

State and Local

A&M junior finds time for more than just attending his classes

By Richard Williams
Reporter

Talking to Vince Palasota is like talking to an athletic Richie Cunningham of the TV show "Happy Days."

Palasota, a junior agricultural economics major at Texas A&M, is a member of the 12th Man Kick-off Team, a fraternity president, has a 3.3 grade-point ratio, pays for his education expenses and also pays for a large part of his sister's college expenses.

If there were 25 hours in a day, Palasota would probably be doing something for 26 of them.

He has an air of confidence about him.

One of his roommates, Joe Lucas, compares Palasota to the little engine that could, and says he has always been like this.

"Vince always does everything he sets his mind to — he doesn't quit," Lucas says. "He believes he can do anything he wants."

Palasota, from Mexia, gets things accomplished no matter how hard they may seem, he says.

Palasota is a self-described confident — not too cocky — person. He admits he was cocky when he first arrived at A&M, but says coming from Class 3A Mexia High School to a university the size of A&M knocked most of the cockiness out of him.

In high school, Palasota played quarterback and cornerback on the football team, as well as shortstop for the baseball team. He was named to the all-district baseball team. He was voted "Most Likely to Succeed," "Most Handsome," "Most Intelligent," as well as "Most Conceited" by his classmates.

After talking about his past accomplishments, he is quick to add that those things happened in high school and really don't mean much anymore.

"When I was playing high school sports at Mexia, I was everybody's hero," he says. "I walked around town and everybody said 'Hi.' The school paper would never print anything bad about me."

It is the things he's doing now that count, he says.

"It's not a good thing to rest on the past too much," Palasota says. "When anyone rests on the past, they tend to forget the future."

Palasota had the chance to attend several different junior colleges on athletic and academic scholarships, but decided he could get a better education by attending a university.

At 5-foot-7, Palasota says he just



Photo by Sarah Cowan

Vince Palasota plays for Texas A&M as a member of A&M's 12th Man Kick-off Team.

realized he couldn't make a career out of athletics.

An education, Palasota says, is more important in the long run to anyone. The 20-year-old says he wanted to attend a school that would provide a good education.

"I went to the A&M vs. Texas game where we got beat bad, and after the game all the students stayed for yell practice," Palasota says. "Nowhere else would they do that. I figured that if the students supported the school that much, A&M had to be good."

Palasota wanted to continue playing sports once he arrived at A&M. He tried out for A&M's baseball team and survived several cuts, but was finally cut. He then tried out for the 12th Man squad in 1986.

After surviving several cuts, Palasota was finally let go from the 12th Man team, but he stayed on as a walk-on.

Being a walk-on was not always fun, Palasota says.

One of his jobs during that year was to don a burnt-orange jersey, the color for the University of

Texas, and run back kickoffs against the 12th Man team.

He says running back kickoffs was something he didn't mind, because it helped the team, and as for the burnt-orange jersey, all he says is that it didn't exactly make him happy to wear that color.

Last year, Palasota didn't play a single down during a game and he still has not played this year. But he has several reasons for suffering through 16 to 20 hours of practice a week and still not getting to play.

"I like helping out the team each week and I like football," he says. "Ego could have something to do with it, too," he adds quietly.

For helping the team last year, Palasota now wears a Southwest Conference Championship ring.

He's a take-charge kind of person, but says he likes to do so without taking over.

As president of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, he has to provide leadership, but says his philosophy of leadership might be different from others. His job is to lead — not to command, he says.

"Everybody runs the fraternity, not just the president," Palasota says.

His fraternity office also takes up a lot of his time.

"Being president is a big responsibility," he says. "Everybody looks to you when something is happening. Sometimes they look for you to make things happen. I like that."

The fraternity also provides Palasota with help in his classes.

"A lot of people think that a fraternity has to hurt your grades," Palasota says. "It doesn't have to. Everybody in Alpha Gamma Rho has an interest in agriculture. I have other members in a lot of my classes, and a lot of members have taken the classes I'm in now before — that helps."

The fraternity puts a large amount of pressure on him, he says, but he also says he enjoys being under pressure. The fact that the fraternity will be moving into a new house in January adds more pressure, he says.

Pressure is something Palasota thrives on — he really doesn't know any other way.

Locker room surveillance causes controversy

AUSTIN (AP) — Southwestern Electric Power Co. violated the privacy of employees at a Northeast Texas plant by making secret locker-room videotapes, Rep. Lloyd Criss said Tuesday.

"I think this type of action is reprehensible, and I think this company has violated the civil rights of the people who are working for it,"

Criss, D-La Marque, said.

At a news conference with Jim Harrington of the Texas Civil Liberties Union and labor union representatives, Criss said he is seeking an attorney general's opinion on the legality of the videotaping.

SWEPSCO, which serves parts of Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas, hired a company to videotape em-

ployees in the men's locker room at the Welsh Power Plant in Cason for 30 days, Criss said. The taping began Dec. 3, 1986, said Michael Whitehurst of Longview, business manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Criss said the round-the-clock, secret videotaping included employees

who were nude. It began after one worker reported that \$40 had been stolen from his unlocked locker, he said.

Whitehurst, whose union represents the workers, said two employees were disciplined as a result of the surveillance, which involved as many as 100 workers.

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Quentin Steitz harvests the graceful foliage of reedroot near her ranch in Colorado County. She shows readers how to use native and naturalized plants like reedroot in ornamental arrangements in her new book, *Grasses, Pods, Vines, Weeds: Decorating with Texas Naturals*. The book is available for \$24.95 in hardcover in the Patio Bookshop and comes lavishly illustrated with more than 150 full-color photographs.

