

Women and the Corps

Despite integration philosophy, some outfits remain all male

By SOMMER BUNCE

The Battalion
Company G-1 cadet Rebecca Barron sees the Corps of Cadets as a task she started and one she will finish.

Barron, a junior general studies major, began as a freshman in her unit with five other women cadets and watched each of them leave. For her, the decision to continue in the Corps was simply one to "stick it out."
"I would feed off [it] when they quit, and it made me stronger," Barron said. "I'm the only one left."

For most of the 120 female cadets, the decision to stay in the Corps may be similar, said Maj. Becky Ray, the commandant's assistant for gender issues. On average, 50 percent of freshman women leave the Corps after their first year. But once a woman remains in the

Corps beyond her first year, the retention rate is high, Ray said.

"There is a whole different situation between men and women," she said. "For a woman to come into the Corps and to remain or not to is a personal choice.... It comes down to how many women really want to do this all four years. Women drop out who could really do this."

"But then, it's different for a young lady to date a guy in uniform than for a young man to date a lady in uniform."

On the first day of Fall 2000 classes, 163 women were in the Corps, and 69 were freshmen. This semester, the number has fallen to 37 freshman and 120 women in total.

Ray attributes the drop in numbers to several factors: Some freshmen do not return at all, some are ineligible because of grades,

some leave for medical reasons and some simply change their minds.

Most women continue in the Corps because of contracts for military service and because they are satisfied with their social lives, Ray said.

But Barron said women must go the extra mile to get the same credit as their male counterparts. A woman must prove that she is just as tough and physically capable as her male buddies before she can gain acceptance into the male-dominated Corps culture, she said.

"I won my male buddies over," Barron said. "A lot of times females think they're going to be treated differently within the Corps because they're female. When they don't get that same respect we usually get from the outside world, [they] go into female mode and start crying. It gives all of us a bad

Number of FEMALE CADETS		
TOTAL	UPPER CLASSMEN	FRESHMEN
163	94	69
FALL 2000		
120	83 (12 percent decrease)	37 (46 percent decrease)
SPRING 2001		

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

name after so many women have done things like that."

Some women's classmates try to convince them to leave, but that starts with bad

See WOMEN on Page 2A.

Bush to push tax-cut program

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Bush goes before the nation tonight with his first major challenge: sell a program of tax cuts that Americans are lukewarm about and spending cuts that many will not like.



BUSH

It would be a tough assignment for any president, but this new leader has hurdles all his own. Elected without a clear mandate, Bush gets only middling marks for his public speaking, has yet to build enough support in Congress and has had to make his arguments heard in the midst of the din over the Clinton pardons, a spy scandal, a White House shooting and an airstrike against Iraq.

"Hopefully, all the focus on the past is over with," the president said at a Cabinet meeting Monday. "It's time to move forward and [tonight's] speech is part of moving forward."

The cornerstone of the joint address to Congress, which aides said would last about 45 minutes, will be Bush's pitch for a \$1.6 trillion tax cut over 10 years. He is buffeted on all sides — from Democratic partisans who say it's too big, GOP activists who say it's too small and voters who put a higher priority on debt reduction and certain spending programs.

A poll released by the Pew Research Center last week indicated that voters narrowly support Bush's tax plan — 43 percent in favor, 34 percent opposed — with voters in favor of shoring up Social Security or paying for domestic programs rather than tax cuts.

Bush must convince voters they can have it all: lower taxes, lower public debt and bigger budgets for education, environment and other popular programs.

"With a \$5.6 trillion surplus, we do have room for a lot of options," White

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— President Bush

House press secretary Ari Fleischer said Monday.

Bush rarely stressed debt reduction on the campaign trail, in part because his massive tax-cut package didn't leave room for reducing red ink under economic conditions at the time.

But surplus projections have ballooned. And the Congressional Budget Office estimates that up to \$800 billion of the \$3.4 trillion in publicly held debt cannot be retired in the next decade because it is in savings bonds or treasury bills that do not come due soon or are held by foreign governments.

Bush will be able to promise the fastest, largest debt reduction in history: \$2 trillion over 10 years, aides said Monday.

What does it mean to you?

A&M diploma has various degrees of worth in workforce

This is the first of a three-part series on the value of a Texas A&M degree. The focus of Part II will be the Aggie Network and Part III will be on military reputation. Today's focus is A&M's international presence.

By MARIANO CASTILLO

The Battalion
The steady rise of Texas A&M's academic reputation has increased the value of an A&M diploma, according to many former students and employers. Although no precise price tag can be placed on an A&M

"Internationally, there are a lot of [A&M graduates] in petroleum engineering, agriculture and vet medicine."

— Ray Hannigan
Class of '61

diploma, graduates are entering the workforce with highly marketable skills and expertise.

Consulting firms and engineering companies recruit avidly at A&M, said Paul Husky, assistant director of former student career services.

"Aggies have a reputation being personable," he said. "The [Aggie] Code of Honor is also well known. Employers trust that Aggies keep stuff in confidence." Engineering firms also seek out A&M graduates for their practical knowledge, Husky said.

"Employers have said that Aggies have a taste for what's real," he said.

Faculty, staff and former students agree that while employers have a generally favorable view of A&M graduates, Aggies are often handicapped by a narrow worldview in an increasingly international workplace.

However, A&M graduates are gaining a reputation for being unwilling to leave Texas and live abroad.

Ray Hannigan, Class of '61 and recently retired CEO of Kinetic Concepts, worked 19 years abroad and lived in nine different countries. Many Aggies work abroad, but he said in general, there is a reluctance to leave the United States.

"There is a lot of resistance, a 'why should I do this' attitude," Hannigan said.

The number of Aggies living and working abroad is rising, but the majority of the jobs are concentrated in a few fields.

"Internationally, there are a lot of [A&M graduates] in petroleum engineering, agriculture and vet medicine," Hannigan said.

The number of Aggies in international corporations include international students who studied at A&M and returned to their home countries.

"However, some A&M graduates are not prepared for international situations."

"It depends on the industry and discipline," Hannigan said. "Business and liberal arts are not necessarily as common abroad."

A&M's core curriculum currently does not require any international courses. See DIPLOMA on Page 6A.

Medieval motion



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Ashley Richards, a member of the Society of Creative Anachronism, dances across the floor of the MSC Flagroom. The group, which specializes in Medieval arts, performed a dance at the MSC Monday.

Tax-free season may be extended

By ELIZABETH RAINES

The Battalion

Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander has proposed expanding the tax-free season from three to five days, saving Texas taxpayers an estimated \$46 million more in sales tax during the back-to-school shopping season this summer.

"The sales-tax holiday is a tremendous help to hard-working Texas families," Rylander said. "By expanding the holiday from three days to five and adding [more tax-exempt] items, the sales-tax holiday will be less of a traffic jam and save Texans more of their hard-earned dollars for their families."

Since the tax exemption program began in 1999, Texas taxpayers have saved \$69.6 million.

Rylander's office is hoping the legislation will pass this session so taxpayers can reap the benefits during the 2001 tax holiday, which is scheduled for the first weekend of August.

"Whether the tax-holiday extension will be effective depends on the Legislature," said Will Holford, press secretary for the comptroller's office. "If it is approved by the Legislature, we hope that it will be effective immediately for this 2001 tax holiday."

State Sen. Rodney Ellis and state

Rep. Renee Ahlaveda are sponsoring the bill in the Texas Senate and House of Representatives.

The comptroller's office has added items to the tax exemption list including school supplies; child-safety equipment, such as safety seats and bicycle helmets, and any sewing item that can be turned into clothing.

Holford said Rylander is placing heavy emphasis on exempting child-safety seats.

Last year, local taxing entities could choose whether to waive the local sales tax during the tax holiday. All but one community, Sunset Valley, waived the local tax for the weekend. It is not known yet whether all local entities will waive the local tax exemption for all five days if the expansion of the tax holiday passes through legislation.

Kelley Cole, director of marketing

See TAX on Page 2A.

HOLIDAY

Proposed to be extended from three to five days in August

State sales tax would be exempt for:

- clothing items
- school supplies
- child-safety seats
- bicycle helmets
- sewing items

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Media appeals for access to records in Dartmouth case

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Vermont organizations took their case to the state's highest court Monday after a judge refused to open records that might explain why authorities have charged two Dartmouth college professors.

The Associated Press, the Times Free Press, the Rutland Herald, WCAX-TV and WPTZ-TV appealed to the

Vermont Supreme Court to reverse the lower court ruling.

"Once they're judicial records, we say we should have a right to them," said AP lawyer Philip White.

It was not known when the Supreme Court would hear the case.

The sealed records include affidavits for search warrants and a request for physical evidence from the suspects.

See DARTMOUTH on Page 6A.

Texas defensive end dies in car accident

AUSTIN (AP) — University of Texas-Austin defensive end Cole Pittman was found dead Monday at the scene of a one-car accident.

State troopers discovered Pittman's pickup truck on the side of U.S. Route 79 near Easterly, about 100 miles northeast of Austin.



PITTMAN

Pittman, a sophomore who had played in 23 games in his two seasons at Texas, was returning to school from his family's home in Shreveport, La.

Longhorns coach Mack Brown told the team Monday afternoon at a meeting that had been scheduled to prepare for spring practice. The workouts were supposed to begin Tuesday but have been postponed. No new date has been given.

"This is the hardest thing I have faced in 29 years of coaching," Brown said. "We've lost a mem-

ber of our family, and it really hurts. Every member of our team is like a son, and you can never prepare yourself for something like this. I don't even know how to begin."

Before receiving the devastating news, Brown met with the media to discuss his plans for the spring, and he immediately put to rest any speculation about his quarterback plans: Chris Simms is a firm No. 1 and Major Applewhite is the backup.

"They will be competing, but there's no question Chris is the

starter," Brown said. "We don't feel the need to alternate guys like we did the first of last year."

The 6-foot-5, 265-pound Pittman played defensive tackle as a freshman, then moved to end this past season. He started the first three games in 2000. He had 30 tackles, two sacks, five tackles for loss, five quarterback pressures and caused one fumble in his career.

Pittman enrolled at UT in the spring of 1999 after helping

See UT on Page 2A.