

Apathy At A&M: The Post Report

The Houston Post's Thursday article in its current series about A&M concentrated on the administrative policies of President Earl Rudder. In the process, Reporter Jerry Lockett analyzed the circumstances of last October's removal of the top three Battalion staff members. "Some have cited the rather weak outcry against The Battalion incident as an example of the apathy of the A&M students about campus affairs," Lockett noted. "Rudder himself says the students are not apathetic, rather they are too busy with their studies for such things."

It is not our intent to rehash the controversy or the way in which the administration dealt with it. It could probably go without saying that The Battalion has cooperated with President Rudder in his wish to protect the reputation of the university by keeping publicity about the situation to a minimum.

But now one of the most widely read newspapers in Texas, and one which has almost surely increased its already-large Aggie readership this week, has chosen to look at the events again; and we feel justified — and compelled — to remark at least briefly on Mr. Lockett's findings. President Rudder's explanation for the apparent apathy here, as quoted in the article, is a reasonable and logical one. Presumably, it was given in response to a question from the Post reporter, and it is hard to imagine a better response to what must have been an unfair question. Unfortunately, it is too charitable to the student body.

The voter turnout in the last general election was less than 11 per cent of the student body. Although the candidates for the top senate office were two potentially powerful vote-getters — an outstanding athlete and a popular Cadet Corps leader — the elections commission chairman remarked that they apparently couldn't "arouse enough interest." A month later, in the Student Senate elections, less than half of that small number of voters turned out. Six candidates were elected without opposition — after the filing deadline was extended until someone finally signed up for one of the positions that had no applicants during the standard filing period.

We wish we could reasonably surmise that the fantastically poor turnout was due to the students' lack of time for anything but their studies, but we feel differently. We think the explanation is apathy.

Considering the awkward position in which the administration found itself last October, it did the only thing feasible within the confines of its policy. Surely there were students who saw injustices in The Battalion's actions, just as there were those who defended them; yet, aside from a few pointless theatrics by a small group of anti-administration students, very little interest was shown by the majority of students in what was happening on their campus.

President Rudder is eminently justified in his wish to prevent wide-scale demonstrations and general strife at A&M which could hurt its image in the same way the University of California has been hurt. But the specter of Berkeley which seems to haunt him does, after all, represent a gross perversion of the principle of idea-interchange which A&M is so sadly missing.

What we would propose, for those members of the student body whose pride in this university was aroused by the Post's unflattering Thursday report, is not a succession of revolts in the name of "academic freedom" or in defense of any and every attempt to oppose administration policies. We don't want another Berkeley any more than President Rudder does; in fact, we don't even want another University of Texas.

What we would like to see is active participation in SCONA, in Great Issues, in student elections. We would like to see better turnouts for the Political Forum. We would like to see discussions and maybe even a few heated

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"... Until th' end of the semester — what else!"

Engineering Hopefuls To Compete

All-State engineering drawing students will be selected from Texas high schools through the 24th annual Drawing Contest sponsored by Texas A&M's Engineering Graphics Department.

Contest problems will be sent to participants Feb. 13, announced Dr. James H. Earle, Texas State Drawing Competition chairman.

"We expect to surpass last year's entry list of 11,000 students from 175 high schools," the department head said.

Participating high school drawing teachers will supervise drawings as a classroom project and select the best three solutions per class for all-state competition at A&M. Four competition classes include working drawings for first and second year students, isometric pictorial and architectural drawing.

All-state competition entries

are due at A&M March 15 with the winners to be announced by April 1, Earle said.

"Many of the high school students who enter the contest will be here May 5-6 for an on-campus contest as part of the Texas Industrial Arts Fair," he went on.

A 14-person committee including Dr. Cliff H. Ransdell and J. G. McGuire, engineering assistant deans, and engineering graphics faculty will judge all-state competition drawings.

Scholarships Are Available

Applications for Spring Award Scholarships are available at the university's Student Aid Office.

Robert M. Logan, student aid director, said about 45 scholarships ranging from \$100 to \$800 a year will be awarded about May 10 after winners are selected by the Faculty Scholarship Committee.

Total value of the scholarships is approximately \$25,000, Logan noted.

Enrolled At T.U.

AUSTIN (AP) — Luci Johnson Nugent is, too, enrolled at Texas University this spring, Chancellor Harry Ransom said Thursday.

Earlier in the day, the registrar's office said it had no record that the President's 19-year-old daughter was enrolled. But the latest registration papers processed by the registrar's office were for last Tuesday.

Ransom said it was against university policy to disclose details about a student's schedule, but a girl who said she was in Luci's class told The Associated Press Luci was taking a non-credit typing course.

The classmate, who preferred not to be named, said the class meets five times a week in the afternoon. She said the Secret Service has the name of everyone in the class.

She said there was no doubt in her mind that reports that Luci will have a baby in June are true.

Luci's husband, Patrick, also is enrolled at the university. He is working on a master's degree in business administration. He is reported taking courses in "management and resources."

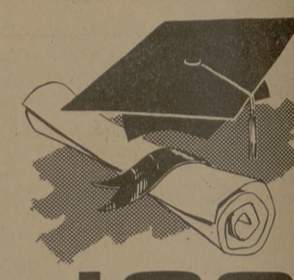
This ended rumors he was dropping school this spring because his job with a television station owned by the Johnson family interests was too time consuming.

The Nugents registered late — registration week ended last Friday — but they were delayed by a snowstorm in their return from a week's visit with Pat's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Nugent in Waukegan, Ill.

Connally Will Seek Fourth Term

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. John Connally indicated Thursday in his strongest statement on the subject to date that he will seek an unprecedented fourth term if a sizeable part of his legislative program is not passed.

He all but said he would seek reelection, and acknowledged with a rueful nod that the filing deadline for next year's elections is less than a year away, in February 1968.




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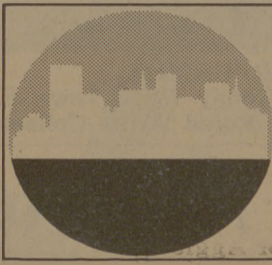
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Campus Interviews

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 15 & THURSDAY, FEB. 16

PEANUTS



By Charles M. Schulz

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