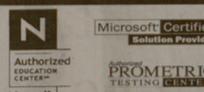


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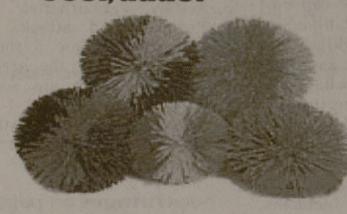
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Textbooks

Continued from page 1A

with online trading groups than with local bookstores.

"If you're willing to take those risks, you're possibly going to save money," Patti said.

Patti also said relying on used books may not be beneficial to students' study habits.

"So many books today are customized and packaged.

Because of that, it is very hard for a student to use a site like this exclusively," he said.

"Also, bookstores try to have a knowledgeable staff to assist the students."

Do said he does not consider the Website in direct competition with Bryan-College Station bookstores.

"We only deal with used books and make no money from the Website," he said.

Barnes said he knows that

bookstores offer a service to students, but feels that textbook-trader.com offers better prices.

"(With our site) there's no shipping, no middle man and no tax," Barnes said. "The book stores do provide a service to students, but we are appealing to budget-conscious students."

For more information and to access the book Website, visit textbook-trader.com.

Math

Continued from page 1A

"The three who have the best insight and can answer the most questions make the team," said Elizabeth Williams, a sophomore applied mathematics major who competed as an individual.

A&M had several other students compete as individuals, including Ryan Pai, Armando Solar, Scott Talafuse and Williams. Pai made it to the top 300, and the others ranked as individual bests.

The Putnam Competition takes much preparation, and this year, a problem-solving course in the math department was designed to help competitors, Hensley said. However, enrolled students do not have to compete for the one-hour course credit. Preparation during the previous years was taken care of through an informal seminar, he said.

Hensley said the competition is tough and students must be willing to work hard throughout the semester to tackle the problems.

"You never know what's coming on this test, the

questions just come out of left field, but practicing helps you figure out tough problems," Hensley said.

The course is offered in the Fall, preparing for the competition in December. The course covers questions from previous tests, and professors share techniques and writing styles for answering the hardest questions.

"I've competed all three years, and there is always something different," Patterson said. "All the problems take cleverness and mathematic maturity."

The competition takes eight hours to complete. The test consists of 12 questions and competitors have three hours for the first six, get a break, and then three more hours for the last six problems. For every question answered correctly the individual receives 10 points. The test is so difficult that a score of one out of a possible 120 points is not unusual at all.

"The difficulty level of the test is a shock the first year, but I am enrolled again, and hopefully I will do better next year," Williams said.

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by R. DeLuna Andersen

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