

Eric Evan Lee

Susan Hampton was recently hired to The Battalion staff as an editorial assistant. She edits, does layout and organizes the newsroom in the absence of the editor and the associate editor.

## Putting the paper to bed

by Dena L. Brown  
Battalion Reporter

Have you ever heard the adage, "The press never sleeps"? Well, it's true in more ways than one.

The students who put The Battalion together stay up late editing stories, writing headlines and coding them on punched paper tape. Those students work with the paper's video terminal computer, a storage and retrieval system for the stories that go in The Battalion.

Production workers arrive at The Battalion around 9 p.m. Their job is to type into the computer system the corrections made by a journalism editing class.

One production worker, Leigh-Ellen Clark, worked on production every night last semester. Now she splits the work with another student, Wes Mitchell.

In addition to typing in story corrections, Clark and Mitchell type in and code headlines for each article.

After the stories have been corrected by the production workers, they're given to the night news editor who edits them again, crops pictures and checks headline lengths. The stories then are coded onto punched computer tape and taken

to the University Printing Center.

One of two night news editors, Daran Bishop, a senior English major from Houston, said she likes the work hours. Bishop shares the night shift with Elaine Engstrom, a senior journalism major from Dallas.

"I'm more of a night person," she said. "It beats getting up early in the morning to go to work. There are not too many other jobs where you can start work at 9 p.m."

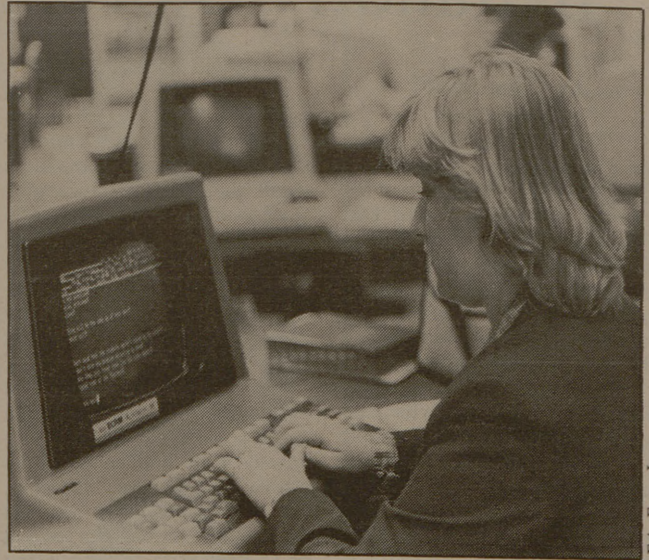
Page one editors Jennifer Carr and Rebeca Zimmerman draw

the page on a page layout sheet, edit the copy and crop pictures.

Carr, a senior journalism major from Dallas, never comes in to work before 10 p.m. She can't start work until all photographs and stories have been turned in.

"I can come in at 10 p.m. and finish at 2 a.m., or I can come in at midnight, and get through at 2 a.m.," she said.

Voicing the attitude of most night workers, Engstrom said that if it takes until 2 a.m. to do the work, then the night staff will be there until 2 a.m. It's all in a night's work, she said.



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## Future of The Battalion indicates expansion

by Susan Poole  
Battalion Reporter

Newspaper production has come a long way since Benjamin Franklin and his hand-operated printing press. The Battalion is produced using relatively new computer technology. However, there is always room for improvement.

Keeping up with the The Battalion's growth and modernizing newspaper production are goals the student publications department has planned for The Battalion, says Donald C. Johnson, director of student publications.

The Battalion has quadrupled in size over the last six years, said Johnson, who has been at Texas A&M since 1977.

"Six years ago the paper averaged around eight pages a week," he said. "Now it averages about 80 pages a week."

The Battalion, a student-run newspaper, has a dual function. It not only informs the student body about current events, but also serves as a laboratory for journalism students to give them practical experience working on a newspaper. Because of this, the student publications department is trying to keep up with the latest in communications technology.

Newspaper production is becoming more computerized. In 10 years, all commercial papers will have a system where everything from writing a story to making the printing plates can be done on a computer, Johnson said.

The student publications de-

partment eventually plans to install this type of system for The Battalion. This plan includes purchasing a new video display terminal system with pagination terminals and a central processing unit, Johnson said.

A pagination terminal is used to design the way the paper looks. On the terminal, the editor can see exactly how any page of the paper will look. This allows for more creativity since stories can be moved and the size of type can be changed on the terminal instead of manually.

The central processing unit is the brain of the whole system. This system includes a graphic digitizer that makes it possible for pictures and other graphics to be seen on the computer.

When a page is ready for print, the editor pushes a button, and a metal page is made automatically.

A new system would allow The Battalion staff to gain complete control of the production of the paper, Johnson said.

Although the new system would be expensive, Johnson said it is ultimately less expensive to run than the current system and would pay for itself in three to four years.

The Battalion is basically self-supporting. Student fees pay for less than a fifth of the production. The rest of the money is raised by advertising.

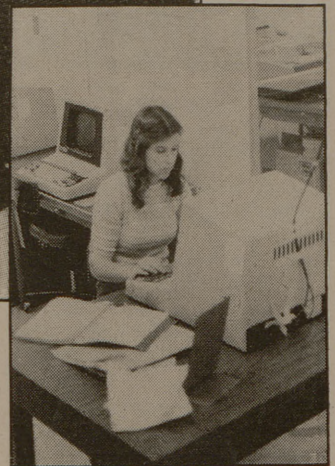
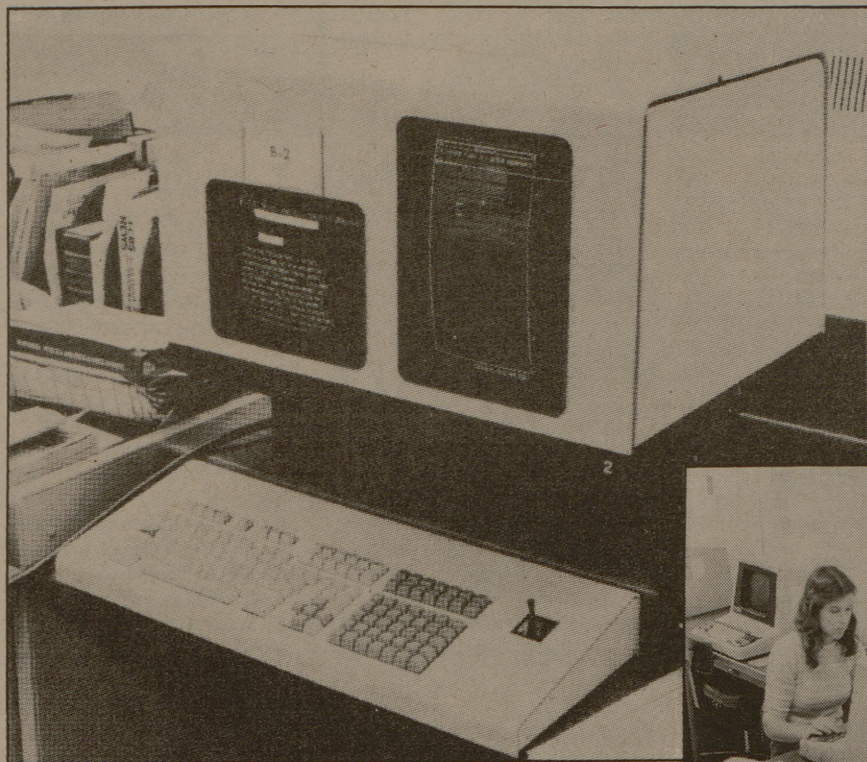
The Battalion has a circulation of more than 23,000 and is the largest daily newspaper between Waco and Houston.

The Battalion is among the top 10 percent in quality of university newspapers. That standing is not subject to future

change, Johnson said.

"We have good students with high standards who do good work," he said. "It is an excep-

tional college newspaper. Our problems are in production ability — not in the students doing their jobs."



The Battalion has made plans to install a new computer system to complement the existing system. Eventually, the new system will allow an editor to design, edit and lay out a page on a terminal before sending it to printing.