

Cadets to participate in review

Final Review for seniors in the Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets will be held on the Memorial Student Center drill field May 5 at 3:30 p.m. Approximately 1,900 cadets are expected to participate in the final tribute. Undergraduate commencement ceremonies will be May 5 and 6 in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Graduate student commencement is scheduled for 3 p.m. May 5 in Rudder Auditorium.

Student senate positions open

Four positions are currently vacant in the student senate. These include both a senior and sophomore position in the College of Education, a graduate in the College of Engineering, and an at-large representative from the University Apartments. The deadline for application is Tuesday, May 2, at 5 p.m. Applications may be obtained in Room 216 of the Student Government Office.

Deadline for summer calendar

The deadline for submitting dates and events for the Summer All-University Calendar is Friday. Forms are available in the Student Activities Office, Room 221 of the MSC. Dates for the fall calendar are also being accepted at the time. The deadline for entering events on the fall calendar is July 26.

STATE

Ship picketed as union debates

Labor and management leaders debated Wednesday what to do about four picketers whose protest of a "Soviet invasion" has prevented the unloading of a Russian ship for the past three days. A spokesman for the union officials said union leaders were trying to persuade dock gangs to cross the picket line. "It's a strong effort being made," one spokesman said. "We have the responsibility. But we just can't get our people to go behind the picket lines. You can't force a man." Meanwhile, shipping officials may be seeking court action to move the Soviet ship, Magnitogorsk, to New Orleans with cargo intact. The ship was to unload 20 West German buses at 7 p.m. Monday. The buses are part of a 300 bus-package purchased with 80 percent federal grants for use in 11 American cities. Last month the National Maritime Union (NMU) picketed a bus shipment aboard the Skulptor Golubkina protesting the use of Soviet ships for a federal project while American ships lay idle. However, NMU officials have since accepted a U.S. Department of Transportation commitment to study exclusive use of American shipping for such projects and said they had nothing to do with the new protest.

Carter plans base cutbacks

Congress has been notified of the administration's intent to close or "realign" 85 military bases, including a Texas Air Force base, thereby eliminating several thousand civilian jobs in order to save \$336 million annually for other defense programs. Although a formal announcement listing the affected bases was expected from the administration Wednesday, defense officials tried to cushion anticipated opposition by giving advance notice Tuesday to congressmen and senators whose areas will be involved. The list which was originally scheduled for action last fall, concentrates on training installations in an area that could best be cut back. Delayed until early this year, the list was ordered by President Carter held up again until the Panama Canal treaties cleared Congress. Defense Secretary Harold Brown will set up guidelines for the proposals in an effort to produce greater savings than were achieved in the base cutbacks proposed by the Ford administration. The new plan includes a primary list of candidates for closure as well as alternative proposals for achieving some of the savings, which are to be channeled into "other priorities," in the defense budget, officials said.

WORLD

Vorster accepts Western plan

Prime Minister John Vorster has announced his acceptance of a Western plan for independent black rule in Namibia in hopes of removing the threat of economic sanctions and end the year-long split with the United States and Britain. The acceptance, announced on Tuesday and apparently planned to coincide with the U.N. General Assembly debate on the Namibian question, meant Namibia could become independent by the end of the year if the plan is also accepted by the militant South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO). Sam Nujoma, leader of SWAPO, told reporters, "it is his (Vorster's) problem. We have made our position clear." African delegates at the United Nations pointed out that there were still differences over some aspects of the Western plan as Vorster accepted it. The delegates did indicate, however, these could probably be worked out in subsequent negotiations. The controversial issues include Vorster's insistence on retaining Walvis Bay, and the condition that the present police force will maintain law and order during the transition to independence. If accepted by Nujoma, the Western plan would spell the end of 58 years of South African rule in Namibia.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy and warm today and tonight. Mostly cloudy tomorrow with a chance of thundershowers. High today near 80, low tonight mid-60s. High tomorrow mid-80s. Winds from the southeast at 10-15 mph. Thirty percent chance of rain Friday afternoon.

The overreaction syndrome at A&M

By LIZ NEWLIN
Battalion Campus Editor

Newspapering, like other joys pursued by commoners, generates situations where the wrong action is the easiest to take. Overreacting to a news event often comes naturally — to both reporters and sources.

A recent example of overreaction on both sides of a story yielded a front page article in Wednesday's Battalion. The report, "Misplaced for two years: Confidential records burned," described the discovery and destruction of some 5-year-old student files containing grade slips. Apparently the record were overlooked during an office move and forgotten. Records are routinely destroyed when they become outdated.

A student called The Battalion Monday afternoon and asked for this reporter. He said that some student records were stored rather carelessly in a closet in the student lounge between Crocker and Moore residence halls. He added that he had told an assistant area coordinator (counselor) of

the records, but nothing had been done. After supper I went to the lounge and nonchalantly pulled back a folding plastic door with a rusty, make-shift padlock and pulled out a cardboard box with the tag "Closed personnel files." Inside the box were manila folders with biographical data on the outside and grade slips on the inside from 1972-73.

After securing photographs of the misplaced records and returning them to the

Commentary

closet, I went to the Battalion office to begin an investigation. The story was hot and I didn't mind calling University officials at home.

The first few calls yielded background information and a refusal to talk from the man whose name was on the files.

No significant overreactions — yet. By this time, Dr. Charles Powell, director of student affairs, had been called (not

by the Battalion) and was waiting for me on the telephone.

Powell sounded very upset on the phone. He threatened to file criminal charges against me if the Battalion published the story in Tuesday's edition.

I'm not very good at taking notes when my hands are shaking, so I didn't record the exact quote. It was something like — "If you publish the story tonight, I'll file breaking-and-entering charges against you."

I didn't write the story on the 5-year-old records that night. I did not sleep much, either.

The article did need more work, and we probably would have waited another day anyway. The story was already two years old.

The interviews on Tuesday were much less frightening and more informative and the complete account of the misplaced records was published in Wednesday's paper. Powell still says that, at the least, I have fractured University Regulations, but

he says he won't take any action against me. I'm glad.

Overreaction was easy on the night of the "discovery." I wasn't sure what I had found, and neither were the administrators. So we became suspicious of each other.

Suspecting my intentions, they became evasive and I thought they were hiding something. We fought fire with more fire, and we all almost got burned.

I was looking for answers, not trouble. Reporters generally seek information, not scandals. News sources need to understand that asking questions is a reporter's job. Journalists don't want sensational headlines when they're not justified. But sometimes sources' reactions to questions make a small story seem very important.

Under stress, mole hills appear to be mountains. And reporters and sources are always ready to fight for mountains.

This story was not a mountain. And it certainly didn't merit the administrative panic it caused.

Another set of tapes

By JIM CRAWLEY

This is the season of the political endorsement. The newspapers, unions, farmers, teachers, and almost every other group of three or more people are lending their support for candidates in state and county primaries.

The reasons for this increased interest in the politics of Texas and the various counties are as varied as the groups making the endorsements.

Politics

SOME GROUPS make the endorsements in an effort to persuade their members to vote for "their" man. Others put their name behind a candidate because of similar philosophies. Some groups back a candidate because they don't want to support a loser and they deem it necessary to announce their support for some candidate. Finally, there are those political endorsers who believe they are fulfilling a public service. Usually these groups just provide information on the various candidates.

Newspapers are probably the best known and most widely followed endorsers of political candidates. Newspapers have endorsed candidates since the early days of the printed word. The fact of the matter is, these early political endorsements often caused problems for the early press in England.

Newspapers in early America were often papers which supported only one faction of people. Into the 1800s American papers were usually sponsored by one political party. The press of that era was extremely biased compared to today's "objective" press.

NEWSPAPERS ARE NOT the only ones in Texas that make political endorsements. Teachers are a formidable group that dabbles in politics by endorsing candidates.

This year is a perfect example of the teachers' plight in making a political endorsement. The Texas Educators Political Action Committee (TEPAC) is the political arm of the state teachers' association, TSTA. The group interviewed each of the candidates for the gubernatorial position early this year. The interviews were taped so the committee making the decisions could refer to them in later discussions. Those tapes have involved TEPAC in a battle of political intrigue.

After consulting the tapes and their notes the TEPAC committee decided Attorney General John Hill was their man.

Letters to the editor

Aggies do cheat

Editor: This letter concerns the cheating that takes place at Texas A&M; specifically, in our classes.

For pre-veterinary students, grades create a very competitive situation; some students are not able to compete fairly. When these "students" cheat on tests, they decrease the honest student's chance of getting the grade he deserves. In one of our classes, the make-up exam is IDENTICAL to the regularly scheduled exam. We have noticed that some students use "friends" that are taking the regularly scheduled exam by having them pocket a second copy of the exam. An easy "A" results for these cheaters.

While the above case reflects the naivete of the professor, there are other cases of cheating in our classes where anti-cheating measures are enforced. For example, one of our tests went overtime, and students for the next class started coming in. There was confusion with so many people in the room at once. Amidst the noise and bustle, five or six students managed to trade answers.

We speak of cheating not only in our major, for we believe dishonesty exists in ALL courses of study at A&M. We wish there could be effective measures taken to stop cheaters and their parasitic tactics. They make a joke of the Texas A&M Code of Honor and discredit our university.

One solution is to effect a STUDENT-ENFORCED HONOR SYSTEM. Such a system is used successfully at the University of Virginia. It involves a student-run judicial board. Any offender is reported by the accusing student to the board. A hearing is held to determine if the accused student is guilty.

Cheating is a serious problem at Texas A&M, and we challenge the Student Gov-

ernment and administration to do something about it.

—Michael W. Riggs, '80
Patrick D. Choyce, '80

By any other name . . .

Editor: I wish to say, "Here! Here!" in reply to the excellent letter by Ruthanne Taylor in the April 4, issue of the Battalion concerning the importance of women's right to abortions.

The soundness of her logic brings to mind an earlier era when similar advances in the laws of freedom of choice were enjoyed by the citizens of a certain Far Eastern civilization: A man, having gone through the necessary rituals to obtain a wife and having found her presence and dependency inconvenient to his plans, an embarrassment to his position, or in general a restriction to his freedom to pursue happiness, he was allowed by law to terminate her life.

The humanity of this law is immediately evident because the society was so structured that the life of an unattached woman could not have been sustained by herself and she would have been left to a slower death by starvation or abuse. Of course keeping an unwanted mate only led to abuse within the household and stresses which would have diminished the quality of life for all concerned.

I believe the whole issue was summarized best by a far-sighted physician who said that arguing whether abortion is an act of killing or not is unproductive. Rather we should spend our energies coming to a more mature and realistic way to look at killing.

— T. Barrett



A call for tolerance

By JEFFREY L. NAUSS

I would like, at this time, to shed a new light on some of the comments made by the departing Battalion editors. I would like to bring in the concept of values.

Mr. Arnett, in his final editorial, made the statement that it is all right at TAMU to be an individual as long as it conforms. There is a certain amount of truth in that, but what about applying the concept on a larger scale? Is Texas A&M University allowed to be unique (or individual) as long as it conforms with other universities in the area?

Reader's Forum

I can see where it might be good to allow women to be yell leaders or have a woman's drill team for basketball games. There is value in allowing the women to participate in such university activities.

However, there is also value in not having such commonplace representations of the school and in maintaining certain aspects of this university as they were 20 years ago. And, for many people on this campus, there is no contest as to which is the more valuable.

Change is good, things cannot stagnate forever. One good example is that previous to 1963, there were no girls or non-regs on this campus at all; and the school was also dying.

Now, Texas A&M is a university, not a college. 13th in the nation in National Merit Scholars, leading the state in total research, a world leader in agriculture and engineering and still producing large numbers of military officers. Opening the

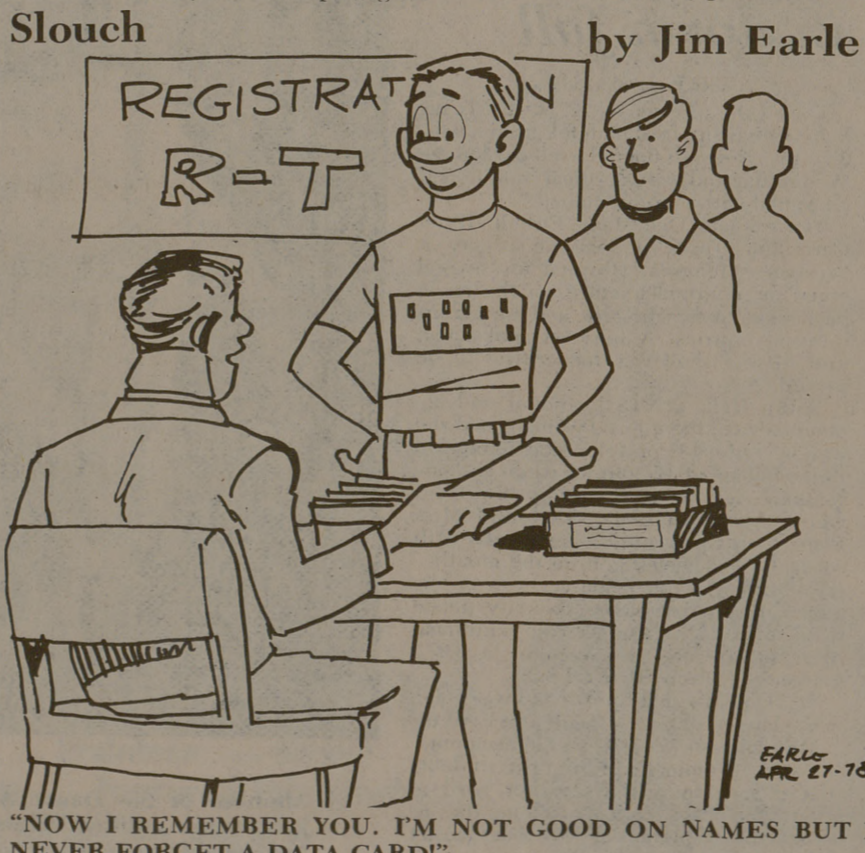
doors for A&M was a matter of survival, there was no other satisfactory alternative.

However, the changes proposed on several occasions by many people, including the editors of the Battalion, are not dealing in the survival of the University. They are merely value judgements and I feel confident in saying that this campus holds the recent system to be more valuable than any other proposed system. Perhaps some day there will be half male-half female yell leaders and perhaps a second band representing A&M at various activities, and on that day this Former Student will be saddened. But that day will come only when the student body is ready to change its systems of values, not before.

In the meantime, A&M will be different, unique, and conservative (if that is being without change) and people who wish to try to change the system will find that they will be swamped by protest. The protest will come not so much because the students are narrow-minded or even ignorant, but because they have a different set of values, one that they will jealously defend, probably as much as a tea-sip will defend Earl Campbell.

I think all Aggies, both those leaving this school and those who will be back next year, need to keep this in mind and be more tolerant of both two percenters and short-haired C.T.'s who have different values. If someone wants to change the system or even leave it as it is, I am sure that person is doing so to improve this university in his eyes. I wish everyone good luck in their fight; but if they should lose their fight, the school has spoken and gotten what it wants, whatever that may be.

Nauss is a biochemistry graduate student.



"NOW I REMEMBER YOU. I'M NOT GOOD ON NAMES BUT I NEVER FORGET A DATA CARD!"

THE BATTALION

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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.

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