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Fish

by R. DeLuna



Silence

Continued from page 1

prayer. "We are talking about patriotism and loyalty to our country," he said.

The U.S. Supreme Court in October 2001 rejected a challenge to a Virginia law that makes a minute of silent prayer mandatory for that state's public school students. The Virginia law specifically requires prayer as one silent activity that students may choose.

Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, said he did not have a problem with requiring students to observe a moment of silence or recite the Pledge of Allegiance, but was critical of the requirement that students say the Texas Pledge of Allegiance.

"You don't have to pledge to Texas. Anybody who was born and raised in Texas, that's enough. Here I am in Texas," Barrientos said.

If signed into law, the bill would take effect in the 2003-2004 school year. Wentworth said the bill does not provide for penalties for noncompliance.

Rep. Dan Branch, Dallas, is carrying similar legislation in the House. The House Public Education Committee approved his bill last week.

Another option would be to redesign the program to fit recent cuts in funds.

"The department will be restructured, but I can't see the journalism department without a writing program," Starr said.

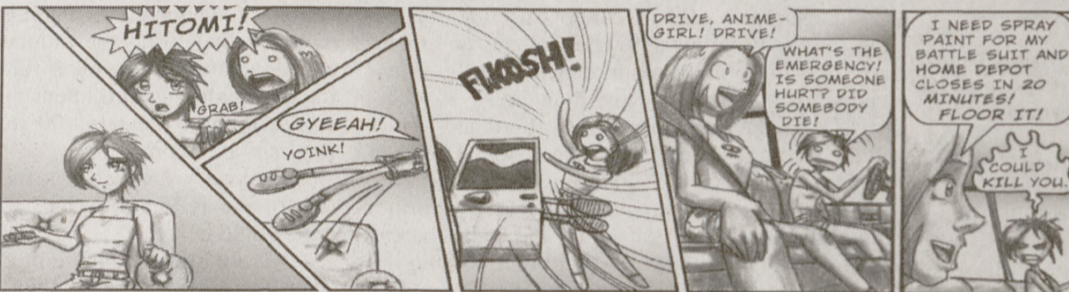
Starr said several Aggie graduates have snatched journalism jobs around the country.

Senior journalism major Deborah Smith said she is concerned that the department might be dissolved.

"The more money you take away from any program, the worse it will get," she said. "The idea of merging the department is one of three possibilities mentioned by the review team in Fall 2001."

CUBE OF XOE

By C.J.



Noise Pollution

by Jesh Darwin



Journalism

Continued from page 1

at cuts from 10-12 percent, Johnson said.

One of the major problems affecting the department is the absence of a department head for the last four years, Steffy said.

"A department head has not been attracted because there hasn't been enough of a budget," he said. "There isn't enough money to lure someone and as the budget situation became worse, it aggravated the situation."

Steffy said he is trying to gather former students to voice their concerns about the possibility that the program may be cut.

Journalism professor Dr.

Douglas Starr said that even though the department has lost several faculty during the last few years and has not replaced them, the department will not be eliminated.

"Journalism is a good general degree," he said. "It teaches people how to be citizens and they learn the First amendment and the responsibilities when presenting the news."

Starr said when students choose a major it is a personal thing. "Any college program is no better than the student," he said. "You can have the best or worst program in the world, but what you learn is up to you."

Eliminating the program requires approval by A&M

President Robert M. Gates, the Board of Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, a process that could take a year, Johnson said.

Johnson said the option of merging the journalism department with another department is being considered.

Steffy acknowledged that there have been talks to merge with the department of speech communication, but the journalism department was not interested in the idea.

"We would consult with faculty in affected departments about this option before pursuing it," he said. "The idea of merging the department is one of three possibilities mentioned by the review team in Fall 2001."

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THE BATTALION (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except University holidays and exam periods) at Texas A&M University. Periodicals Postage Paid at College Station, TX 77840. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, Texas A&M University, 1111 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Media, a unit of the Department of Journalism. News offices are in 014 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone: 845-3313; Fax: 845-2647; E-mail: news@thebatt.com; Web site: <http://www.thebatt.com>

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Subscriptions: A part of the Student Services Fee entitles each Texas A&M student to pick up a single copy of The Battalion. First copy free, additional copies 25¢. Mail subscriptions are \$60 per school year, \$30 for the fall or spring semester, \$17.50 for the summer or \$10 a month. To charge by Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express, call 845-2611.

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