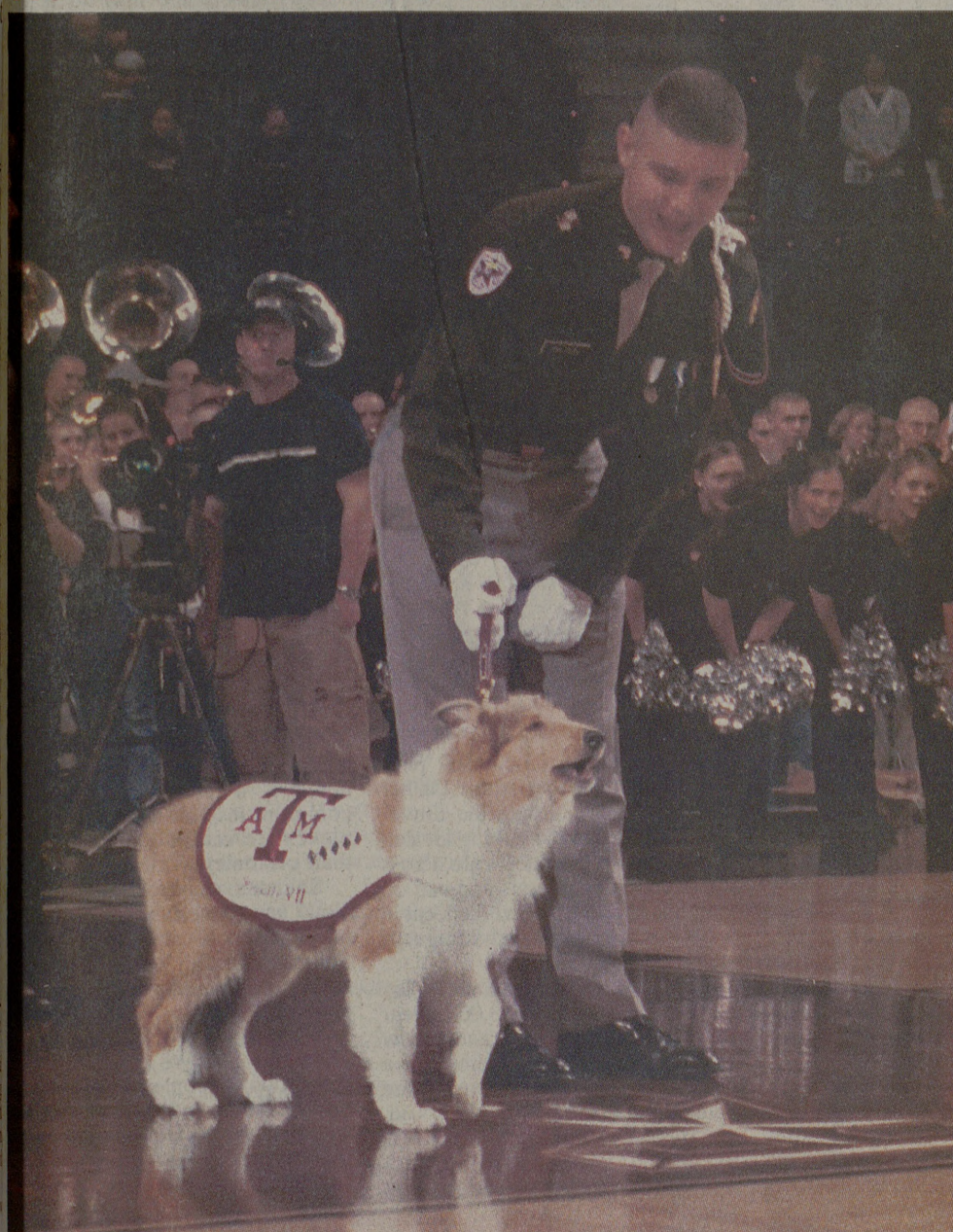


Reveille VII takes a bow



CHADS ADAMS/THE BATTALION

Reveille VII, along with mascot corporal Bo Wilson, a sophomore business administration major, made her Texas A&M debut at Saturday's men's basketball game against Missouri. She will replace Reveille VI at the end of the semester.

Lack of funding causes unfilled staff positions

Physical Plant unable to provide same service level

BY COURTNEY STELZEL
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Physical Plant has lacked the money to hire enough people since last year. An estimated 200-250 slots for local and state positions are vacant due to the lack of money.

Vacant positions remain in such areas as the custodial department, landscaping and facility maintenance.

Richard Williams, interim assistant vice president for the Physical Plant, said, "We don't provide the level of service that we have in the past."

"The impacts (of this shortage) may not be known for years to come," he said.

The inadequate number of employees is due to a shortage in the budget and an inability to stay competitive in the local job market. The Physical Plant is not able to offer the same amount of money as other businesses in the Bryan-College Station area. However, Williams said no employees have been fired due to the lack of money.

"Slots just haven't been refilled after employees have left," Williams said.

Williams said he initiated the hiring freeze, but that the decision is subject to the University's chain of command, and is not entirely up to him. He said employees should rest assured that their jobs are not in danger.

"[Termination of employees] will never happen as long as I'm interim," Williams said.

The Physical Plant has a budget of \$14 million for salaries of state employees under the education and general (ENG) budget, and an estimated \$7 million for local, non-ENG employees. Physi-

cal Plant has an estimated 1,200 employees.

ENG workers hold positions in state-regulated areas, such as custodial services for classrooms and libraries. Non-ENG employees provide such services as cleaning the sports facilities. Both ENG and non-ENG employees are entitled to the same benefits as regular state employees.

Williams said he attributes the insufficient budget to a habit of overspending.

"We are within budget this year, so we are attempting to get people back on board at this time," Williams said.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

College living arrangements

Many students choose off-campus housing as dormitory rates continue to rise, communities compete for business

BY SOMMER BUNCE
The Battalion

With the various housing options available to Texas A&M students, incoming freshmen and their parents are a commodity in the residence hall market, said Mack Thomas, assistant director of housing assignments for Texas A&M.

Dorm-style apartment communities, such as the Callaway House and The Tradition at Northgate, pose a threat to the occupancy rates of campus residence halls, Thomas said. But, he said, the threat is small because of the large numbers of students campus halls can house.

As more housing options become available off campus, the number of freshmen living on campus, currently 4,500, may be affected, Thomas said. Callaway House, with an occupancy of 500, and Tradition, which could house as many as 795 students when construction ends this summer, could decrease the occupancy rates on campus by 9 percent, he said.

"We are in competition, but most apartment-style residences are in competition for upperclassmen, and we deal mainly with freshmen," Thomas said. "For the most

part, freshmen live on campus and are strongly encouraged to do so by their parents."

Of the average 6,500 freshman admitted each year, 5,200 live in residence halls. Residence Life has oversigned its housing for five of the past 10 years.

The Housing Office uses the rent from on-campus halls to help pay for utility costs and mortgage-like bills, such as the \$6.25 million debt it owes for the construction of the modular halls, Thomas said. The main area where the Housing office invests money in the residence halls is replacement, not addition, he said, as the housing office builds new halls and retires old ones.

The average cost of building a res-

idence hall is about \$50,000 per bed. A large modular-style hall such as Appelt would have cost \$14.9 million to construct.

Jennifer Cowley, assistant research scientist at A&M's Real Estate Center, said on-campus housing does not represent the true costs of real estate. On-campus residents are paying a bargain price for what they get, Cowley said.

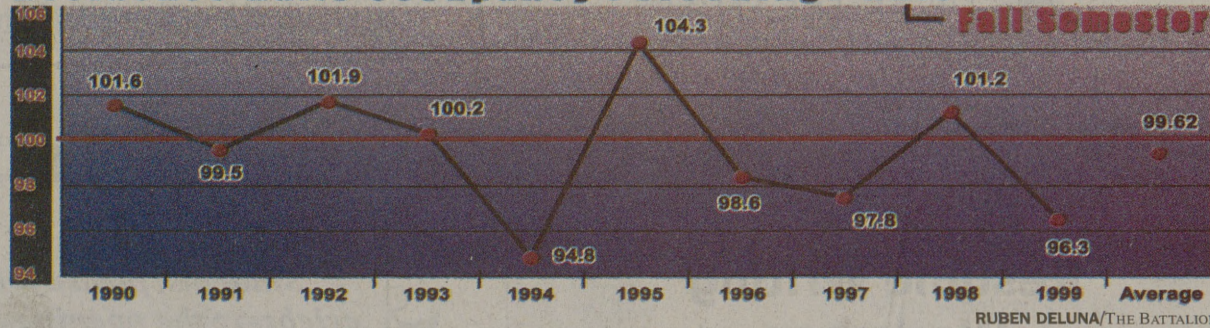
"In most cases, you're paying the cost of service and some profit to off-campus communities that have just been built," she said. "The prices you find off-campus for the same types of things may be just a bit higher, but they represent the real costs of business. It's simply up to the student and parents whether a higher price is excessive or acceptable."

Occupancy rates were as high as 104 percent in 1995, a result of the "guessing game," Thomas said. Residence Life plays when calculating how many students to accept and how many upperclassmen will remain in halls. Last year, occupancy decreased to 96 percent.

Thomas said every student who applies for on-campus housing this fall will be offered



Residence Halls Occupancy Percentage Rate



See LIVING on Page 2.

Eating Disorders Week aims to teach students

BY BRANDIE LIFFICK
The Battalion

In an effort to address an illness that affects 5 million people each year, Student Health Services Health Education, Student Counseling Service and Peer Representatives Educating About College Health (REACH) are coordinating Eating Disorders Week.

Beginning today, the week will teach Texas A&M students about types of eating disorders, symptoms, how to help a friend and where to go for help. Information tables will be set up in the Memorial Student Center from 1 a.m. to 2 p.m. today through Thursday.

"The worst thing you can do to someone you think has an eating disorder is to label them," said Dr. Mary Ann Covey, a psychologist with Student Counseling Service. "That just makes a person defensive."

Covey said there are certain ways to help friends who are suffering from eating disorders.

"People tend not to be real sensitive to eating disorders," she said. "They often will look at

someone with anorexia and say, 'Just eat,' but it's not that simple. This is a mental illness."

"Just like you can't expect a person with a fear of heights to go to the top of Rudder Tower and look down, you can't expect a person with an eating disorder to all of the sudden eat more or stop binging," Covey said.

A discussion panel will be held Tuesday at 7 p.m. in 301 Rudder. Speakers include Covey; Dr. Ann Reed, associate director and head of clinical services at A.P. Beutel Health Center; registered dietitian Amy Chapman and Michelle Corove from the psychology clinic.

According to the National Eating Disorders Screening Program (NEDSP), an eating disorder is an illness associated with disturbances in eating behavior, severe body image distortion and an obsession with weight.

Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in 281 Student Recreation Center, representatives from Student Health Services will lecture about prevention, treatment and risk factors of eating disorders.

Although anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are the two

most widely recognized types of eating disorders, the lecture will also discuss binge-eating disorder and how to recognize early signs of eating disorders.

"New studies are now showing that [eating disorders] are starting at younger ages than in the past," Covey said. "But often, patients do not seek treatment until they become of college age."

College, Covey said, provides an opportunity for people to face this illness and get help.

Both physical and mental evaluations are necessary to diagnose an eating disorder, Reed said.

"Often a person will come in with symptoms, such as depression or fatigue, but they don't realize that these are related to an eating disorder," Reed said. "Both a physical and a mental evaluation are important to form a plan for treatment."

The Student Counseling Center provides one-on-one therapy and group sessions for those suffering from eating disorders. According to NEDSP, as many as one in every 10 college-age women suffer from clinical eating disorders.

News in Brief

Two police officers injured in hit-and-run car accident

Early Sunday morning, two College Station police officers were involved in an auto accident that left one officer seriously injured. Just after 3 a.m., officers Karla Wiesepape and Bobby Branch were driving in an unmarked police car on Wellborn Road south of 2818 when their vehicle was struck from behind.

Both officers were taken to the College Station Medical Center. Branch was treated and released, but Wiesepape remains hospitalized with injuries to her leg, hip and shoulder.

Officer Walter Sayers of CSPD said the suspect's vehicle was found Sunday near the Southgate Village Apartments. Sayers says a warrant will be issued for the suspect later today. The suspect could face felony hit-and-run charges.

Attack on Iraq may complicate U.N. negotiations

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The latest allied airstrikes near Baghdad are likely to complicate upcoming U.N.-Iraq talks aimed at breaking a stalemate over U.N. sanctions and getting weapons inspectors back into the country.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is to meet with Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf on Feb. 26-27 for talks that have been seen as a chance to start a dialogue on the intertwined issues of sanctions and weapons inspections.

In a letter to Annan and the

Security Council, al-Sahhaf said the U.N. chief should "condemn the dangerous aggression and the increase of tension" and should take "speedy steps to prevent such attacks from taking place again," the official Iraqi News Agency said Sunday.

Iraq wants the U.N. to lift crippling economic sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The United Nations says Iraq must first let inspectors back in to make sure President Saddam Hussein is not developing weapons of mass destruction.

Though a major breakthrough had not been expected from the meeting, the fact that Baghdad requested it and sent such a high-level delegation was seen as positive.

Iraq's supporters on the Security Council — Russia, China and France — had been hoping the United States and Britain would help their efforts to nudge Iraq into cooperation with weapons inspections.

Instead, U.S. and British warplanes launched their most serious attack on Iraq in two years, hitting air defense and radar sites

south of Baghdad Friday night.

The Pentagon said the attack was meant to thwart Iraq's improving capability to target U.S. and British planes that patrol a no-fly zone set up over southern Iraq after the Persian Gulf War.

But the raid drew widespread condemnation, some of it from key U.S. allies in the Middle East and Europe who said it was time for Washington to reconsider its policies toward Iraq.

Russia, France and China all said the airstrikes were unprovoked and would damage international efforts to resolve the

sanctions issue. All three countries want the sanctions lifted.

China called on the United States and Britain on Saturday to stop military action in Iraq immediately to create a favorable atmosphere for the upcoming talks, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhardt said Annan hopes the meetings will go ahead as scheduled "because all the major issues remain unresolved and unless we talk out these differences we don't think they can be resolved."