

WALK-ON/12TH MAN INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Tuesday, August 29, 2000

The locker room on the west side of Kyle Field

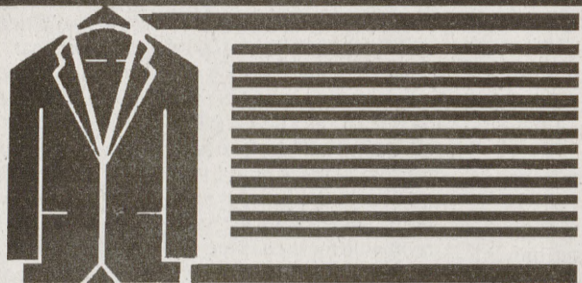
4:30 PM

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Freshmen adjust to college life

By RICHARD BRAY The Battalion

The boxes are unpacked, the walls are decorated, and parents have climbed back into station wagons and gone home. Freshmen turn from the familiarity of their homes and face the daunting challenge of getting to know their roommates and adjusting to relationships and challenges at Texas A&M.

One of the first things Angelique Hopkins, a freshman aerospace engineering major, said she had to master was learning how to get around the University.

"In high school everything is small, and everything is right there. But you come out here, and none of your classes are in the same building, and you don't know where you are going," she said.

Hopkins said another concern for her was budgeting her time.

"I didn't study much in high school, and I think I'm really going to have to hammer down in college," she said.

When it comes to classes and studying, Dr. Mary Ann Moore, a psychologist for Student Counseling Service, said time management is the most important academic difference between high school and college.

"The material isn't that much harder in college. There's just more of it," she said. "So the key adjustment is managing your time."

Moore added that the variety of activities available in college can take away from study time.

"It's a lot of discipline because there are so many distractions when you get to A&M and you really have to set aside study time," she said. "In high school most people didn't have to do that, or they set a very minimal amount of time. It's important, especially in your first semester, to try to stay on top of school so you don't have to play 'catch up.'"

The ultimate challenge for incoming freshmen can be adjusting to a new roommate. Moore said the daily habits of roommates are small things that can lead to conflict during the year.

"If they have never had [a roommate] before, just making that initial adjustment to having someone else going to sleep at a different time and getting up at a different time and getting used to all their different quirks can be difficult," she said.

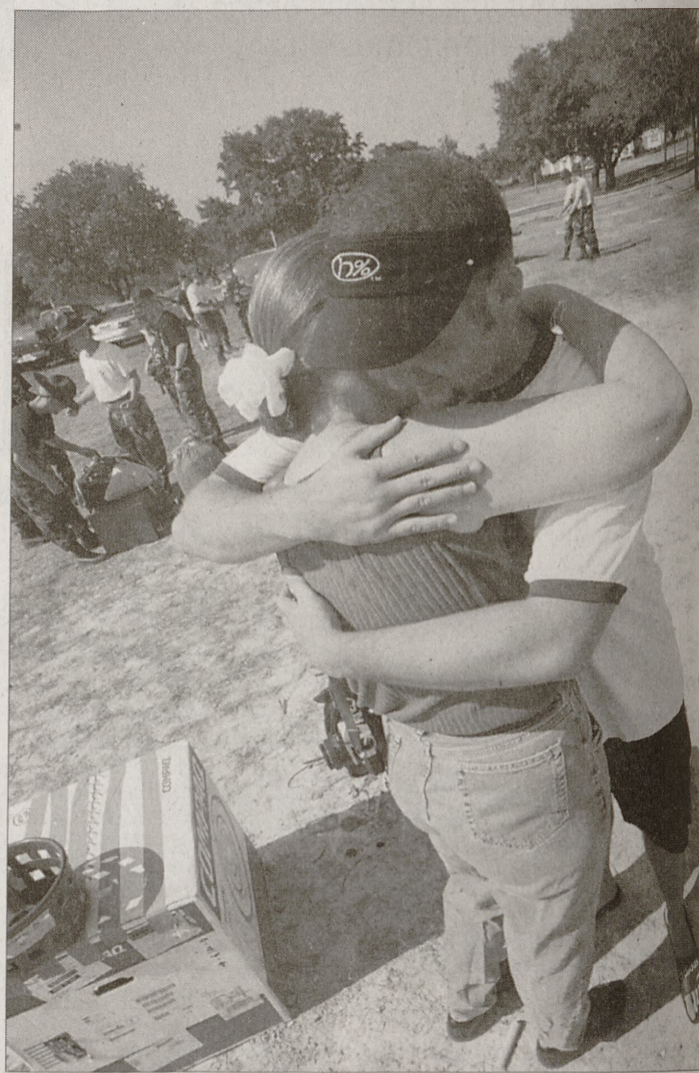
Moore said many roommate conflicts can be avoided if both parties are willing to adapt.

"The biggest thing [students] can do is try to be flexible," she said. "The more flexible you are, the easier the adjustment is going to be."

Conflicts will arise between roommates. However, Veronica Gonzalez, a resident adviser for FHK Complex and a junior chemical engineering major, said few freshmen have difficulty with their roommates.

"Most conflicts arise early, and we try to work on it for about a week or two," Gonzalez said. "If things can't be resolved then we move them. It is usually because of a lack of communication and the small things building up over time."

Moore said the college change is not limited to students — parents also



Michael Brzezinski, a freshman from Alvin, hugs his mother goodbye Sunday. Brzezinski will be a member of the Corps of Cadets this fall.

must adapt to having a child in college.

"A lot of parents want to make sure their child is happy or that they are where they want to be, and they don't want to let them go — they want to keep a close eye on them and sometimes the student does not want that," she said.

Gonzalez said the first year can be the roughest because new roommates are not the only relationships that go through ups and downs.

"There is the relationship with parents because you are no longer living at home," she said. "Freshmen have to learn to become much more self-sufficient. But it is funny because when freshmen come back in January, they find that it was difficult being at home. Even the sibling relationship gets weird because [freshmen] have not seen them all year and things change."

Lisa Mers, hall director for the FHK Complex, said residence halls throughout campus will coordinate several activities to ease the social transition for freshmen.

"We try to focus on social functions in the beginning just so we can build a social base for the students, and then we do educational programs," she said. "We really try to focus it towards each individual hall and the needs of the students in that building."

Programs hosted by the residence halls allow students to meet others in their majors and fields. It also allows them to set up study groups.

"My biggest advice I can offer for freshmen coming in this fall is to keep an open mind," Gonzalez said. "You are going to meet people you have never met before, and they will be doing things that you are not used to. But you have to remember that your main goal is education, and you can't lose that focus."

WELCOME

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Balkum said she did not expect freshmen to compete with returning cadets for parking or resources because Residence Life is prepared for a busy move-in day.

The event today allows volunteers to concentrate their efforts on helping the freshmen and was intended to alleviate overcrowding on Sunday, but other elements influenced Residence Life's decision to have an official welcome day.

"We wanted new students and parents to feel special and welcome and we thought this would be a good way to do it," Sasse said. He attributed the success of the program to the Aggies' willingness to pitch in and help one another.

"If it is going to work anywhere, it ought to work here," Sasse said.

Dwyer, a graduate of the University of Texas, said, "It is just to me what A&M is all about. There is a camaraderie that transcends age and status."

Dylan Misslin, a resident adviser in Walton Hall and junior recreation, parks and tourism major, said check-in has been a smooth experience thus far. Of the 19 freshmen who will be living on the ramp, only five have arrived and he expects the rest to move in today.

"All of the RAs are excited about the fish because they are the spirit of the campus," Misslin said.

The event only assists those living on campus. Balkum said Residence Life currently has no arrangements to help off-campus freshmen.

"Once they get on campus, we are here for them," he said.

Sasse said that if the program had drawback, it would be that parents are unable to get time off work to help their students move in today.

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News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism. News offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building, Newsum Hall 845-3313; Fax: 845-2647; E-mail: batt@unix.tamu.edu; Website: http://www.battalion.tamu.edu

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The Battalion (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except University holidays and exam periods) at Texas A&M University. Periodicals Postage Paid at College Station, TX 77840. POSTMASTER: address changes to The Battalion, 015 Reed McDonald Building, Reed Hall, University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.



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Tips

By STUART HUTSON The Battalion

When Alex card his freshmen that he would be a senior

"It is really more than what you see the money Texas A&M is a major. This is buying things to enter the card

The fall semester and as students of college commonly failed by concept of financial responsibility

Activities that saves when students can quickly for those who are very shopping costs. In campus students misuse fi



RUBEN DELUNA/The Battalion