



BATTMEN

Freshmen Corps members serve unique role in Battalion distribution.

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IDEOLOGICAL INCONSISTENCY

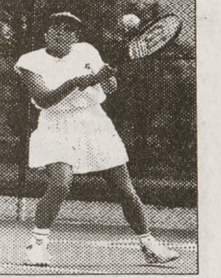
Taylor: Conservative views are often considered "closed-minded" by the "open-minded"

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HOME COOKING TURNS SOUR

The Texas A&M women's tennis team is routed by Oklahoma, 8-1.

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THE BATTALION

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"Serving Texas A&M since 1893"

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A&M System schools hold forum on race relations

Students representing the system schools agreed that improving race relations within their campuses is a primary goal.

Eleanor Colvin
THE BATTALION

Representatives from schools in the Texas A&M University System agreed during a forum Wednesday that recruiting and educating a diverse faculty, staff and student body are their ultimate objectives.

The Race and Ethnic Studies Institute of Texas A&M organized the forum on improving race, ethnic and hu-

man relations.

The forum let students express their views on race and diversity on Texas A&M University System campuses.

Dr. Gail Thomas, director of RESI, said the forum would address some of the commonly ignored issues on campus.

"People often suffer from a lack of candid and frank dialogue on major issues," she said.

Dr. Don Rochon, assistant professor in the College of Education, said the forum could benefit everyone if people shared what they learned with others.

"This dialogue can be fruitful for each of us," he said. "The issues are not only relevant here, but nationwide. Each of our departments and extended families we come in contact with, after we leave here, can gain from this exchange."

During the forum, student and faculty representatives from the seven Texas A&M System schools spoke with five

A&M student leaders via the Trans Texas Video Network.

The representatives discussed how the school could recruit and retain a minority representation proportionate to Texas' minority population. Several representatives said students need minority role models on campus.

Christine Vasquez, president of the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture, said diversity is important at A&M.

"When I walk into a room and see no people of color, I feel intimidated," she said. "Seeing another student or professor of my ethnicity or gender would encourage and motivate me."

"A&M's lack of cultural diversity discourages students and faculty minorities from coming here."

Reggie Deal, a member of Networks, an advocate organization for people with disabilities, encouraged students to be involved with diverse groups.

"We need to stress the importance of interaction at the student level," he said. "The only way to open minds is to participate with others of unique and different backgrounds. Texas A&M needs to encourage growth through involvement."

The representatives unanimously decided that education and interaction are the answers to solving diversity problems.

Jeff Wilson, vice president of the Student Government, said co-programming among organizations helps bridge many cultural gaps.

"Co-programming effectively builds ties among groups of different backgrounds," he said. "I support this type

of student-based education by groups like CAMAC, U-ACT, ExCel and the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference."

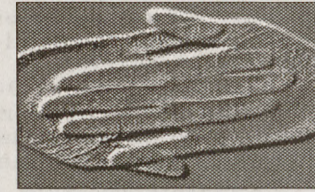
Rochon said education is mandatory for change.

"We must seek out information to dispel myths and the aura of ignorance many people have regarding others," he said. "Many people are against something they really know nothing about. Instead of educating themselves, they subscribe to the multicultural and gender issues' propaganda."

Amy Kardell, president of the Graduate Student Council, told the representatives that hard work is the key for success.

"There's no magic pill to solve the problems fast enough," she said. "We must work harder than ever before."

"Challenge your professors and administration if they do not live up to your expectations of them."



Health Center director explains consolidation fee referendum

Students will be able to vote on the referendum next week.

By Tracy Smith
THE BATTALION

Dr. Kenneth Dirks, director of the A.P. Beutel Health Center shed light on the health care funding issue Wednesday by explaining the importance of consolidating all student fee funding for the health center into one fee.

"By consolidating all the money that students pay for health care into one fee," Dirks said, "students will get a better idea of where their money is going."

Currently, Texas A&M students are charged a \$25 health center fee and a \$15 student service fee that also goes toward health care. The health center's proposal would combine both fees into a \$40 health center fee.

"The amount of money would be set at \$40 in 1996 and would allow for a more clearly marked fee statement," Dirks said. "Students have often asked why they are charged health center fees on two places on the statement, and this would alleviate the problem."

Students will be able to vote on a student referendum next week that could allow for such a

change, as well as other changes geared toward improving the health center, Dirks said.

The referendum also proposes to increase the ceiling on the health center fee from \$25 to \$75.

However, Dirks explained that a passage of the referendum would not mean a huge hike in student fees; increases would be limited to no more than 10 percent each year. These increases would also require approval from a student referendum each year.

"What the referendum is proposing would provide for student input and recommendation on any future health center fee increases," he said. "This way the students aren't locked into a 10 percent increase each year."

"If students in 1997 decide that they want no increase, then there will be no increase."

Dirks said that if the referendum passes, it would allow the health center to provide better consumer information, more student input and better accountability of funds.

"Quality health care is our main focus at the center," he said. "And realizing a student's budget, we want to keep students' costs as low as possible."

According to the center's 1995

See **Referendum**, Page 12



Amy Browning/THE BATTALION

The Three Stooges

Sophomores Chris Cooper, a biomedical science major, Tommy Brown, a political science major, and Chris Clinkscales, a biochemistry major, play the Ford Comedy Quiz at the CBS fair Wednesday afternoon. The fair will continue in front of the MSC until the end of the week.

Voelkel stresses academics, honesty, leadership as new Corps Commander

He will be the first Aggie Band member to hold the title of commander of the Corps of Cadets.

By Gretchen Perrenot
THE BATTALION

For the first time in A&M school history, a member of the Texas Aggie Band will become the commander of the Corps of Cadets.

Tyson Voelkel, Class of '96, will take command of the Corps in May.

Voelkel said he is the first band member to make Corps Commander in the unit's 120-year history.

"One of the band directors from years ago gave me a call to congratulate me and said he didn't think there had ever been one either," Voelkel said.

Maj. Gen. Tom Darling, Corps Commandant and chair of the board that chooses the Corps Commander, said Voelkel was selected because of his accomplishments and because he is an outgoing, people-oriented individual.

"He comes out of the band, which is interesting," Darling said. "None of us on the board can remember when someone came out of the band and rose to be Corps commander."

"We certainly want to give the band members a chance, and Voelkel was the perfect candidate."

Darling said he's followed Voelkel's college career and was impressed by Voelkel from the first time he met him.

"He's a fine leader and seems to have the potential for Corps Commander," Darling said. "You look at his list of achievements and it's pretty impressive."

Voelkel is a member of the Ross Volunteers, College Republicans, Aggie Pathfinders and several other organizations and committees. He is also a platoon honor graduate from Army Parachutist School.

Darling said that choosing a Corps Commander

from the 11 candidates was a tough decision.

"Every one of the candidates could have assumed the job and done it well," he said. "They will all hold key positions in the Corps, and some have already been chosen for other leadership positions."

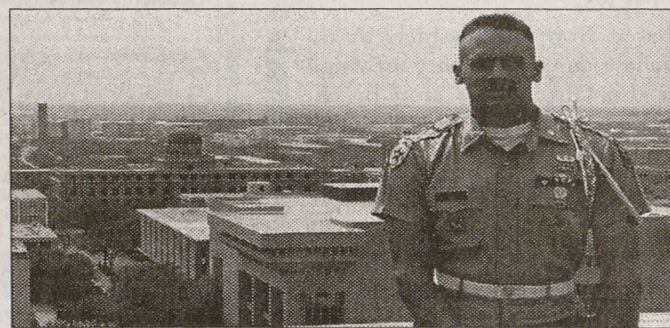
Voelkel said his goal as Corps Commander is to follow in the footsteps of the institution's present leader, Corps Cmdr. Matt Segrest.

"The Corps Commander last year set down an excellent foundation for me to pick up on and I'm lucky to have that," Voelkel said. "He set down a precedence for academics and recruiting so that we could have more cadets and more people involved in student activities."

Voelkel said he will pursue the Corps' ultimate recruitment goal of 2,600 members. The Corps currently has about 1,800 cadets.

Voelkel said he will also follow Segrest's and the Corps' three main goals of instilling the importance of academics, leadership and honor into the

See **Commander**, Page 12



Amy Browning/THE BATTALION

Tyson Voelkel, the new commander of the Corps of Cadets, stands against a backdrop of the A&M campus.

Abortion issue divides GOP on welfare reform

Anti-abortion Republicans threaten to block their party's bill to overhaul the welfare system.

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans overcame an anti-abortion insurgency within their own ranks Wednesday to push ahead on a far-reaching plan to reform welfare and reduce out-of-wedlock births.

Anti-abortion lawmakers said the legislation, the keystone of the GOP's social agenda, would encourage abortions. They sided with most Democrats in a tense attempt to block further debate on the bill.

The move failed, by a vote of 217-211, to derail the legislation and the House began considering the first of 31 amendments and two Democratic substitutes.

Democrats and some Republicans complained that House leaders had gagged debate on the sweeping bill, which squeezes \$66 billion out of the federal welfare budget, by refusing to consider amendments that would have tempered restrictions on aid to poor women and children.

"I am deeply concerned that in the otherwise laudable drive to reduce illegitimacy and dependency, we are poised to enact legislation that is likely to increase the number of abortions per-

formed ... while also making children more impoverished," warned Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J.

The GOP's bill bars states from increasing the cash benefits of women on welfare who have additional children.

It also denies cash welfare to unmarried teen-age mothers and their children and rewards states that reduce out-of-wedlock births. Critics say the formula in the bill to determine whether states have succeeded in reducing unwed births, known as the "illegitimacy ratio," is actually a bounty on abortions.

Tempers quickly rose on the House floor as the debate got under way.

Cult-like group denies role in subway poisoning

Police are still looking for clues in Monday's attack which killed ten people.

TOKYO (AP) — Police seized nerve-gas solvent, \$7.9 million in cash and 22 pounds of gold Wednesday at two dozen sites linked to a secretive religious sect that calls itself the Sublime Truth.

Several sect members were arrested in a kidnapping case, but police refused to say whether they were also being questioned in Monday's subway attack. Ten people were killed and nearly 5,000 sickened by the poisonous gas released during rush hour.

The cult-like group Aum Shinri Kyo has denied any role in the attack. There was still no known motive and no claim of responsibility.

In a chilling development, the sect's leader,

Shoko Asahara, was reported to have delivered an apocalyptic-sounding message Tuesday to followers in the Russian Far East.

"The time has come at last for you to awake and help me," Asahara said in the message, broadcast Wednesday night by Japan's NHK television. "You must act to ensure you do not have any regrets about death."

The police raids provided frightening evidence of the sect's hold over its followers.

At a cult compound in the wooded foothills of Mount Fuji, police found about 50 people who were weak and ill, and six were hospitalized. Doctors said they were probably suffering from malnutrition.

Other sect members were bizarrely dressed and appeared disoriented. And a 23-year-old woman sect member was reportedly rescued from a container where she had been confined.