

Students hired to petition use of taxes for hotel

By ROBERT SMITH
 THE BATTALION

The Brazos Valley Hotel/Motel Association hired A&M students to form a petition that opposes the city using public funds to build a hotel and conference center on Northgate.



The students have used a "Save Our Mud Lot" campaign to attract signatures.

Larry Haskins, a lawyer representing the land, Jack Culpepper, said the land will be developed even if the hotel and conference center is built.

"They have the right to form a petition," Haskins said, "but people must realize that the land is not going to be saved. He (Culpepper) plans to develop the land if it is not used for a hotel, he may decide to build businesses, restaurants or anything else." James Hobbs, president of the Hotel/Motel Association, said the association hired students to gather signatures and submitted a petition to block a proposed hotel and conference center because it promotes unfair competition to local hotel developers and operators.

But Jeremiah Guerra, a sophomore philosophy major employed by the Hotel/Motel Association to collect petition signatures, said the effort to block the proposed hotel is a "student thing."

"We feel the students should have a right to voice their opinion before the city uses taxes to build a hotel," said Guerra. "We talked to him (Hobbs), but this is really a student thing."

Don Anz, owner of Cafe Eccel and Rosalie's in College Station, saw the "Save Our Mud Lot" tables while jogging on campus.

"I saw the tables one morning and I thought, 'This is interesting,'" said Anz. "When I started asking them questions about what the petition was for, they seemed to get really nervous, almost like they were trying to get rid of me."

Four proposals have been presented to the city for a hotel and conference center on the mud lot.

John Q. Hammonds of Hotel Inc. made the first proposal for a Northgate hotel and conference center last January. Three other proposals also have been made, two of them proposed for the same Northgate land. Hilton and Layne Hospitality in Chicago, led by Hobbs, have made a proposal for Northgate. Culpepper also made a proposal for Northgate. The fourth proposal is at Wolf Pen Creek.

Hobbs has taken an active role in the hotel and conference center proposals. He also is general manager of the College Station Hilton, one of the groups that has made a proposal.

Hobbs is supported by the Hotel/Motel Association and Layne Hospitality despite his conflicting roles. "I asked the Hotel/Motel Association if they wanted me to step down as president, but they did not," Hobbs said. "They support me on this."

Hobbs said the Hotel/Motel Association opposes the proposals because it promotes "unfair competition" to local hotels and motels.

"Under this proposal, the only time they will pay for the conference center is when they are using it," he said. "Whenever it is not being used, they would not have to pay. Thus, they could lower the prices on all of their rooms and they will clean up."



PHOTOGRAPH: Tim Moog

The Brazos Valley Hotel/Motel Association opposes unfair competition surrounding the proposed hotel and conference center on Mud Lot.

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'01' Ag to head new battleship

A&M flag flies on the deck of the USS Ross

By MICHELLE NEWMAN
 THE BATTALION

GALVESTON — The United States Navy commissioned its newest battleship Saturday in Galveston, and the person in charge of the vessel will be none other than an Aggie.

Cmdr. Jeffrey R. Ginnow, commanding officer of the USS Ross, is a member of the class of '78 at Texas A&M University. The 21st of 81 ships to be built, the USS Ross is the most technologically advanced ship in the Navy. Designed for anti-air, surface, land, and submarine attack, the ship is capable of four types of warfare instead of the one or two most ships can perform.

As a former member of the Corps of Cadets, Ginnow said he values his experiences at A&M.

"You learn a lot about leadership in organizations like the Corps," Ginnow said.

Originally from Neenah, Wis., Ginnow later moved to Texas with his parents. When the time came for Ginnow to pick a university, his parents required him to stay in Texas. A&M offered him scholarships and, after a tour of the campus, he said he felt at home at the University. The friendliness of people and the traditions of the campus brought him to A&M, Ginnow said.

"The traditions at A&M are now near and dear to my heart," he said.

This sentiment is illustrated on the deck of the USS Ross. Flying high on a mast beside the United States and Texas flags is an A&M flag.

The ward room, a meeting room for officers aboard the ship, has been decorated in maroon and white. Tradition allows the first commanding officer of a ship to pick the ship's decorations.

Ginnow is one of three Aggies aboard the USS Ross. Weapons systems officer Lt. Dennis Garth is a member of the Class of '88 and also was in the Corps of Cadets. Garth was a drum major of the Aggie Band from Fall 1987 through Spring 1988. As a drum major, Garth said, leadership was essential for success.

"Colonel Haney (band director at the time), back in '01' Army' days, expected the three drum majors to take care of all activities of the band," Garth said. "For a kid, that's a lot of responsibility."

Garth said the Corps of Cadets was a positive learning experience.

"The Corps was great for camaraderie, and it was the best leadership experience I could ever have," Garth said.

On most Naval ships, about 50 percent of the officers attended the Naval Academy. The other half studied at other military-style institutions.

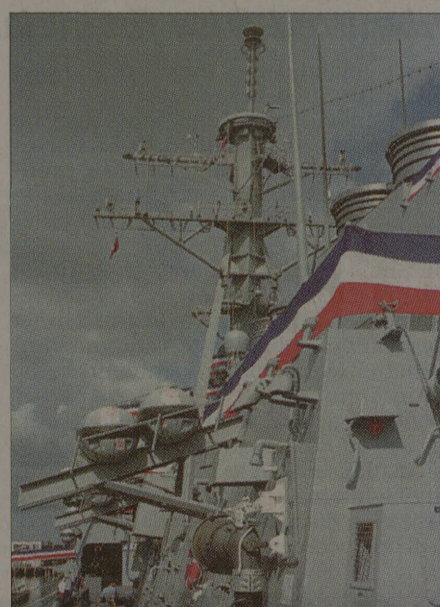
Ensign Robert Cohen, Classes of '93 and '95, also was a member of the Corps.

"At the time you are going through [the Corps], you don't think it's helping you," Cohen said. "In the end, though, you know it did."

Ensign C.W.L. Huysoo said Aggie spirit is prevalent on the ship.

"There's only three Aggies on the boat, but everyone knows who the Aggies are," Huysoo said.

Under the leadership of Ginnow, tradi-



PHOTOGRAPH: Michael Tomlinson, Special to The Battalion

The Navy commissioned its newest battleship, the USS Ross, Saturday in Galveston.

tion is a part of leadership.

The USS Ross is named for the late Donald Kirby Ross, who won a Medal of Honor for his service at Pearl Harbor. Each person aboard the USS Ross is taught the history of the ship's name to instill a sense of pride for the ship and the history to which it is linked.

"It is a wonderful way to bring camaraderie to the ship," Ginnow said.

The USS Ross was commissioned in Galveston Bay at Pier 21 Saturday night.

Ross' widow and veterans of World War II were present for the commissioning of the ship.

The ceremony was held at night because of concerns about the heat and humidity of Texas weather. This is the first time a commissioning has been held at night.

The USS Ross' home port will be in Norfolk, Virginia.



PHOTOGRAPH: Michelle Newman

Ensign Robert Cohen, classes of '93 and '95, Cmdr. Jeffrey R. Ginnow, class of '78, and Lt. Dennis Garth, class of '88, are the Aggies aboard the USS Ross.

City agency to take over Kelly AFB

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — In a deal that is the largest of its kind, officials from San Antonio and the Air Force will get together this week to complete the \$108 million sale of Kelly Air Force Base.

The deal, to be completed on Wednesday, is the first step in the eventual purchase of the military base and improvements by the Greater Kelly Development Corp. The city agency was formed to guide the future use of the facilities and work force after Congress voted in 1995 to close the San Antonio Air Logistics Center at Kelly by 2001.

When Air Force and local officials sign the agreement at the Spanish Governor's Palace, they will at once break the mold and build on an evolution that began with the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

The Greater Kelly Development Corp. will officially begin the redevelopment of the 1,871-acre base, which the Air Force will leave by 2001.

The ceremony will be attended by San Antonio Mayor Howard Peak and top Air Force officers, but the actual start of the privatization program will come in August with the award of the C-5 aircraft maintenance contract.

The agreement will transfer all Kelly land, buildings, equipment and utilities east of the runway from the Air Force to GKDC, the city-appointed local redevelopment authority.

The proposed deal is a landmark not only for San Antonio but for the Defense Department.

The \$108 million, 40-year deal is the largest and longest of the 19 economic development conveyances the Pentagon had done nationwide through March 1997.

TODAY IN BATTALION

SPORTS

Hickey continues to help A&M strive towards a more complete women's program.

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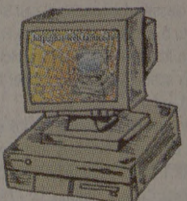
OPINION

Callaway: Texas legislature, order #174 attempts to quiet 'inappropriate' music.

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ONLINE

http://bat-web.tamu.edu
 Look up with national news through the WP Wire.



Overassignments, costs top on-campus housing complaints

By MICHELLE NEWMAN
 THE BATTALION

Living on campus at Texas A&M University provides thousands of students opportunities to meet new people, become involved in college life and become a member of the Texas A&M community. Although these opportunities may make on-campus life favorable to living off campus, some campus dwellers say housing facilities need improvement.

On-campus students fear the University's "overassignment" policy. Under this policy, more people are assigned to some residence halls than it can actually hold. The Department of Residence Life and Housing must overassign to make up for expected losses when prospective residents decide not to live on campus. Students who are overassigned sleep on cots in rooms with two other people or in study rooms.

According to a June 3, 1996 Battalion article, the Department of Residence Life and Housing said 80 percent of housing applicants received room assignments and 20 percent were overassigned in Fall 1996.

“Our primary goal is to get residence-hall income to equal costs.”

Ron Sasse

Residence Life and Housing Director

Dan Miser, assistant director of facilities and planning for the Department of Residence Life and Housing, said the overassignment problem

seems to be under control.

"Memos have been sent out which shows revisions to this process," Miser said. "We shouldn't have problems again like a few years ago."

Before receiving on-campus housing, many students are skeptical of its costs.

Kenneth Krampota, a junior accounting major, said he finds campus dorms costly.

"The cost seems to be pretty high," Krampota said. "It seems that you could live off campus just as easily."

Ron Sasse, director of residence life and housing, said on-campus housing fees are based directly on cost.

"Our primary goal is to get residence-hall income to equal costs," Sasse said.

Planned maintenance costs total \$26 million for the next fiscal year alone.

Money gained through on-campus rent is applied to the maintenance of current

and the automatic steering system was almost back on line.

In a radio conversation — their first since the accident — the wife of commander Vasily Tsibilyev warned him, "Be careful."

"I understand her feelings and her worries, concerns," Tsibilyev told reporters gathered at Russia's Mission Control outside Moscow.

"When I'm listening to her I cannot feel that she's worried. But I can imagine she tries to contain it in herself and, in fact, after talking to my wife I was calmed down."

Later, NASA astronaut Michael Foale got a chance to talk with his wife, vacationing with their two young children in Kentucky. And he assured his Russian crewmates and

flight controllers that, regardless of all that's happened, he'd be willing to fly again in space.

Unlike the four previous days — hot, humid, nerve-racking and crammed with power-salvage work — the crew enjoyed a slower pace and even took time out for a brief news conference.

The chief flight director, Vladimir

Solovyev, commented on how well the men looked.

"We are alive, thank God," Tsibilyev replied in Russian.

Indeed, the three crewmen appeared robust during the video conference, smiling and even laughing at times.

Please see MIR on Page 6.

Putting a Roof Over Aggies' Heads

- Monday - Residence Hall Blues
- Tuesday - Shaping Up Campus Housing
- Wednesday - Off-Campus Woes
- Thursday - Future of Off-Campus Living

GRAPHIC: Tim Moog

housing, Sasse said. Additional dorms have not been built because the money is used for the renovation of current facilities.

Please see HOUSING on Page 6.