

Alpha Chi Omega

Wishes to congratulate our New Members

Sarah Adam
Michelle Adams
Laura Andries
Jenifer Barondes
Sarah Beck
Kelly Bena
Lisa Bianchi
Sarah Blue
Paige Boyce
Crys Brown
Jill Buescher
Laura Cannon
Elaine Cherry
Nicole Coselli
Holly Cothran
Brynn Crow
Brittany David

Jill De Witt
Larin Frederick
Jill Hamilton
Natalie Harris
Jill Jackson
Kristen Hubbell
Marianne Hudson
Kristin James
Ashley Judith
Jennifer Kaspar
Tanya Keck
Holly Kious
Lauren Kish
Melissa Knott
Raemi Kolb
Courtney Liston
Melissa Loria

Jessica Marrs
Natalie McCoy
Erin McCrory
Stacy Meyer
Molly Mlod
Amy Morgan
Allison Nichols
Kimberly Olson
Krisyn Potter
Micala Proesch
Bethany Penola
Victoria Phillips
Elizabeth Proffitt
Amy Ransdell
Melissa Ray
Lauren Saladino
Debra Seale

Christi Shafer
Emily Simmons
Becca Sloan
Ashley Smith
Lenti Smith
Macee Smith
Melinda Smith
Andrea Stegall
Sarah Thomas
Brandy Tilley
Liz Vaughan
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THE RIGHT GRIP

Conservative politics dominate Texas A&M voters

By STUART HUTSON
The Battalion

With little more than a month and a half until citizens of this country go to the voting booth to cast their ballots for the presidential candidate of their choice, those who would be president are picking up the pace down the campaign trail.

Soon, television and radio will be inundated with nominees promising an American future that no one else could supply. Fliers and propaganda will fight for space on the walls of every gas station, every bumper and in most magazines.

But, for the students of Texas A&M, the war of words probably will seem a little lopsided come November.

There has been a long-standing perception that, at a school where military uniforms and outspoken conservative views are commonplace, any political organization not boasting a Republican elephant as a mascot would be dead in the water.

"There is this thought that the Republicans just dominate everything here. ... Don't be so sure that it's necessarily true, though," said Ian King, a four-year member of the Aggie Democrats.

King is serving as publicity director for the organization and has also been its president and vice president in the past. He said that, if anything, his experiences have taught him not to take popular perception as fact.

"If you break it down, I think that you will find that most of the students here support many issues that have been classically Democratic," King said. "Minimum wage, some environmental protection, further support for student loans — all things that the Republicans have railed against, but also all things that most college students fully support."

Regardless of individual political standings, however, there is little question that the Republican presi-

dential nominee will be more widely viewed than any other at A&M.

"We're not going to put the majority of our effort into campaigning for Gore, because we just aren't going to build a big following for him," King said. "Just like Gore, nationally speaking, isn't going to put a lot of emphasis on Texas. Bush, the governor of the state, pretty much has it."

King said that the overwhelming

"A lot of students wouldn't even call themselves [Republican or Democrat], but when they are drawn out to the voting booth, I'm pretty sure the majority will vote for Bush."

— Jason Denby
President of Aggies for Bush

support for Bush at A&M may come more from the atmosphere of conservatism at A&M more than individual political leanings.

"There are many things here that make it a conservative setting," he said. "Military, in the form of the Corps [of Cadets], has long been seen as affiliated with the Republican Party. The traditions here, while a wonderful part of the overall Aggie experience, can also instill a sense of conservatism."

"This overall sense often draws people here who are initially conservative, and once here, can sort of put them in a conservative mood, which can affect their political leanings further."

Jason Denby, president of Aggies for Bush and a senior politi-

cal science major, said the conserva-

tive leaning helps his organization. "We are a Republican group, but we welcome anyone who supports Bush, regardless of affiliations," Denby said. "Voting for president and political party affiliation do not always go together."

"A lot of students wouldn't even call themselves one thing or another, but when they are drawn out to the voting booth, I'm pretty sure the majority will vote for Bush."

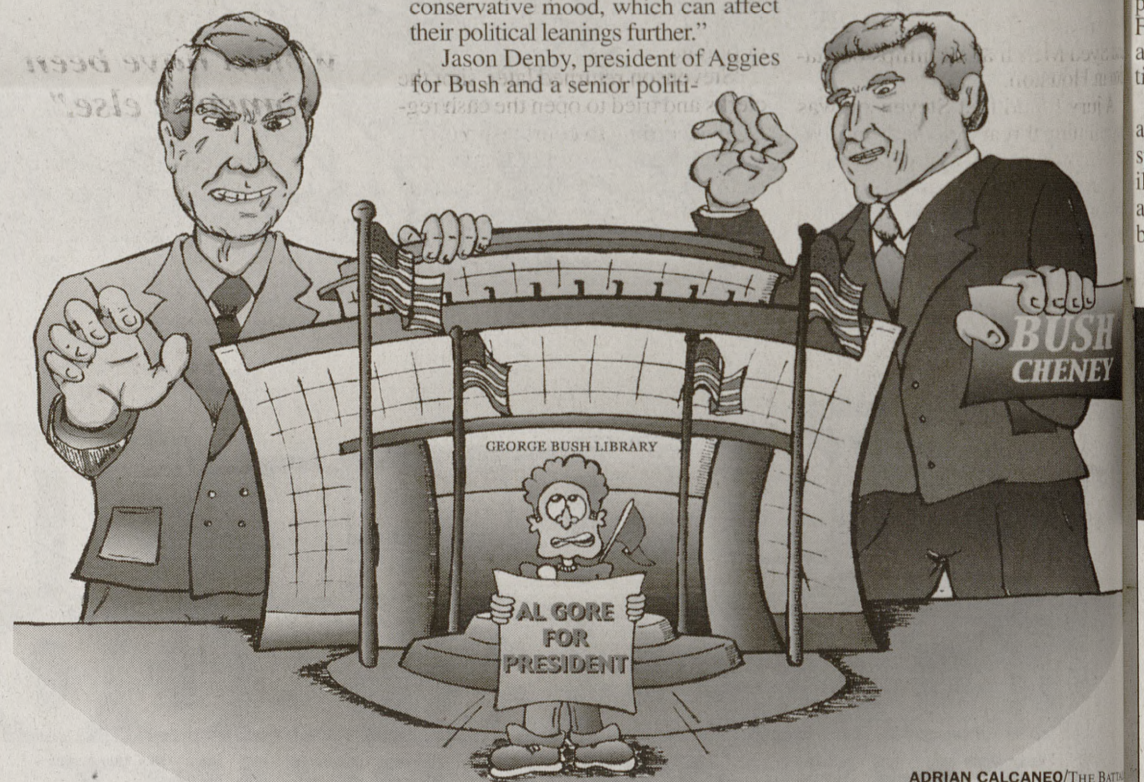
Neither the Republican or Democratic organizations at A&M will deny that the Republican-affiliated organizations have had a long-held upper hand when it comes to recruitment.

"Yes, the Republican organizations get more participation than the Democratic organizations," said Jack Long, president of the Texas A&M College Republicans and a senior political science major. "But that is because more students here would align themselves with the Republican view, although I'm not really sure of the percentage."

"I wouldn't say that Republicans do have a perceived dominance," he said. "They certainly don't know what I read in the newspaper. There are just more conservative than liberal students here."

As for the smaller, lesser known organizations, such as the Aggie Libertarians and Democratic Socialists of Texas A&M, that often find themselves with views that deviate from the commonplace, a conservative majority can be a hindrance.

"Many students come here with a closed mind," said Chris LaFord, president of the Democratic Socialists of Texas A&M and senior political science and sociology major. "Once they get here, the conservative environment helps them keep their mind closed. All we do is to try and show them the differing viewpoints."



ADRIAN CALCANEI/THE BATTALION

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