

campus

Silver Taps ...

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come a victim of large numbers. No one could have predicted the growth the University would experience, he said, just as no one could predict the increased mobility of the student body.

"It sounds gruesome," Laine said, "but it is a fact that more people are going home more often, and the chances for a student getting killed are greatly increased. At the first Silver Taps there was a massive number of people in attendance, 5,000 or so. But attendance steadily decreased from there, he said.

Cadet Commander of the Corps Bill Dugat said that having Silver Taps almost every other Tuesday night was inconvenient for both students and participants. The proposed change would be academically more beneficial, he said.

The firing squad of the Ross Volunteers is the student organization responsible for scheduling and performing the Silver Taps ceremony. The memorial is the

sole function of the firing squad. Pruet said he felt the proposed change would reinforce the importance of the ceremony. However, he said, "even if it got to the point where they held Silver Taps every night, the Ross Volunteers firing squad would always be ready to carry out their duties."

The most prevalent argument against changing Silver Taps is that holding the ceremony once a month would tend to depersonalize the memorial.

Perie Pitts, senator for off-campus Ward 4, said that accepting the bill would be "changing a tradition for the institution. But this particular tradition is for the person, not the institution."

Changing Silver Taps to increase attendance will not make the ceremony more meaningful, he said. The Aggies who take the time to come to Silver Taps because they want to remember a student who is gone are the ones who give the ceremony its impact and importance, he said.

Pitts added that holding the

ceremony only once a month would increase the chance of Silver Taps being held for more than one person at a time.

Laine said that he was aware of this argument, but he pointed out that the first memorial held in the fall is usually for seven or eight people who die during the summer, and of the ceremonies held this semester several of them have been for more than one person.

Laine added that when a family attends Silver Taps they see the ceremony as being held for their own son or daughter, not two or three people.

"And even if Silver Taps is only held once a month, that is still four times a semester," Laine said, "which is quite a few times."

"Silver Taps is such an honored and cherished tradition and it is as much for the students attending as for the student being remembered," he said.

Another consideration in changing Silver Taps is the effect it may have on the family of the student being honored, said Off-

Campus Aggies President Debbie May.

The situation could arise where the ceremony would not be held until over three weeks after someone dies, she said, and it would be hard on the family to go through an additional or prolonged period of grief.

One final argument against changing Silver Taps is that the regular scheduling would not eliminate all the scheduling conflicts that do arise, said Pitts.

However, Laine said he felt it would help. Having intramurals going on during Silver Taps, as was the case at the ceremony Nov. 20, could be more easily and consistently avoided if a special night once a month were set aside for Silver Taps.

Ronnie Kapavik, student body president, said that because changing Silver Taps is such an emotional issue, arguments on the question will be mixed and the issue will not be settled in everyone's mind. It is important that students be involved in the making of this decision, he said.

Study of zooplankton starts

Oceanographers at Texas A&M University have begun year-long study of trace metal accumulation by zooplankton, the sea's microscopic smorgasbord.

Zooplankton were chosen for the research because they represent a basic link in the marine food chain, say researchers. The \$35,000 project sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and is meant to determine how tiny particles of organic and inorganic matter suspended in the water affect the pattern of metal uptake.

Using seawater collected off the Texas coast, Dr. B.J. Presley and Dr. Paul Boothe hope to tell federal

authorities responsible for regulating waste dumping the extent to which particulate matter influences the sub-lethal accumulation of cadmium, mercury and lead by zooplankton.

This is an important question since most of the trace metals in wastes dumped into seawater are associated with the particulate matter, not the water itself, said Boothe.

Presley, who has conducted other dumping effect studies for NOAA, said wastes and trace metals have an easily measured short-term effect on particulate matter, but that it is not known if this effect is dangerous for the zooplankton.

The two Texas A&M scientists hope results of this and other long-term studies can provide some answers since contamination of zooplankton has implications for other rungs in the food ladder.

To measure the minute amounts of metals involved, the oceanographers will have to depend on such sophisticated techniques as compartmental analysis and gamma ray spectroscopy.

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Texas Public Employees Association

Ags represented by un-union

By EILEEN WALL

Battalion Reporter

Since Aug. 29, there has been an employee association — but not a union — for Texas A&M University staff members.

The Texas Public Employees Association represents employee in-

terests, but says it wants nothing to do with unions.

According to its bylaws, the association will "never become affiliated with, become a part of, or endorse any labor union."

Local TPEA chapter President Jim Phillips said there are two main differences between the TPEA and a union. First, he said, membership in the association is voluntary, and second, TPEA operates on a state-wide, rather than a national, basis.

Dues are another major difference between the two groups. TPEA dues are \$13 per year, while, according to

its members. At its August 1979 convention, the association reaffirmed this policy in a resolution presented to Governor Bill Clements.

Collective bargaining is against the law in Texas, so unions must use other means to accomplish their objectives. Dave McNeely, in an article on unionization in Texas, said political means is one way the union tries to achieve its goals.

McNeely said the union becomes actively involved in elections in order to bring pressure on the Legislature, which determines state employees' salaries.

McNeely said collective bargaining is not needed for raises and benefits.

The TPEA has been representing

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public employees since 1946, and currently has approximately 32,000 members.

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Phillips, an electrical technician in the electrical engineering department, said the chapter's main goals right now are to build membership and to open lines of communication between the association and the administration.

There are 6,000 TPEA members here, Phillips said. The more members the chapter has, the better the cross section of opinion will be represented, he said.

Before the formation of the local

chapter, some University staff members participated in the local highway chapter of the TPEA, Phillips said, but since that chapter's working conditions are different from University staff, it was felt the staff needed its own chapter.

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Ray Smith, director of Texas A&M personnel department, said that the

University has always had an "open door policy" with employees and added that employees have "never been bashful" in approaching them.

University policy on the new TPEA chapter, he said, is one of "absolute neutrality."

"We neither want to hinder nor go out of our way to assist them," he said.

They don't want to help the TPEA, he said, because the administration does not want employees to feel that they have to join the TPEA in order to be heard.

The TPEA chapter has not approached the administration with any proposals yet, Smith said.

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