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THE BATTALION

Thursday, November 11, 2002

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A&M research team travels to Antarctica

By ERIC AMBROSO
THE BATTALION

Depending on the season, anywhere from 200 to 1,000 people inhabit McMurdo Station, the largest and oldest military base in Antarctica. Since 1955, scientists and military personnel at McMurdo have trampled over the snow near the barren South Pole, leaving bootprints in places previously untouched by humanity.

The activity near McMurdo has led to side effects: environmental damage as a result of human intervention. Texas A&M's Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG) will send six scientists to McMurdo next week for

a month's stay, concluding the team's three-year research into the effects of human activity in Antarctica.

"Our hope is to minimize the impact of research teams in Antarctica," said Chuck Kennicutt, director of the GERG. "McMurdo Station is the largest U.S. base in Antarctica, serving as the main staging area for research in Antarctica. The location has been occupied by people for 50 years, and the effects of our interaction with the environment have begun to show."

A&M has a history of research in Antarctica since the 1960s, said Kennicutt, who has been to Antarctica five times to participate in similar environmental studies, leaving his own

footprints behind.

The research team will work to analyze environmental damage in Antarctica to prevent further ecological damage because of the disposal and wastes of people in Antarctica.

McMurdo was built as a research base for the U.S. Navy. Attracting up to 1,200 researchers in the summer, damage to the environment McMurdo is showing, researchers said. Sponsored by a National Science Grant, researchers from A&M have worked to alter the impact of this damage.

Guy Denoux, laboratory manager for the GERG, said the group is trying to develop a process for monitoring the area and training research teams.

"Our purpose is to measure the damage that has been done to the environment and ways to prevent more damage," Denoux said. "We'll use a team of divers to collect water in order to analyze samples for contaminants."

Diana Alsop, a graduate student from Texas Department of Geology, has been to McMurdo Station last two years. With A&M's GERG, Alsop has developed a long-term program for Antarctica.

"The base itself is a town; it's an old mine and still feels like that," said. "However, the beautiful areas are quite rugged."

Driver advocates look to Bus Ops for help, solutions

By AMANDA SMITH
THE BATTALION

A recent complaint by a Texas A&M bus driver and a handful of other drivers disgruntled with the 12-hour minimum work-load rule have prompted the student-led driver advocacy team (DAT) to further consider Bus Operations' employment practices.

Gary Jackson, Bus Operations manager, said the group has not been previously very active but has become more involved this semester.

"This year, a couple of drivers wanted to make a difference, so they have become very active trying to drum up more interest among the other drivers," Jackson said. "The only serious issue raised by the DAT so far is the same one already raised, that of the 12-hour-policy."

Last month, A&M bus driver Matt Rooney, a junior management information systems major, claimed mismanagement had led to him being unfairly reprimanded for the hours he has worked. Rooney also complained of favoritism for some students working in the department.

PTTS officials countered, saying the procedures for required hours had been made clear to student workers and other employees in Bus Operations, which hires more than 300 student employees per semester as bus drivers, dispatchers and trainers.

Bus Operations management recently implemented a new rule requiring drivers to

work a minimum of 12 hours.

Jackson said DAT and an unteer committee, along with Bus Operations management, are examining the enforcement of the 12-hour-minimum.

"The major issue now is the way we enforce the 12-hour minimum as well as the way in which the schedule is set," Jackson said. "We're trying to get the students to

"We will try to work with those who cannot make the minimum for some reason."

— Gary Jackson
Bus Operations manager

some feedback on the design but doubt seriously can make major changes in the fall. Rather we have said that we will maintain the hour-minimum in effect through the spring, along with the rule as is and continue to make improvements.

"We will try to work with those who cannot make the minimum for some reason."

At a recent DAT meeting, a committee of volunteers organized to further review the 12-hour rule.

DAT, organized from last semester, has worked closely with another group, the Association of Texas Aggie Bus Drivers (ATABD). ATABD serves as a service organization

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Spring 2002

(The spring editor will serve from Jan. 7 through May 10, 2002)

Qualifications for editor in chief of *The Battalion* are:

- Be a Texas A&M student in good standing with the University and enrolled in at least six credit hours (4 if a graduate student) during the term of office (unless other credits are required to graduate);
- Have at least a 2.00 cumulative grade point ratio (3.00 if a graduate student) and at least a 2.00 grade point ratio (3.00 if a graduate student) in the semester immediately prior to the appointment, the semester of appointment and semester during the term of office. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (a graduate student) must have been taken for that semester;
- Have completed JOUR 301 (Mass Communication, Law and Society), or equivalent;
- Have at least one year experience in a responsible editorial position on *The Battalion* or comparable daily college newspaper,
- OR -
Have at least one year editorial experience on a commercial newspaper,
- OR -
Have completed at least 12 hours journalism, including JOUR 203 and 303 (Writing I and II), and JOUR 304 (Editing for the Mass Media), or equivalent.

Application forms should be picked up and returned to Franca Cagle, Student Media business coordinator, in room 014A Reed McDonald Building. Deadline for submitting application: noon Monday, November 12, 2001. Applicants will be interviewed during the Student Media Board Meeting beginning at 10 a.m. Friday, November 16, in room 221F Reed McDonald Building.

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