



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

ATMentors program celebrates 20 years of guidance for students

BY MARIANO CASTILLO
The Battalion

Each Monday, students roll out of bed with hopes for a better week. This week studies will be done every night, homework will not be late and all classes will be attended. However, reality soon sets in and Monday and Tuesday night television becomes more appealing. The chicken and a friend's problems take priority over studies. Papers and un-read chapters start piling up, and on Wednesday night, the reminder note for the test on Thursday is found. Then it happens: anxiety.

Shortness of breath, palms getting sweaty and nightmares of failing out come to mind as students try to calm the nerves of another wasted week gone by.

With these issues in mind, a small group of faculty members founded a program in 1979 to give students the opportunity to "just talk" to someone whenever they needed. This group noticed students were feeling isolated and defeated in the bureaucracy of the fast-expanding campus. Twenty years later and 400 volunteers strong, the ATMentors program is helping over 2,500 students each year.

Today is the first day of ATMentors Awareness Week, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the organization and promoting the program to attract new mentors and students to take advantage of this service. Mentors will wear buttons this week in order to promote themselves as mentors. A mentor is a faculty, staff or administration member who volunteers a certain number of office hours for students.

LuAnn Helms, a graduate assistant who helps coordinate the ATMentors program, said one of the greatest aspects of the program is that it is completely voluntary.

"Mentors don't receive any bonuses or benefits," Helms said. "The only benefit is they know

they are there to help students."

The ATMentors program operates through the Student Counseling Services, and all of their funding comes from donations. Most donations come from various Aggie Mother's Clubs and from the mentors themselves.

Although the mentors are volunteers, the structure of the program is defined and efficient. Of the 400 current mentors, a group of about 10 volunteer to serve on the executive committee, which elects a coordinator to oversee the group's activities.

Dr. Betty Milburn, coordinator of ATMentors, said, together with the executive committee, she makes an annual report to the members as well as plan meetings and guest speakers.

The most recent annual report included a survey reflecting the effectiveness of ATMentors at A&M. The survey accounts for the opinions of roughly half of the mentors. The results show, in the 1997-98 school year, 68.5 percent of all mentor visits were in regard to academic matters such as career choices, finding a job and conflicts with instructors.

Other major topics included relationships, family problems, deaths in the family, grade troubles in a particular class, roommate conflicts and depression.

Personal crisis such as suicidal thoughts or other trauma accounted for 15.7 percent of visits. Helms said because mentors are not professional counselors, serious personal problems are not handled best by them.

"If a student has a deep problem, we refer them to the Student Counseling Service," Helms said.

Issues discussed with less frequency were financial, ethical, Corps of Cadets and safety concerns.

Peggy Philpot, a mentor for three years and a worker in the MSC Student Programs Office, said ATMentors has helped many students.

"I know that as society gets bigger, students feel they can't connect," Philpot said. "We've got people willing to reach out and talk to the students face to face."

Philpot said it was not difficult for her to adjust to a role as a mentor.

"I'm a good listener; it comes naturally to me," she said. "I mainly see students who work in our immediate office, and throughout the day, I make small connections with them — such as saying 'hi' and smiling."

Philpot said students are not the only ones who benefit from mentoring. Most mentors find their experiences rewarding.

"[Being a mentor] has taught me that a lot of people just need a listener," she said. "Something might be going on that we don't know about and can't be solved until it is talked about. I learned that I can make a difference."

Helms said that 20 years down the road, ATMentors will be much bigger, more resourceful and more popular.

"In general, we want the ATMentor program to expand in the future," she said.

ATMentors recruits new mentors from all departments and offices. The program has a goal to be able to refer students to other counseling services because of the wide range of issues brought to them.

"There are many other mentor programs at A&M that we want to cooperate with," Helms said. "We would like to make this a hub where any student can call and find the most appropriate mentor."

Philpot said ATMentors Week is a good opportunity to inform students of the program.

"I think it is a great program," she said. "I wish more people would get involved and that more students take advantage of it. Many students have a stigma of going to the Student Counseling Center. It's wonderful to get the mentoring process out in the open."

Film critic Siskel succumbs to battle with brain tumor

CHICAGO (AP) — Gene Siskel fell in love with movies as a child. Every Saturday the schoolboy Siskel would walk eight blocks to his neighborhood theater on Chicago's north side to catch the newest films with his friends.

It would be many years before Siskel would make movies his life's work, giving the world the thumbs-up and thumbs-down film reviews he and colleague Roger Ebert created.

"I can't even imagine what it will be like without Siskel," Ebert said Saturday from his Michigan home as news of Siskel's death at age 53 spread.

Siskel's death ended a quiet but strenuous battle against complications that arose after a growth was removed from his brain in May.

"There was a history there, a respect that I'm never really going to replace in my life. It's going to be tough," Ebert said.

Writing for rival newspapers, the young Siskel and Ebert were fierce competitors, always trying to out-scoop each other.

The icy relationship warmed when they reluctantly teamed up to co-host the public television program "Sneak Previews" in 1975.

"For the first five years that we knew each

other, Gene Siskel and I hardly spoke. Then it seemed like we never stopped," Ebert wrote in a column titled "Farewell, my friend" on the front page of Sunday's Chicago Sun-Times.

"Siskel & Ebert," as their show was later known in syndication, became a household name.

Ebert said Saturday that the show would continue with revolving guest critics.

"In the future, we will see," he said.

"The two thumbs up has become an icon in the film industry," said Paul Dergarabedian, a spokesperson for Exhibitor Relations Co. which compiles box office receipts. "The average person would look toward them about whether to take their hard-earned dollars to the box office."

Despite his fame, Siskel stayed in the Midwest, resisting the lure of either coasts.

"The boys always wanted to stay in Chicago — they felt that was neutral territory," said Mary Kellogg of Buena Vista Television, who developed a close friendship with Siskel in the 14 years they worked together on the show.

Orphaned by age 10, Siskel threw himself into his family life with a passion close friends

were quick to remark on. He met and fell in love with Marlene Iglitzen while working at WBBM-TV in Chicago. They married in 1980 and had three children, a boy and two girls.

His passions drove him — from the movies he had loved since a boy, the words he grew to love as a newspaper man, the enjoyment he got as a Chicago Bulls fan and for his family.

At the time of his death, Siskel had taken a leave of absence from his work not only with the "Siskel & Ebert" television show and the Chicago Tribune, but also as a film critic for "CBS This Morning" and WBBM-TV, and as a columnist for TV Guide.

Thousands of letters and e-mails from his fans poured into Buena Vista, which distributes his show, in support of Siskel's leave of absence.

In Sunday's column, Ebert recalled how Siskel strove to deflect attention away from his illness and toward his film criticism after his surgery.

"Although it was obvious sometimes that he walked slowly and was in pain, I never once heard him complain. He carried on with a bravery that is hard to imagine," Ebert wrote.

May Graduates
Official Texas A&M
Graduation Announcements
on sale
Jan. 11 - Feb. 26, 1999
For Information and to place your order
access the Web at:
<http://graduation.tamu.edu>
All orders must be placed over the Web
All payments must be received by February 26
MSC Box Office 845-1234 Mon-Fri 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

AT Tutoring 260-2660
725B University Drive
TICKETS GO ON SALE MONDAY 5PM
www.aggiecentral.com

		MON Feb 22	TUES Feb 23	WED Feb 24	THUR Feb 25
CHEM 107	6-8 PM	CH 5,6	CH 7,8	CH 9	CAPA
CHEM 102	8-10 PM	CH 17A	CH 17B	CH 18A	CH 18B
PHYS 202	10 PM MID	CH 21	CH 22	CH 23	CH 24
CHEM 102 SORIAAGA	6-8 PM	CH 16	CH 17A	CH 17B	CH 18
ECON 202	8-10 PM	Part I	Part II	Part III	PRAC TEST
CHEM 227	10 PM MID	CH 5	CH 6	CH 7	PRAC TEST

Texas Aggie Athletics This Week!

Golf (W) Monday and Tuesday
GTE "MO" morial

Basketball (M) Wednesday 7:00
vs. Oklahoma

Baseball Friday 3:00
vs. Oklahoma State

Tennis (W) Friday 3:30
vs. TCU

Tennis (W) Saturday 1:30
vs. Oklahoma State

Basketball (W) Saturday 2:00
vs. Colorado

Baseball Saturday 2:00
vs. Oklahoma State

Baseball Sunday 1:00
vs. Oklahoma State

Tickets off campus
Kroger in College Station

A Proud Corporate Sponsor!

ROGER CREAGER

"HAVING FUN ALL WRONG"

TIME TO PARTY
AGS...

THURSDAY FEB 25TH

PARTY IN THE CANYON

DICKSON PRODUCTIONS
SUPPORTING TEXAS FINEST MUSIC

THE PRINCETON REVIEW

More reason you should prepare with our GMAT course

PREMIER CAT SOFTWARE

The Princeton Review was the first test prep company to produce computer adaptive software and has over 5 years experience developing CAT questions. Each of our software products has been consistently rated best in the industry. In our GMAT course, you will have the best software available.

Prep for the April GMAT CAT start THIS WEEKEND! Call today!

Don't forget about the FREE Admissions Seminar this Thursday! Look for our Batt ads, radio ads, and flyers!

(409) 696-9099
www.review.com

The Princeton Review is not affiliated with Princeton University or ETS.

Superior

4.0 & GO

The week of February 21 - February 25

	Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IV
Acct 229 Dr. Hayes	Mon Feb 22 11pm-1am	Tue Feb 23 11pm-1am	Wed Feb 24 11pm-1am	Thu Feb 25 11pm-1am
Acct 230	Mon Feb 22 5pm-7pm OR 7pm-9pm	Tue Feb 23 5pm-7pm OR 7pm-9pm	Wed Feb 24 5pm-7pm OR 7pm-9pm	Thu Feb 25 5pm-7pm OR 7pm-9pm
Bana 303 Dr. Anthony	Mon Feb 22 8pm-11pm	Tue Feb 23 8pm-11pm		
Econ 202 Dr. Mabry	Mon Feb 22 9pm-11pm	Tue Feb 23 9pm-11pm	Wed Feb 24 9pm-11pm	
Gene 301 Ellison	Part I Sun Feb 21 8pm-10pm	Part II Mon Feb 22 8pm-10pm	Part III Tue Feb 23 8pm-10pm	Part IV Wed Feb 24 8pm-10pm
Mgmt 363	Part I Mon Feb 22 6pm-8pm			
Mktg 321	Part I Sun Feb 21 8pm-11pm			

Tickets go on sale Sunday at 7:00 PM.
4.0 & Go is located on the corner of SW Pkwy and Tx Ave, behind KFC next to Lack's.
Check our web page at <http://www.4andgo.com>