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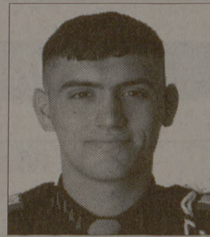
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FORUM

THE BATTALION

Keepers of the spirit

Every Aggie is responsible for upholding tradition



JOHN HUFFMAN

On behalf of the Corps of Cadets, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back to campus. Whether this is your first semester on these storied grounds or you're taking a few victory laps before graduation, we're glad to see you made it back here safely. I'd like to tell you a little about where I see the Corps fitting into the whole of the Aggie community.

If you have ever seen a Texas A&M promotional video, been to a New Student Conference or seen a picture of that distinctive khaki uniform, you've had at least a cursory glance at the second-largest uniformed body of students in the nation outside of the U.S. service academies — the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets. The Corps, like any other institution of similar origin and history, holds to its values, its legacy and its traditions tightly; The Corps as a whole has its past, present and future closely intertwined with that of Texas A&M. Because of A&M's all-male military college status for its first 90 years, many of this campus' most cherished traditions grew out of Corps experiences and practices. Silver Taps, Aggie Muster, the Twelfth Man, March to the Brazos — all of these developed from 'Old Army' cadet life. However, the face of the University and the Corps has changed

dramatically since the days of Thomas Gathwright and Lawrence Sullivan Ross. Now, in the middle of one of the largest, most successful research institutions in the nation, the Corps must find its place and its future, all while holding to the traditions and values it dearly loves.

We hope it is obvious to everyone that the Corps holds the traditions of this campus in high regard. Daily, we seek to earn the right to the title 'Keepers of the Spirit,' but make no mistake — it is a title that we share with every Aggie willing to give back to the University he loves. It is a title that we share graciously and gladly, and it is not something we would ever seek to keep to the point of estrangement from the rest of the campus. I am constantly impressed with the examples that I see around campus of fellow students spreading our famous Aggie Spirit — freshmen and seniors saying 'Howdy' with enthusiasm as they pass each other between classes, the traditions of the MSC being strongly supported by the general student body, the proud 12th Man standing to cheer on our football players — the list goes on and on. All these serve as a reminder to us on the Quad that we are not alone in this fight to keep A&M's traditions alive. I commend every Aggie, uniformed or not, for upholding the things that make our campus great.

Being a 'Keeper of the Spirit' has nothing to do with the clothes you wear to class or the section you stand in during the football game. It is about your

heart, your desire, your enthusiasm for this great University; it is about holding yourself and others to that high standard that sets our University apart and it is about selfless service to preserve A&M's future among the stars. In my book, every Aggie committed to the ideals of the spirit that makes this campus special is a keeper of the same spirit as I am. I am a guardian of the same traditions that we know and love.

The Corps enjoys its role on this campus as do other prominent student groups, and along with every student, we will adapt to our changing environment and help keep A&M special. We will continue to serve A&M and the surrounding community in whatever way we can; it is the least we can do for the generations of Aggies before us who forged the path we follow. We will work hard with all of our fellow students to ensure the survival and the spreading of the Spirit of Aggieland. We will stand beside the other student groups of this campus and carry the banner of our University into prominence and promise into a future in which A&M is recognized as the beacon of character and success that we know it to be. That is our role, that is our promise and that is where we as Aggies are supposed to be.

John Huffman is Corps Commander and a senior finance major.

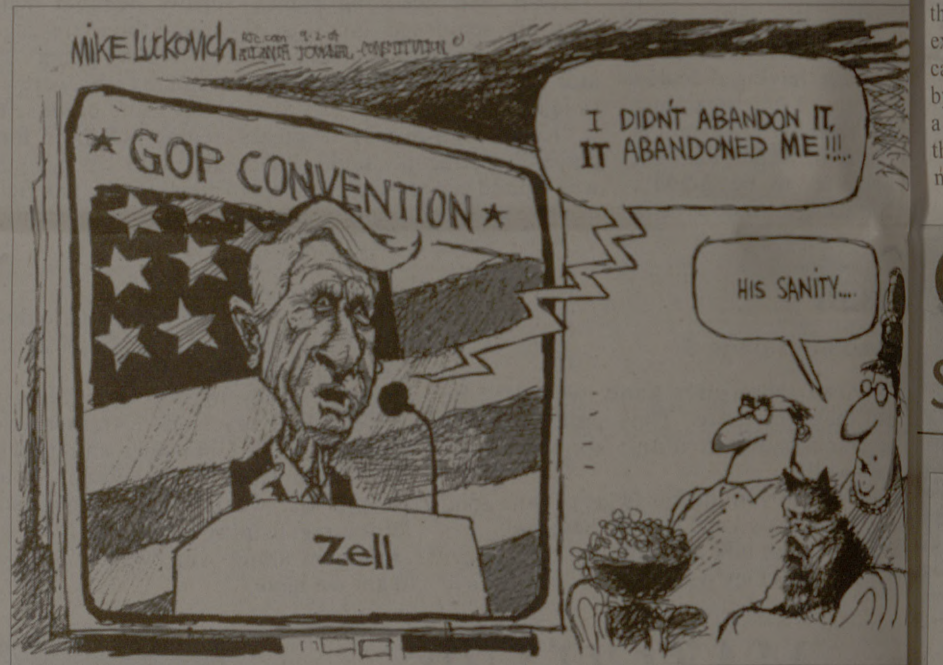
MAIL & CALL

Walking on the grass is because of ignorance

I hope the only reason there has been a drastic increase of people walking on the grass at the MSC is their ignorance for what it stands for and not that they're too impatient to wait for other people to walk past so they can get to a bus. For those of you who do walk on the grass, bear in mind what the MSC is: a memorial. The grass is part of that.

The memorial aspect is key as it is a reminder of how grateful we should be for those who have come before us, among us and those who will make sacrifices to allow us the freedoms that we have grown so accustomed to. So with these freedoms that have come at such a high price comes a few responsibilities and I would hope that I am not the only one who views one of those responsibilities as not defacing memorials to the dead.

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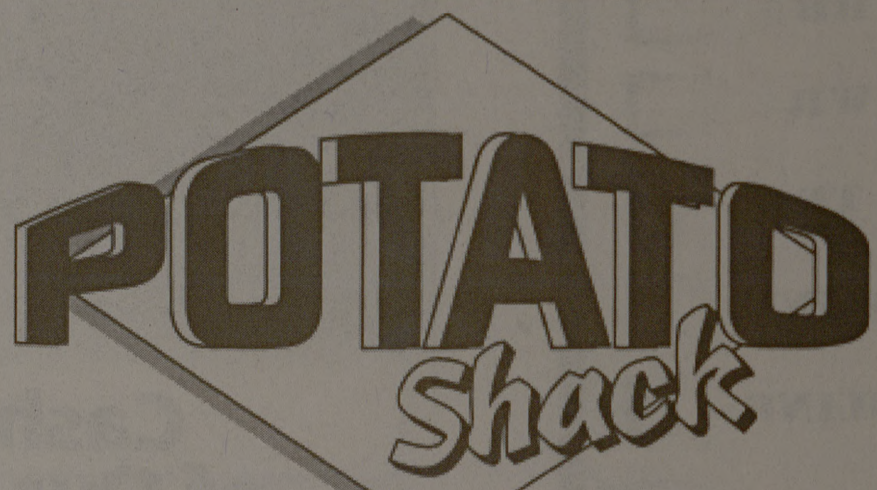
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