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# Concern: University looks for leads

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has come to me to provide me with first-hand information," Southerland said. "Because this appears to be a Corps-related situation, the commandant has full knowledge of the rumor mill and would and has aggressively pursued all possible leads."

Gen. Thomas Darling, Corps of Cadets commandant, said the possibility of such an organization has caused concern. Darling said, however, that pursuing the matter has been difficult because of a lack of evidence.

"I have proceeded in an informal way to see what I could find out about all of this," he said. "I've talked to a number of people, seeking advice, but I have no facts to go on. That's my problem."

Darling said that the concept of secret organizations, in general, is an idea that is

not embraced by Corps administration or cadets. He added that student sentiment against Stickers runs high.

Although he has not been able to verify the organization's motives or agenda, Darling said he is concerned that the Stickers may be an organization that would contradict what the Corps is trying to achieve.

Corps Commander Tyson Voelkel, a senior industrial distribution major, said that although he cannot verify the group's existence, the idea of secret organizations goes against the beliefs of the Corps.

"If this group exists or is indeed organized," Voelkel said, "it does so explicitly against what the Corps of Cadets stands for and undermines what being an Aggie is all about."

"If they are involved in something like this, they are hurting the Corps and going against the Aggie Code of Honor and prov-

ing that they have no integrity."

Voelkel said the possibility of the existence of Stickers has prompted a greater focus on leadership training within the Corps.

"I've given countless hours of advice and mentorship to not only Steven (Poster, next year's commander), but other key leaders in the Corps that may be susceptible to this type of organization," Voelkel said.

"I feel strongly that they know more about what real leadership is and with that knowledge will not do anything to hurt A&M."

Southerland said the A&M administration welcomes any information that would help verify the existence of Stickers and its purpose.

"If individuals have first-hand knowledge or information that would constitute a charge against individuals or an organization, I'm listening," he said.

# History: Secret organizations nothing new to Texas A&M

Continued from Page 1

elections and the selection of cadet rank.

The Kala Kinasis was eventually disbanded, but reorganized years later as the TTs. The TTs, which stands for True Texans or Tonkawa Tribe, also had secret membership and goals.

During the time, another dancing club, the Swastikas, was formed. Much like the Kala Kinasis, the Swastikas, in addition to hosting social functions, sought to control the outcome of elections and Corps leadership selection. The Swastikas eventually evolved into the Stikas, or Stickers.

The Swastika is an ancient symbol that means "meeting." It gained racial and anti-Semitic connotations during World War II.

In 1952, the A&M administration learned of the True Texans and disbanded the organization. Despite the secrecy of the organization, officials were able to gather a confession from one member, who provided them with a copy of the organization's membership. Students involved with the organization were forced to educate the administration about the organization and to disband it immediately because University regulations strictly prohibited belonging to any organization whose purpose and membership was not public.

Membership in the TTs was by invitation only, and popularity, according to members, was a prerequisite.

The TTs had a secret handshake, which involved squeezing three times while shaking

hands. Initiation into the organization required potential members being blindfolded and led to a secret meeting place where they were forced to kneel. While kneeling, initiates were forced to swear an oath of allegiance to maintaining the secrecy of the club and its membership.

Members of the TTs were typically seniors, but the organization had, at times, accepted a few sophomores and juniors.

During the controversy surrounding the TTs, the students of the University were vocal in their contempt for such organizations.

The Student Senate voted unanimously to ask the administration to revise regulations prohibiting any involvement with organizations that had secret membership or goals.

The senior class also voted unanimously to encourage the administration to continue investigating the TTs.

A&M President M.T. Harrington issued a statement at the time condemning the existence of secret organizations and asserted that "membership of secret organizations of this type will be just cause for dismissal."

All those who were found guilty of involvement with the TTs were immediately placed on conduct probation for the rest of the school year, and all involved cadets were reduced to the grade of private.

By 1954, despite the TTs promise not to reorganize, the secret organization once again was functioning.

The administration again



Sterling Hayman, The Battalion

Above is a piece of graffiti art located underneath Heldenfels Hall. The artwork, which is no more than 20 years old, features the symbol of the Swastika Dance Society on the helmet. To the left of the head is the symbol of the True Texans, an organization that was supposed to be permanently disbanded in 1954.

launched an investigation and found that the TTs were in fact re-formed, violating University regulations.

University officials, after conducting interviews and an investigation, found that 18 students were members of the True Texans.

Eighty-five students presented the administration with a signed petition recommending that the University dismiss all students found guilty of being

members of the TTs. Eventually, 19 students were "indefinitely dismissed" from Texas A&M. Four of the dismissed cadets were members of the A&M football team, under Paul "Bear" Bryant.

Several of the cadets, who were close to graduation, did return to finish their courses over the summer. The rest were not allowed back into the College.

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