

NEWS BRIEFS

Enrolled students can use A&M computers

As A&M students enrolled at the College for summer school may use computer labs on the A&M campus.

On the new password log-on systems students previously had to be enrolled in summer courses at A&M to access the computers.

The Student Government worked with the Computing and Information Services to provide computer service for students who need to use the computers during the summer but are not taking classes at Blinn.

Students who need to go to the Teague Building.

Comptroller Sharp announces candidacy

JUSTIN (AP) — State Comptroller Sharp announced his candidacy for lieutenant governor Wednesday, promising to make the Legislature a place "where good ideas can come from good government."

Sharp said he will focus his campaign on innovative ideas and concrete proposals to meet the demands of the growing Texas economy.

Known for his dramatic cost-cutting measures, Sharp said his annual "Performance Review," which looks for ways to make state government more efficient and less expensive, has saved taxpayers \$8.5 billion.

The Democrat had been touted as a front-runner in the bid for governor in 1998, but Sharp told his supporters last week he'd be running for the No. 2 job after Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock announced he would be ending his 4-year political career.

Tornado touches down near Amarillo

LELA (AP) — Several tornadoes were reported in the eastern Panhandle on Wednesday night, and at least one twister damaged property and caused injuries along Interstate 40, authorities said.

The National Weather Service said a large tornado passed over Wheeler County, about 100 miles east of Amarillo, and touched down near the highway about 7:30 p.m.

Wheeler County sheriff's officials reported to take calls Wednesday night, saying they were too busy. A police dispatcher in nearby Shamrock said there were "some injuries on the highway."

In adjacent Collingsworth County, sheriff's dispatcher Paula Chambers said the damage in tiny Lela was serious.

"It flattened one house, it turned several big trucks," Ms. Chambers said. "It's a pretty bad storm."

Authorities said there were more than a dozen tornado sightings in the eastern Panhandle on Wednesday. There were no other reports of tornadoes touching down.

TODAY IN BATTALION

LIFESTYLES

Credit card crisis: Students confront consequences of living with plastic.

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OPINION

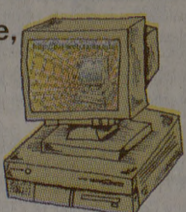
Alternative medicine methods, advancements have public health in mind.

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ONLINE

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Enrolled faculty, staff must pay fees

The legislation might affect recruitment

By ERICA ROY AND MATT WEBER
 THE BATTALION

Beginning the second summer term, Texas A&M faculty and staff enrolled in courses at the University will not be exempt from paying fees due to a ruling by the Texas attorney general.

In November 1996, Attorney General Dan Morales ruled that the governing boards of state universities cannot waive mandatory or discretionary fees unless authorized by statutory law.

In March, legislation passed through the Texas Senate giving such governing boards the authorization to waive certain student fees, but the bill failed in the House of Representatives.

Before the ruling, A&M faculty and staff paid tuition for the courses they were enrolled in, but they were not required to pay fees such as the General Use Fee and the Recreation Center fee.

Bob Piwonka, the manager of Student Financial Services, said the fee waivers were designed to help the faculty and staff continue their education while working.

"Waiving fees for the faculty and staff was a very positive thing to do," Piwonka said. "It was good for the University."

Sen. Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, authored the bill and said he hopes to get a similar bill passed during the next legislative session.

"We tried to see if we could help employees at state universities," Lucio said. "We thought it would be a valuable way to reimburse state employees."

Over 500 A&M employees are enrolled and received the fee waivers this summer term.

Dr. Wayne Wylie, Faculty Senate speaker and an associate professor of health and kinesiology, said requiring employees to pay the fees will not affect

the quality of teaching at A&M, but it will have a disheartening effect on the faculty.

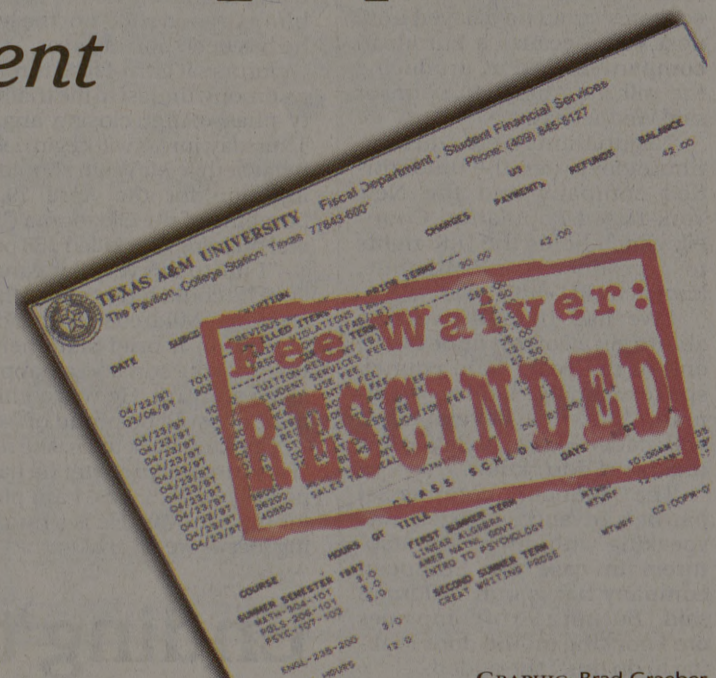
"Even if nobody was using this benefit — which was not the case — the fact that it was jerked out from under you is demoralizing," Wylie said.

Although fee waivers provided an incentive for faculty and staff to further their educations, Piwonka said the decision will not affect the caliber of A&M faculty.

"We're going to continue to hire good people and encourage continuing education," he said.

Wylie said the absence of fee waivers might affect the recruitment of faculty because it takes away an inducement for faculty to teach at A&M.

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GRAPHIC: Brad Graeber

Legacy of the Aggie Ring

Symbols recognize school pride, honor

By JENARA KOCKS
 THE BATTALION

Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but to Aggies, nothing shines brighter than the gold in their senior rings.

Cecil Bleiker, a senior kinesiology and sports management major and a student worker in the Sports Information Department, said the rings mean so much to Aggies because it takes so much work to get one.

"I don't think a lot of people realize how hard it is to complete 95 hours at (Texas) A&M (University)," Bleiker said.

Undergraduates must have 95 cumulative hours, 60 of which must be completed at A&M, a 2.0 GPR and be in good standing with the University to buy a ring.

Carolyn Swanzy, director of the Aggie Ring Program, said thousands of students buy rings each semester. Between 2,200 and 2,500 students

bought rings from late May to June.

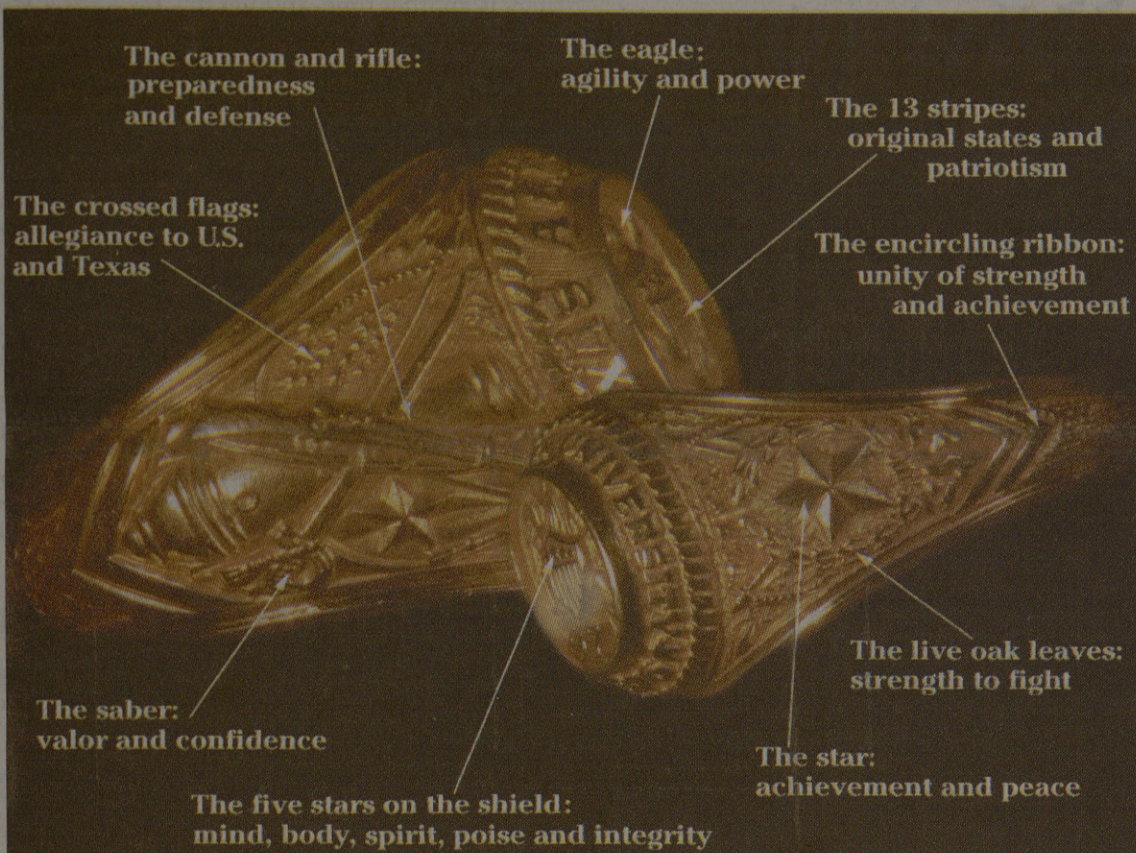
Students who qualify and have filled out audits at the Ring Office in the Clayton Williams Alumni Center have until Friday to order their rings. Rings will arrive September 11.

Swanzy said A&M probably sells more rings than any other school in the nation. She also said prices for the rings are quite a bit cheaper than those at other schools because A&M senior rings have only one design and because the Association of Former Students has a contract with the manufacturer, L.G. Balfour Company of Attleboro, Mass.

"The Aggie ring is the best class ring bargain in Texas and the one with the most tradition," Swanzy said.

According to an article in the October 1989 issue of The Texas Aggie titled "100 Years of Aggie Rings," the design of the ring has a long history.

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GRAPHIC: Tim Moog

Juneteenth celebration to feature national artists

By MICHELLE NEWMAN
 THE BATTALION

Saturday will mark the third annual Juneteenth Jam, sponsored by KHRN-FM 94.5 and Omega Psi Phi. The concert event, featuring artists Rome and Twista, will be held at Rudder Auditorium.

Rome has a gold single titled "I Belong to You," and Twista has performed with rap group Do or Die. Twista also is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "world's fastest rapper."

Edward Sanchez, office manager and music director at KHRN, said the event is important to the Bryan-College Station area.

"The acts we are featuring are national recording artists, and not many African-American acts come into town," Sanchez said. "We put on this event for the African-American citizens in our community."

Juneteenth, which is observed nationwide, marks the anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln. The document declared that all slaves be set free on January 1, 1863, but Texas slaves were not freed until two years later, between June 13th and 19th, 1865.

Brian Doze, Omega Psi Phi president and a junior accounting major, said it is important to celebrate Juneteenth because of its importance in black history.

"We (Omega Psi Phi) felt like it's something that we should highlight in our history," he said. "It's something we should never forget."

Tickets are available at Tip Top Records, Double Quick Food Store in Hearne, from any Omega Psi Phi member or may be purchased at the door. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the concert starts at 7 p.m.

Immediately following the concert, there will be an after-party at the Dixie Theater in Bryan.

Report: A&M gives VIP applicants special admission consideration

DALLAS (AP) — Some applicants trying to get into the state's biggest universities are getting second looks from the institutions if they have VIP connections, even if they fall short of academic requirements, The Dallas Morning News reported yesterday.

Officials at Texas A&M University, the University of Texas and Texas Tech University said they often give applicants a second look if a "very important person" requests it.

In one case, Texas A&M gave preference in 1996 to two students who did not meet admissions standards but had ties to state House Speaker Pete Laney and former A&M regent Mary Nan West, the newspaper re-

ported, citing documents and interviews with officials.

Laney, D-Hale Center, wrote a January 1996 letter to A&M in support of a "neighbor and a close friend" for the engineering school. The student had been on a waiting list because he did not meet all qualifications for regular admission, but was accepted after Laney's intercession.

Laney spokeswoman Janet Warren said the student, who was not identified, was a "young man the speaker has known all of his life" and the son of a family friend.

Please see APPLICANTS on Page 6.



PHOTOGRAPH: Robert McKay

Roll On Johnny Ray Lister, a physical plant employee, rolls over tar outside the Bus Stop Cafe Wednesday afternoon.