner of the primary will be unopposed in the November general elections. *The Battalion* is profiling both candidates and will select a candidate to endorse.

By Rolando Garcia  
THE BATTALION

### Al Jones



JONES

Bryan-College Station needs better representation in Austin, Al Jones said, and his track record as Brazos County judge shows he can get things done.

Jones is challenging Rep. Fred Brown in the March 12 Republican primary for the District 14 seat.

"Seniority without leadership has no real value, and Mr. Brown hasn't demonstrated real leadership," Jones said. "He has not been an effective representative for this district."

Jones said he has worked with Sen. Steve Ogden, R-College Station, to move up Highway 6 on the state's funding priority list, and Brown has done little to get more transportation funding for the district.

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### Fred Brown



BROWN

Poised to assume the position of chairperson of the higher education committee in the Texas House of Representatives next year, Fred Brown said expanding access to college and

keeping costs down for students will be his top priorities in the next legislative session.

Brown is seeking a third term representing District 14 in the state legislature and is being challenged in the March 12 Republican primary by Brazos County Judge Al Jones. Brown, currently vice chair of the higher education committee, will likely become chairperson of the panel if, as political observers expect, Republicans gain a majority in the Texas House.

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**INSIDE**



Sports Pg. 5

**No. 22 Red Raiders invade Olsen Field**

No. 17 Ags open Big 12 play with 3-game series against Texas Tech

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**WEATHER**

**TODAY**

40%	HIGH
	50° F
	LOW
	17° F

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**SATURDAY**

50%	HIGH
	55° F
	LOW
	25° F

FORECASTS COURTESY OF  
[www.collegeweather.com](http://www.collegeweather.com)