

Batt writers hit top 10 in national editorial writing competition

By Lisa Elliott

THE BATTALION

Two staff members of The Battalion gained national attention after placing in the top ten of the William Randolph Hearst Foundation competition in editorial writing.

Robert Vasquez and Chris Whitley, both senior journalism majors, took seventh and eighth place respectively in the competition.

Vasquez's winning column, titled "Acquaintance Rape: Crossing the Line Between 'Yes' and 'No,'" is about a friend's experience with date rape.

Vasquez said the column means a lot to him because it focuses on an important topic that doesn't get enough attention.

"It was how others reacted to it that made me realize it was important," he said.

The article caused students to talk about the problem, and Vasquez said many women confided in him about their own personal experiences with date rape after the article ran.

"The column helped confront the topic and that's why it means so much to me," he said. "It was important to get the word out that no means no."

Whitley's winning column, titled "Ageless Woman Stands Test of Time," was a reflection on the life of his grandmother, written a week after her death.

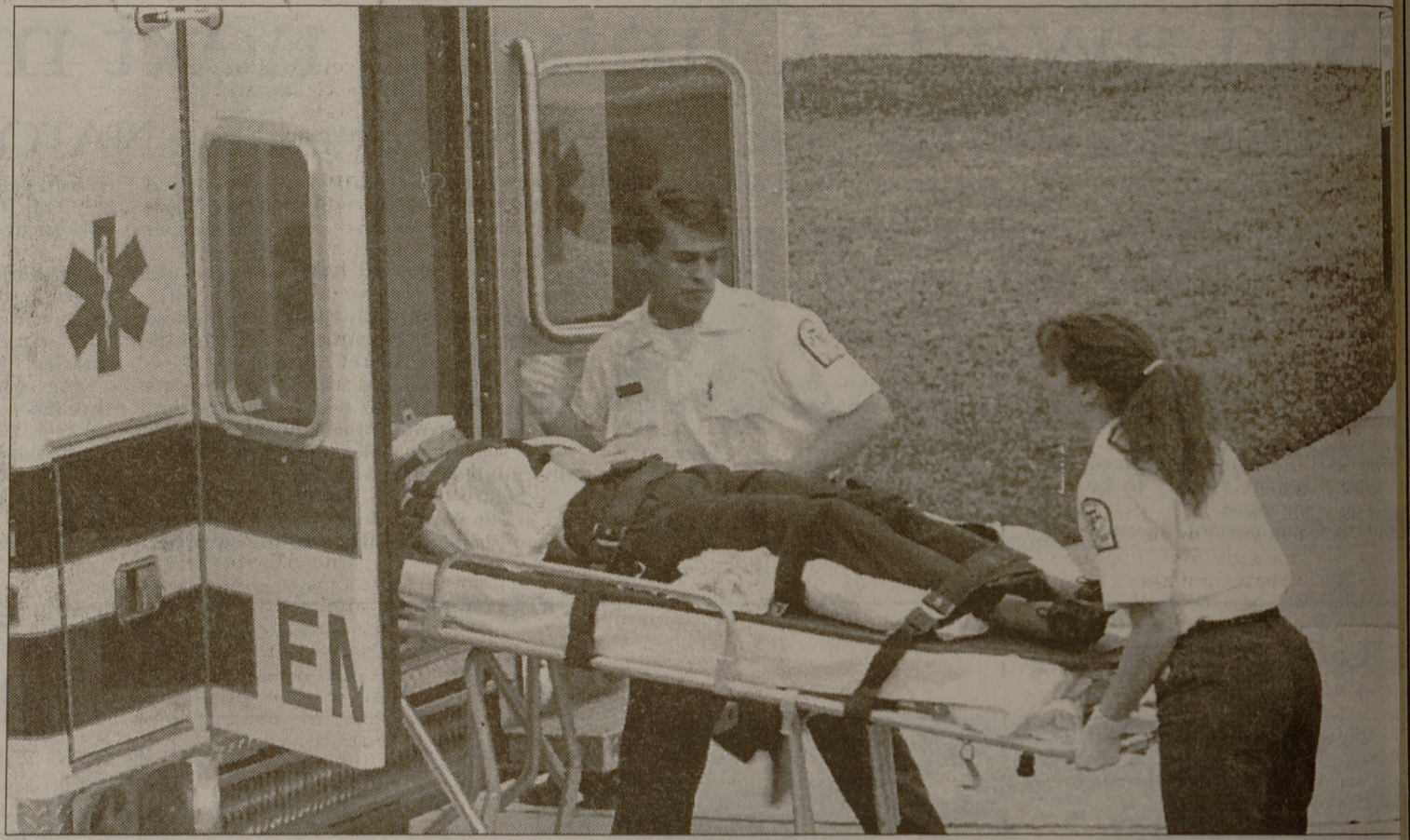
Whitley wrote that his grandmother found the fountain of youth by living a simple life away from the stresses of the modern big city.

He said winning the award for this particular column means a lot to him.

"It was more of a form of release than a column to me," he said. "To win an award for it was personal gratification to me."

Vasquez and Whitley will receive \$500 each for their columns, which were selected from 92 entries from around the country.

To the rescue



Raun Nohavitz/Tribune

Paramedic **Bruce Bensley** and driver **Amy Snead** load a fall victim into an ambulance Monday afternoon outside of Rudder Tower. The victim was later transferred to the Brazos Valley Medical Center. Paramedics would not release the injured person's name.

Nerd is the word at first 'Nerd Weekend' conference

The Associated Press

DALLAS — Sporting pocket protectors and glasses, they've peeled away from their keyboards and emerged from darkened computer rooms by the thousands to unite.

For these self-proclaimed computer nerds, the thicker the eyeglasses and the bigger the assortment of pens and pencils in shirt pockets, the better. Their first "Nerd Weekend" held by one employer, Computer Associates International Inc., ended Monday.

Nerds have come a long way since Dr. Seuss, also known as Theodore Geisel, introduced the word in his 1950 book, "If I Ran the Zoo."

Even though the word is sometimes seen in the company of worse-sounding labels like geek and dweeb, computer types — who also like to call themselves "technologically advantaged" — insist being a nerd is chic these days.

Britta Hoffner of Frankfurt, Germany, says she's a nerd and proud of it.

The support engineer and about 2,000 other com-

"The problem with nerds is that they work in extremely focused and limited situations -- staring at computer screens."

—Hesh Kestin, spokesman for Computer Associates

puter company employees attending the conference from across the nation and 26 other countries are trying to shirk the dictionary definition of nerds as unsophisticated and dull.

"The problem with nerds is that they work in extremely focused and limited situations — staring at computer screens," said Hesh Kestin, spokesman for the Islandia, N.Y.-based Computer Associates.

"Sometimes they don't know what is going on elsewhere in the company," he said.

The company's chairman and chief executive officer, Charles B. Wang, wrapped up the three-day program Monday with a "nerd power rally" and farewell address. Everyone got official pocket protectors from the event.

Wang named a former Texas resident, Billy Keefer, Nerd of the Year.

"The n-word is no longer an insult," said Keefer, 39, the company's technical support manager in Slough, England.

Keefer, 39, is a Texas Christian University graduate who has lived in Killeen and Mount Pleasant.

"We chose Billy because he's not only a super-nerd who's passionate about technology, but because he's totally unaware of it — there's nothing nerdier than being a nerd and not knowing it," said Wang.

Kestin claimed that the nerds' gathering was the first of its kind.

"Usually companies do this for their sales staff to motivate them," he said. "Computer Associates did

it because we wanted to make sure all our technology people in 27 offices around the world all had the same vision of where the company is going."

The gathering was also called "Nerdstock," a Woodstock celebration for computer jocks. If they've been donning goggles to pursue similar targets in three-dimensional worlds through reality machines.

But they may still need some work to be trendy. For Saturday night's entertainment, they ed Computer Associates business software. A bar featured only nonalcoholic wines and beers.

Nerds were in their environment during a computer trivia contest, JeopNerdy, on Sunday night.

"They were all questions about computer technology, including one about what operating system the equivalent of neutered servants," said Kestin.

The answer? Unix (sounds like eunuchs) is the computer control system popular with scientists and universities and developed in 1969 by AT&T, which licensed the product to other companies. Only a nerd would know that, Kestin says.

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Any eligible senior member of Phi Eta Sigma may apply for one of the graduate scholarships. For the undergraduate award, however, the applicant must be nominated by the local chapter. Any eligible member of Phi Eta Sigma who is interested in applying for one of the scholarships or awards should obtain a scholarship application from cubicle IX in the John Koldus Building.

Selections for the awards and scholarships will be on the basis of the student's scholastic record, participation for success in chosen field, and character. National deadline for nominees for the undergraduate awards and for applications for the graduate scholarships is March 1. Return completed application forms to Room 111, Agriculture Building. Local deadline for submission of applications is Feb. 23, 1994.

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