

Texas A&M The Battalion

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Photo by Dean Saito

On The Flying Trapeze

Chris Garhold, a junior marketing major from Victoria, dives for a trapeze bar between two trees as classmates make sure he doesn't fall. The activity

is part of the venture dynamics class offered by Texas A&M's physical education department and is intended to make students trust their classmates.

President withdraws nominee for CIA post

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan on Monday withdrew his nomination of acting CIA Director Robert M. Gates to head the spy agency, saying confirmation hearings at this time "would not be in the interest of the CIA or of the nation."

In a statement read to reporters by his new chief of staff, Howard H. Baker Jr., Reagan said he withdrew the nomination at Gates' request.

Baker also read to reporters a letter from Gates to the president, saying, "It is apparent that there is strong sentiment in the Senate to await completion, at minimum, of the work of the Senate Select Committee on Iran before acting on my nomination."

"I believe a prolonged period of uncertainty would be harmful to the Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence community and potentially to our national security."

Baker said Gates met with the president Monday afternoon. Reagan's statement said he ac-

cepted Gates' request "with great regret."

Reagan said, "I have asked Bob to continue serving as deputy director of intelligence under a new director."

Praising Gates' 20-year record of service to the CIA, he said, "I have been impressed with the class he has shown under the enormous pressures of recent weeks."

"At any other time, I am certain that he would easily have been confirmed without delay."

Baker said selection of a new nominee would be "an urgent item on the president's agenda" and some names had already been discussed.

Gates met with Baker and President Reagan's national security adviser, Frank C. Carlucci, for about 30 minutes earlier in the day.

Before the meeting, Marlin Fitzwater, assistant to the president for press relations, said, "The president stands behind his nomination of Robert Gates to be CIA director. I

have seen the stories about Robert Gates' consideration of this matter, but I don't have any direct knowledge of his position."

"It's a matter for Robert Gates to decide. The president made the nomination and he thinks it's a good one, and I won't have any comment on that."

Monday was Baker's first day as chief of staff. He was chosen by Reagan on Friday to replace Donald T. Regan, whose handling of the Iran-Contra crisis was sharply criticized in the Tower report.

Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., said Sunday that Gates' nomination "could be in some difficulty" if brought to a confirmation vote soon after the Tower report, and other senators have been even more negative about Gates' chances in the current climate.

Gates, 43, was picked to head the CIA after William Casey resigned in December because of brain cancer.

Arms control talks extended following Soviet concession

GENEVA (AP) — American and Soviet arms control negotiators met in special session Monday, and the Soviets presented Mikhail S. Gorbachev's new proposal to eliminate medium-range missiles in Europe.

Searching for a breakthrough in the negotiations, the two sides agreed to extend the talks indefinitely. U.S. officials in Washington said the American side would respond by presenting a draft treaty to remove intermediate-range missiles now aimed at Soviet and European targets.

Soviet officials said Gorbachev made his new offer on Saturday in an attempt to break the Geneva deadlock. The proposal dropped a Soviet demand that the United States restrict its Star Wars program before an arms control package could be agreed on.

European governments generally reacted favorably to the Soviet initiative but cautioned that they would want to examine it closely before moving toward banning Soviet SS-20 missiles and NATO's U.S.-made Pershing 2 and cruise missiles that are now being deployed.

British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe said, "We shall need to look carefully at the fine print."

The missiles that would be scrapped under an agreement include 316 U.S.-made cruise and Pershing 2 missiles already deployed in Western Europe. In all, 572 are to be deployed.

On the Soviet side, Western officials estimate that 441 medium-range SS-20s have been deployed in the Soviet Union. Gen. Sergei F. Akhromeyev, Soviet chief of staff,

said on Monday that 243 of the SS-20 missiles were aimed at Europe.

The Soviet proposal would eliminate medium-range missiles based in Europe over the next five years, with the Soviet Union keeping 100 missiles on its Asian territory and the United States maintaining 100 on its territory.

In Washington, the White House welcomed the Soviet move. But American officials said any agreement would seek to protect Western Europe with short-range nuclear weapons and the Americans

would insist on verification to guard against Soviet cheating.

Seven U.S. senators in Geneva said they were optimistic about the prospects for an agreement after meeting with both the U.S. and Soviet delegations.

Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., told a news conference, "Each one of us is more optimistic leaving than coming."

But he said the negotiations will be "tedious, and we all pray that the next round will lead to a great deal of progress so that drafting (of a treaty) can begin in the summer."

Private prison debate probes more than costs

By Amy Couvillon
Staff Writer

The debate over private prisons in Texas includes ideological questions as well as monetary issues, said a Texas A&M professor familiar with the Texas prison system.

"There are issues other than just dollars and cents that are raised in this debate," said Dr. Ben Crouch, associate professor of sociology.

Prison Privatization Part two of a two-part series

Many issues raised are purely theoretical, he said.

"For example, should the government pass on to someone else its social-control function?" Crouch asked.

"Is that not a fundamental requirement of the state?" he said. "If you privatize all that, are you not delegating something that is quintessentially a function of a government, not of private industry?"

Considering the often violent nature of the prison environment, another important consideration is the question of liability.

When a private corporation is running a prison, and something goes wrong, who can be sued?

"Those are questions that are of vital importance, particularly in a society as litigious as this one," Crouch said.

"Ultimately, presumably, the state is responsible because the state convicted them," he said. "It has turned over their care and custody to a private firm, but it does not cut them loose; the state must still parole them. So the state never cuts that jurisdictional umbilical cord."

Problems might arise in a future situation where the private firm runs the entire operation and the state just pays the bills, Crouch said.

"You could have the state saying, 'I wasn't there; I wasn't involved in the loss of that man's hand, or that man's life, or that fire or riot,'" Crouch said. "But the state sent them there."

In addition to the liability question, there also could be problems with the transition from public to private ownership.

"There are some political issues," he said. "Prison personnel are concerned that if all this begins to become private, what will happen to

their jobs? There may be some strategic issues.

"Some prison managers may resist, not necessarily because they think they may lose their jobs, but because of a sense of expertise: 'I've been in this business for twenty years. Who are you to come in and take over?'"

There are some large corporations such as RCA Corp., Crouch said, that have diversified into some states' prison operations as part of their many enterprises, and the fact that a corporation could buy a prison just like any other business has the potential to rattle prison officials.

"What large corporations are in the business of doing is making money," Crouch said. "Some of their own ball teams or whatever; some of these apparently are getting into the prison business."

However, other corporations have been formed solely for the purpose of running prisons, he said. One example is the Corrections Corp. of America, based in Nashville, Tenn.

Corrections Corp., less than a decade old, runs a county jail in Panama City, Fla., he said, as well as other operations around the nation.

The firm was one of several that put in bids to build a 1,000-bed prison in Harris County near Houston, he said.

Charles Brown, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Corrections, said TDC had consulted with Corrections Corp. to discuss the possibility of a privately-run Texas prison, but that no decision had been made.

"Privatization (in prisons) really hasn't been going on that long to see the feasibility of it, or how cost-effective it would be," Brown said. "It's a viable option, but we would have to look at it."

A bill authorizing private Texas prisons is now in committee in the Texas House. Crouch said the bill could serve to legitimize more extensive privatization of Texas prisons.

"I think in Texas, the reason they're having this bill is there is no precedent for doing this," he said. "And it's not possible for one person to say, 'Hey, let's hire somebody to keep these prisoners.' We need an open, representative debate on these issues."

Crouch explained that completely turning over prison operations to private industry is the extreme case, and that there are many in-between

scenarios of privatization already being used in Texas.

A frequent kind of privatization is for services, Crouch said, such as construction, where the state would grant a contract to a private company to build a prison, then pay the company on completion of the project.

"A strategy having the private firm provide the financing and the construction is speedier," Crouch said, "and may permit the state to move more quickly than they would be able to if they had to get voter approval or float bonds."

Contracting services out to private

See Prisons, page 10

Campus presents physical challenge

A&M students live with handicaps

By Daniel A. La Bry
Staff Writer

While such tasks as pushing elevator buttons and opening doors often are thought of as trivial, they can become major obstacles for a handicapped individual.

To bicycle riders on their way to class, sloped curve cuts are a convenience. But for the wheelchair-bound person, the curb cuts are necessary to get across the street.

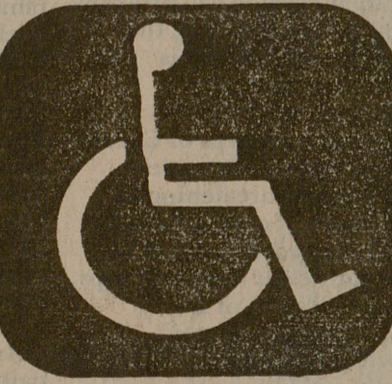
A handful of Texas A&M students confront these problems every time they go to class.

Laurie Marshall, a sophomore general studies major from Dallas, has been confined to a wheelchair because of a nervous disorder since she was in the eighth grade.

Marshall says the main reason she came to A&M was the friendly atmosphere, but the geography of the campus ran a close second. After visiting several Texas colleges, she found A&M to be one of the flattest and most accessible for a handicapped person in a wheelchair.

A Fish Camp counselor for 1986 and 1987, Marshall says she has never let accessibility problems stop her from doing anything,

But when it comes to visiting friends in dorms, she usually resorts to a piggyback ride in order to get to the proper floor, which, she says, is more of an inconvenience for her friends than for



Handicapped Students at A&M Part one of a two-part series

her, but that they usually are happy to oblige.

Since the dorms at A&M aren't equipped with elevators, those wheelchair-bound often experience access problems to upper-level floors.

The first floors of Krueger and Dunn halls have rooms equipped for handicapped students, Marshall says modifications in her dorm room include wider doors, a bigger bathroom, a modified shower and lower light switches.

Doing what most people think is a simple task can turn into quite an amusing experience, Marshall says. She can't help laughing as she explains how she tried to balance books on her lap while jumping for the elevator buttons in the Harrington Classroom Building.

Some isolated buildings on campus are problems for handicapped students, but professors usually relocate a class if a handicapped person is having trouble getting to the class.

Marshall recalls having problems getting to a psychology class held in the Physics Building. Although the building has been modified for handicapped students, she had to use a key-operated wheelchair lift on the west side of the building to access an elevator which she then took to an upper-level floor. Then she had to wheel herself to the other side of the building.

On the first day of class, Marshall arrived just as the class was being let out, she says. The class

then was relocated to a more accessible building.

The Handicapped and Veterans Services office in Hart Hall reviews Marshall's class schedule, along with the schedules of other handicapped students, and sends letters to the appropriate instructors informing them that a handicapped student will be attending their classes. Any foreseeable problem for the handicapped student is then worked out between the student, the instructor and the handicapped services office.

A common problem faced by handicapped students in almost all classes is taking tests. The problem is especially great for those who, like Marshall, don't have full mobility in their hands.

Marshall says it usually takes her twice as long as other students to take an all-essay test, so many of the handicapped students are allowed to take their tests in special, quiet rooms in the handicapped services office.

Overall, A&M's handicapped services seem to be up-to-date, Marshall says, but a few things on campus still bother her.

For example, to get a book on the fifth or sixth floor of Sterling C. Evans Library, Marshall either

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