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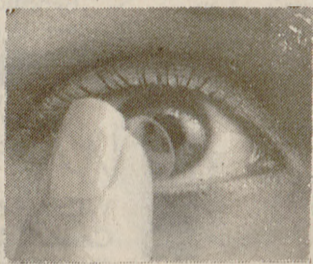
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Price of Aggie ring to increase by \$30

By James Bernsen

The Battalion

The price of the Aggie Ring has increased, but a Texas A&M official said it's still one of the best deals around.

Carolyn Swanzy, director of the Aggie Ring program, said the increases are a result of the change in the price of gold.

The ring price has increased by \$30. Swanzy said the price of the ring has fluctuated in recent years because of gold's changing value.

"The cost of gold is substantially higher," she said. "All kinds of things run the price of gold up."

Willard Clark, Jr., manufacture representative for Balfour, the company who makes the rings, said the changes in gold have been the

only factor in price increases.

Gold was \$320 per ounce last year and is now \$390, he said.

Clark said gold is very flexible in value because people buy gold when they fear economic problems.

"Gold is all tied into the world economy," he said.

Clark has been dealing with A&M since 1967, and his father, a 1942 graduate of A&M, worked for Balfour before him.

Clark said the standardization of A&M's rings make them a good bargain.

"A&M rings are cheaper than other school's rings," he said.

Matt Gaden, a junior wildlife and fisheries major, said the Aggie Ring is such an important investment that the change will not affect his decision to buy the ring.

"It's kind of bad for people getting their now," he said. "But when you're getting there, \$30 is worth the investment. I'll pay it."

Swanzy said students at other schools are paying substantially higher prices for their rings.

She said the average cost for a man's ring at most colleges is about \$500, with some as high as \$600 while A&M's rings range from \$310 to \$422.

Debra Gonzalez, an academic adviser at University of Texas, said the school does have a standardized ring like A&M's.

"There's different bookstores across the street, as well as jewelers," she said. "They have different rings that they sell."

Gonzalez said the price and lack of a standard makes the ring less desirable at UT. "From what I've seen, there aren't too many students that do get them," she said.

Comptroller discusses state issues

By Eloise Flint

The Battalion

John Sharp, Texas comptroller of public accounts, told Texas A&M students his office focused on reinventing government at the MSC Political Forum Wednesday night. Sharp proposed 961 recommendations that will decrease the cost of government programs while providing the same quality service.

Sharp said that, over the past three years, he learned a lot about the government.

"In one respect there is no difference between busi-

ness and government organizations. Their goal is to survive," Sharp said. "Businesses survive by making the customer happy, but when the government and businesses are in a pinch for money, they react diametrically opposed to each other."

"They will close the Washington Monument if you threaten the park service funds," Sharp said. "They never think about downsizing things you can't feel."

Through the three years of reviewing government policy, Sharp said he realized the political parties are very similar.

See Sharp/Page 9

Correction

The Battalion incorrectly reported yesterday that summer school classes would start on May 31.

Summer school will begin on Monday, May 30 as indicated in the schedule. The Battalion regrets the error.

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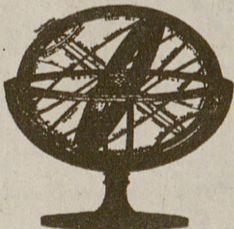
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