

Compare and see

Batt compares favorably with sample of papers

By WILL ANDERSON
The March 5 Battalion reported that the Student Publications Board had approved a raise for Battalion staff members (Batt wages raised, Page 8). Students may be curious as to why they were raised.

Battalion editor Greg Moses told the Pub Board that increases would make The Batt more competitive with other communications jobs on campus and would help keep the talented journalists on the staff. He said many of the staff members were going to jobs in discount stores and hamburger places because of financial reasons.

The Batt staff had applied for the raises a week before they were raised but action was delayed because the Pub Board asked to know how the Batt's salaries compared with other campus newspapers. The staff took a poll of five random

papers — the Rice Thresher, Baylor Lariat, Texas Tech University Daily, University of Texas Daily Texan and the North Texas State University Daily — and devised a system by which to compare them.

The system involves a point system based on 12 assumptions:

- Circulation — the more the better
- Times published — the more the better
- Wire services subscribed to — the more the worse
- Profit — the more the better
- AP per issue, per cent — the more the worse
- AP per issue, inches — the more the worse
- AP per week — the more the worse
- Local copy per issue, per cent — the more the better
- Local copy per issue, inches — the more the better
- Local copy per week — the more the better
- Total column inches per issue — the more the better

Total column inches per week — the more the better

The categories allow for differences in papers resulting from size and style of production.

All the other papers except the Texas Tech University Daily (which pays reporters double the salary Batt reporters got) have a journalism lab which students must take and must turn in news stories (not features) for academic credit. Journalism students who work for the paper can thus do their job and their school work at the same time.

TAMU journalism students who work for the Batt are not allowed to submit their class work for publication in this paper. Articles submitted by journalism students to the Batt are features and not news.

All journalism students at the other schools are in effect an unpaid part of the newspapers' staffs. With the exception of journalism students who submit feature articles, the entire Battalion staff is listed at the bottom of this page.

The Batt is second in the Circulation category with approximately 19,000 an issue. The UT University Daily is the leader by far with 37,500.

The Batt, Baylor Lariat and North Texas Daily are tied for second in the Number of Times Published at four times a week. The Tech University Daily and the UT Daily Texan lead at five times a week.

All the papers subscribe to one Wire Service except the Rice Thresher which doesn't subscribe to any and the UT Daily Texan which subscribes to two and to a wirephoto service.

The Batt is the leader by far in Profit. So far this year, the paper has made \$24,000, a margin of 18.44 per cent. The UT Daily Texan is second with a \$2,300 profit, a margin of a few per cent. The other papers either make no profit or lose money.

Since the Rice Thresher subscribes to no wire service, it leads in all three AP Categories (percentage and inches per issue, total per week). The North Texas Daily is second in all AP categories and averages 4.6 per cent AP per issue. The Batt is third in all AP categories and averaged 5.2 per cent per issue at the time the report was made. The present rate is 4.8 per cent. The UT Daily Texan is fourth at double that percentage, 10.6 per cent.

The Local Copy Categories have three different leaders. The North Texas Daily (which has a very low advertising percentage) leads the per cent per issue at 66 per cent. The Rice Thresher is third at 47.6 per cent; the Batt is fourth at 32.6 per cent and the UT Daily Texan is last at 21.8 per cent.

The most actual inches of Local Copy per issue is produced by the Rice Thresher at 632 column inches followed by the UT Daily Texan at 632.7 inches, the North Texas Daily at 485 inches and the Batt at 442.5 inches.

The UT Daily Texan has the most Local Copy per week at 3,118.5 inches even though it has the lowest percentage per issue and is second in the actual inches per issue. The Daily Texan is published more often and is much larger

than the other two leaders in the categories.

The UT Daily Texan has the most Column Inches both per issue, 2,730 inches, and per week, 13,560 inches. The Batt is second with 1,433.25 inches per issue and 5,733 inches per week. The North Texas Daily's high percentage of daily local copy is explained because the total column inches per issue is only 724.5 inches.

Using the least points to determine which is the "best" paper shows the Batt (31) to be first, followed by the Rice Thresher and the North Texas Daily (a tie at 32). The UT Daily Texan (34) is third, followed by the Texas Tech University Daily (45) and the Baylor Lariat (53).

The staff structure varies from paper to paper but a comparison may be drawn between the salaries of reporters and editors. UT pays its editor the most at \$360 per month, followed by Tech at \$320, Rice at \$240, NTSU at \$210, TAMU at \$150 and Baylor at \$100.

The relation of the editor's salary to the size of his newspaper is given by figuring the salary per column inch of all copy. Rice leads by paying its editor approximately \$.0225 per inch. TAMU is last at \$.0065 per inch.

Rice also leads the salary per column inch of local copy at \$.047 per inch. TAMU is next to last at \$.018 per inch.

The Batt is thus tied with the Baylor Lariat for the worst salary for the editor. The Lariat is produced in Baylor's journalism labs and has a negative profit margin. The Battalion is produced by its paid staff and is the only real money-making paper in the sample.

Perhaps the biggest factor to consider is the reporters' salaries. Tech leads at \$100 per month. UT has only five paid reporters at \$85 per month; the bulk of their news comes from journalism labs. NTSU and Rice are lab newspapers and the salaries for paid reporters on the Baylor Lariat vary. Reporters on the Batt received \$50 per month.

But that's now past; the Batt staff received an approximate 75 per cent increase in pay. It is no longer tied with Baylor for last on the wage scale; it is tied with UT for fourth.



Editor's notes

Inbreeding not possible

... but administrative control of editor is

By GREG MOSES

If the recent charges of inbreeding on The Battalion imply a preference to promote staff members, then the charges are accurate. But if they imply exclusive benefit to long-standing party-line staffers, they are unfounded.

We try to keep experienced help. But it is nearly impossible for The Battalion to have an effective inbreeding policy. Administrators and newsworthy campus groups should be most aware of our lack of success in keeping experienced people. We tried to begin a system of "beats" where a reporter could cover the same areas of activity throughout the year. Because of high turnover, we gave it up before the fall semester ended.

Let's take a quick look at the editorial staff members and their semesters of experience on The Battalion including this spring: Greg Moses, editor, six semesters; LaTonya Perrin, managing editor, three semesters; Will Anderson, as-

stant editor, five semesters; Mike Bruton, sports editor, two semesters; Rod (Old Man) Speer, city editor, eight semesters; Glen Johnson, photo editor, two semesters; Barbara West and Douglas Winship, news editors, two semesters. Subtracting the experience that each editor has had in his current position, we find that there is an average 1.8 semesters experience before staffers assume editorial positions. Not only is it impossible to inbreed with this turnover, but it is also impossible to place well-qualified, experienced staffers in all editorial positions. Inbreeding implies stagnation; I challenge anyone to show me where The Battalion has stagnated.

The Battalion is partly a non-credit training lab for future professional journalists. We are learning from experience — the accomplishments and mistakes. A staffer usually remembers the lessons of his mistakes longer than he remembers the lessons of his accomplishments.

Also, it is not easy to learn the personalities and policies which make the A&M institution. It takes time to learn the bureaucratic ropes. Any benefits gained from bringing a fresh staff to The Battalion must be weighed against the lack of experience which decreases the expertise of the staff and increases its mistakes.

The Battalion just returned from a successful road trip to LSU where it tied for third place (of 17 campus papers) in the news categories of competition in the Southwest Journalism Congress. Last year The Battalion placed tenth (of 16 campus papers).

Including advertising and magazine competition, the Batt placed thirteenth last year and tied for seventh this year.

Tom Adair, faculty member of the Student Publications Board, said The Battalion has made fewer mistakes this semester compared to last fall. These encouraging improvements can only continue with a carry-over in staff experience.

The Battalion

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the university administration or the Board of Directors. The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting enterprise operated by students as a university and community newspaper. Editorial policy is determined by the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

Address correspondence to Listen Up, The Battalion, Room 217, Services Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

Members of the Student Publications Board are: Jim Lindsey, chairman; Dr. Tom Adair, Dr. R. A. Albanese, Dr. H. E. Hierth, W. C. Harrison, Steve Eberhard, Don Hegel, and John Nash, Jr.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

MEMBER
The Associated Press, Texas Press Association

The Battalion, a student newspaper at Texas A&M, is published in College Station, Texas, daily except Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and holiday periods, September through May, and once a week during summer school.

Mail subscriptions are \$5.00 per semester; \$9.50 per school year; \$10.50 per full year. All subscriptions subject to 5% sales tax. Advertising rate furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 217, Services Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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News Editors: Barbara West, Douglas Winship

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