

Battalion Editorials

Page 2

THE BATTALION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1955

Which Way Now?

Last week, The Battalion ran an editorial titled "Coming Closer," in which what is probably A&M's most severe problem was stated.

The problem is that A&M is going to have to change, and the next few years are going to decide which way that change will be made.

A&M's educational facilities are good, and are keeping up with the times.

However, students are generally attracted to a school by the comparatively superficial aspects of student life. A&M's enrollment the last few years has increased slightly, but the enrollment of all the other colleges in the state has increased much more. A&M is not getting its share of the over-all state increase.

Since a school needs students to survive, this is the problem that is facing A&M. It's not an easy problem with a pat solution, but we can explore some of the facets of it.

Three Choices

A&M, as it stands now, has three choices: military, mediocrity, or coeducation. A&M is about at the middle stage now, the in-between stage. It cannot continue this way.

For many years after its founding, A&M gained fame as a military school. It was the only school in the Southwest that offered military training, and the comfortable distance of wars made the uniform something desirable.

Then the ROTC program was put into almost every college that asked for it. Students in civilian school ROTC units wear the uniform only a few times a week, and they don't live under military discipline all the time. Yet they receive the same contract pay and commission benefits as A&M students.

Also, World War I, World War II, and the four-year Korean police action came in rapid succession. Almost every American male has at sometime or another been in uniform, or at least been surrounded by uniforms. Because of this, the prestige of all uniforms, including A&M's, has declined. America is just tired of uniforms. These factors have affected A&M's enrollment.

Now to the alternatives: either improve the present situation, or become exactly like other schools. (Admittedly, this is an oversimplification of the problem, but it will serve to start people to thinking about it, which is the purpose of an editorial.)

Others Did It

Three military schools, faced by the same problems A&M has, have become coeducational. They have not been very successful. Few girls entered, but the colleges still had to bear the expense involved in the change-over. The chances are that if A&M were suddenly made co-ed, the result would be the same: not enough girls would enter to gain the advantages of coeducation.

However, coeducation for A&M has been discussed, both unofficially and by the board of directors. Two years ago there was a proposal for merging A&M and TSCW, evidently lost in the shuffle.

The other side is strengthening the military here, to make it a good drawing card and a better training agency. This falls into two categories: inside and outside.

From the outside, A&M and military schools in general will have to receive some additional recognition for the services they perform. A&M ROTC students, because they get what is recognized as better training, should get the increased benefits that go with that, such as assurance of commissions and contracts and increased subsistence pay. The president, the commandant, Texas congressmen, and others have been very active in working for this, and the formation of the Council of Military College Presidents was a step in this direction. But the proposals are now in the indefinite stage.

'Tightened Up'

From within, A&M's military will have to be "tightened up," as the soldiers say. This means making the corps more of a military unit, and less of a playground for college boys with perpetually sophomoric minds.

Here is the heart of the matter, and it is the part that only the students themselves can do. The final responsibility for the quality of the corps, and thereby the attractiveness of the corps, rests with the corps students, particularly the upperclassmen cadet officers.

Some progress has been made in this recently—the consolidation of the corps being one of the most noteworthy. Most of the ranking cadet officers and the other cadets are trying to make the corps a really good military unit, but everybody has to try.

Along with this tightening up of the military program, A&M will have to improve its civilian student program. That is, give the civilian students some student life—an esprit de corps of their own.

This will require starting from scratch; there is no such program now, but there should be. Civilian students are increasing in number, aided by the board ruling making military optional.

Students' Responsibility

Again, this responsibility rests with the students. The civilian students themselves must want a student life of their own, and they must want it bad enough to work for it. If this doesn't work—if the corps and the civilian students can't or won't improve their own lot, then A&M must take the other course, coeducation, and trying to compete with other Texas schools on their own ground.

We realize that we have not really answered the question 'where do we go from here,' but we hope we have presented some of the elements and clarified somewhat the situation.

It is up to the students to decide what type of school they want A&M to be, and to work to make it like that.

A Friend in Need

A friend of A&M and A&M students is having a hard go of it now.

"Pinky" known to generations of A&M students, is in a Galveston hospital, seriously ill. He would probably appreciate nothing as much as a few letters from the A&M students who are his friends.

His address is P. L. Downs jr., St. Mary's infirmary Room 302, Galveston, Texas. "Pinky" will be 71, Saturday.

Letters to the Editors

(Editor's note: All letters to the Editors submitted will be printed, provided they are signed and contain no libelous or obscene material. We request, however, that the letters be kept to about 250 words, because of space limitations.)

Editors:

Don't you worry about the students forgetting the Tonkawa Tribe, Mr. Editor. How could anyone forget when you continuously write your condemning, one-sided editorials? For every time McDade brought the TT's before the eyes of the student body you have scores of times. Can't you understand that the Administration and student body forgave these Aggies when they let them return to A&M. You seem to think that the Executive committee is foolish to believe the ex-TT's. After all, where can you get in life if you don't trust people? How far above people are you?

Most of the TT's are gone now—not because they didn't love A&M, but because they never had a chance. You know, people can only take so much and then they think it best for everyone if they leave. How would you like to be accused and judged everytime you read a Batt?

Tell me, why is it you always look on the dirty side of everything? This year, more than once, you have proceeded to darken the face of an outfit or a person. Sometimes after the person is gone from A&M or even dead. Why not try to do some good for the school? Give credit where credit is due—encourage students to support the basketball team—stress good relations with other schools—These are some of the things that Aggies would like to see printed.

Let us put the Batt behind A&M instead of against it.

Pat Kirksey '56

Editors:

Although it took a rather long time to do so, I finally discovered one good feature in your "coeditorial" of February 17. You know the old story which says there must be some good in everything, no matter how basically rotten it may be. The good in your editorial lies in the fact that you have finally gotten enough starch in your back-

bone to show your true colors: you have come out with more or less wholehearted support for the institution of coeducation at Texas A&M. Thank you so very much for at least being truthful, though somewhat misguided.

So A&M must have "special recognition" as a military college in order to survive as it is today, eh? Never in the past has A&M had any recognition as a military college and as a school for the instruction of good, solid men, both civilian and military? On our country's battlefields, have A&M men generally behaved in a cowardly fashion and never with skill, prowess, or valor? Has the school made no military contributions of an exceptional nature whatsoever, and are its military graduates professionally viewed as black sheep from an inferior fold? Have its graduates entering civilian life had none of the discipline of mind and body and none of the training in the facts of life and in the art of living with others that will prepare them for success? Are Aggie-exes looked down upon as misfits and as unstable persons—are they people who, for lack of "special recognition" of Texas A&M as a military college, are to be pitied because they chose to attend such a school? Have they nothing to be proud of in their sense of belonging to A&M and of sharing such traditions as Silver Taps, the Aggie Muster, the Spirit, and all the other one-for-all, all-for-one traditions of unity and just pride? Oh! the poor, poor souls!

"Recognition!!" you scream. "Give us 'recognition' (or coeducation), or we will surely perish!"—the words echo back through the years and encircle the globe of time and space, rebounding from the souls of the A&M men who have worked to give to A&M its present pre-eminent and unrivaled position at the summit of the mound of higher education. What greater recognition than this top-most position of summit-dwelling, let me ask, can a person desire for a school?

It has always been a prime objective of the A&M College to develop men—men of sound character, level-headedness, sharp minds, strong bodies, and fiery, unquenchable spirits. Has this objective

been lost upon us? Do we no longer need such men in today's world, and do we no longer need an anvil on which to forge them? If so, then—by all means—let us open the floodgates of coeducation and complete civilian life to engulf our school and to dent our anvil. If we do not want to produce well-developed men at A&M, then let us go ahead and turn out well-indulged men, at least (along with their sister "Aggies").

We should point the prow of the ship of our intentions steadfastly and immediately toward one of two destinations. The first may well be only "a short step" away, Mr. Editor. With very little action and even less thought, A&M can easily be converted into a conventional, up-to-date, run-of-the-mill, coeducational flophouse for the girls as well as for the "men." The other course—the one that leads to loftiness and immortality for Texas A&M College, its Spirit, and the spirits of Aggies—is the course which can be charted by realizing that A&M has, potentially, all the "recognition" it will ever need, if it will only become aware of that fact and endeavor to utilize it in a continuing and ever-improving application of the basic principles and inherent traditions which have

(See LETTERS, Page 4)

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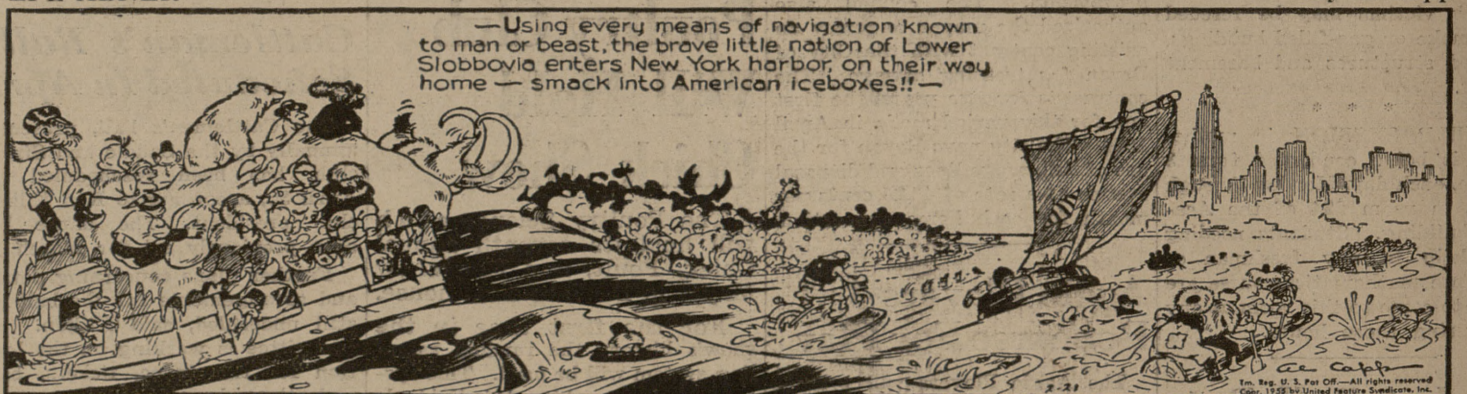
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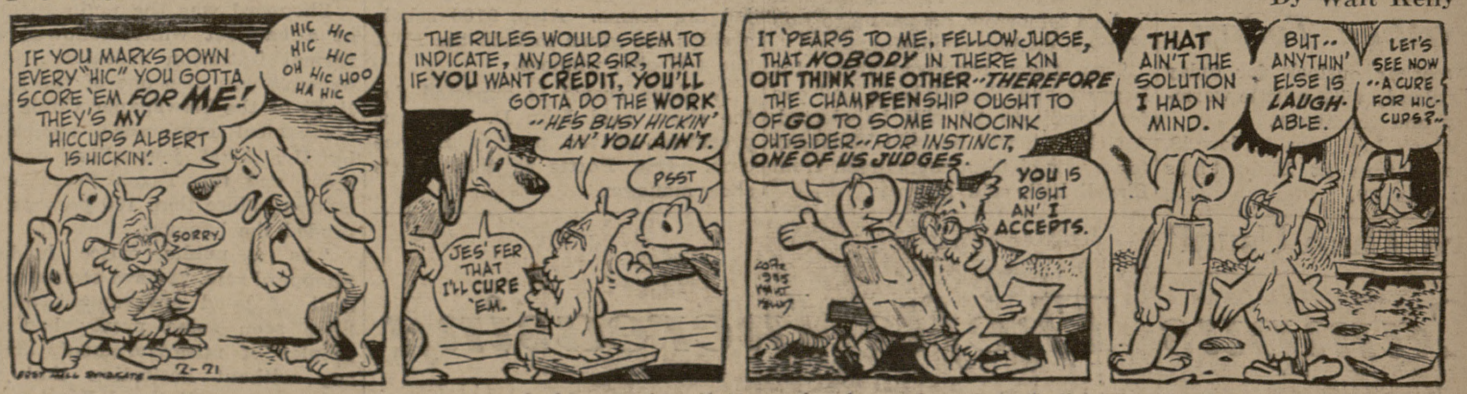
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The Battalion

The Editorial Policy of The Battalion Represents the Views of the Student Editors

The Battalion, newspaper of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and the City of College Station, is published by students four times a week during the regular school year. During the summer terms The Battalion is published twice a week, and during examination and vacation periods, once a week. Days of publication are Tuesday through Friday for the regular school year, Tuesday and Thursday during the summer terms, and Thursday during examination and vacation periods. The Battalion is not published on the Wednesday immediately preceding Easter or Thanksgiving. Subscription rates are \$3.50 per semester, \$6.00 per school year, \$7.00 per full year, or \$1.00 per month. Advertising rates furnished on request.

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Job Calls

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• Wed., Feb. 23—The Pure Oil Company—representatives from the Fort Worth and the Chicago offices will interview chemical, civil, electrical, industrial, mechanical petroleum engineering, physics, geology, geophysics, accounting, business administration, chemical.

• Wed., Thurs.—Feb. 23, 24—Phillips Petroleum Company—majors called for: chemical, mechanical, civil, electrical, industrial, architectural, petroleum engineering.

• Wed., Thurs., Feb. 23, 24—Esso Standard Oil Co. refinery will interview chemists, civil, chemical, industrial, electrical, mechanical engineers for technical work in the refinery. Esso Laboratories will interview chemists, chemical engineers for employment in Research and Pilot Plant work.

Use of fertilizer in the United States reached an all-time high of 23,143,000 tons in 1953.