



Fish for a day

A&M staffer tastes a slice of Corps life

By Emily Guevara
THE BATTALION

Freshmen in the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets have a lot on their plate. Morning formation at 6:45, eating while sitting at 90-degree angles and afternoon physical training are Corps activities those on the outside see. Understanding the Corps, however, comes from experience.

For 30-year-old Dale Tracht, a Kansas State University graduate, Monday was a once-in-a-lifetime experience to get an idea of what the Corps is like for a freshman.

Tracht, assistant director of experiential education for the A&M Career Center and Squadron 2 academic volunteer, became a fish for a day after making a promise to the Squadron 2 freshmen of 2000 as a motivation to improve their academics.

The outfits are ranked for academics each semester, Tracht said.

"I promised them if they got first in grades for a semester (...) I would be a fish for a day," Tracht said. "It was for motivation."

As an academic volunteer for the past four years, Tracht was responsible for helping Squadron 2 Corps members with their academics by providing them with the necessary resources they needed to succeed at A&M.

"I made sure to meet with the fish and eat with them every other week, go to football games with them, (hold) workshops and get them to the right resources to help them succeed on campus," Tracht said.

Academics were not a priority when he began volunteering in 2000, Tracht said, and he wanted to change that.

Jordan Wiersch, 1st Sgt. of Squadron 2 and a junior agricultural development major, said that when he was a freshman, Tracht gave him a binder filled with supplemental help such as free tickets for A-

Plus tutoring and study group information.

"We had every facet of academic help right at our fingertips," Wiersch said.

Four years later the fish of 2000 became first in academics in the Corps as seniors in 2004.

"The first few years, they fluctuated," Tracht said. "The last few they were in the top 10. It was gradual increases."

Linda Powell, graduate teaching assistant in agricultural development and a Squadron 2 academic volunteer, said Tracht went above and beyond the call of duty.

"This shows his commitment to the squadron itself and the loyalty he has formed with all the cadets and his larger commitment to excellence in the Corps," she said.

Tracht said he did not sleep well Sunday night because he was nervous.

He participated in morning formation with the squadron and ate breakfast in Duncan Dining Center.

Freshman economics major and Squadron 2 member Joseph Stryhal was assigned the task of showing Tracht around Duncan.

"Everybody thought it was a great morale booster," Stryhal said. "It was a relief trying to see one of our advisers going through our daily routine with us. It showed us how much he cared about us."

After breakfast, Tracht went to his regular job, where he got more than a few stares.

"Many people thought I was an actual fish," Tracht said. "Some (co-workers) knew in advance, but not many. Most were in total shock and surprise. They were very accepting and excited."

Tracht said he tried to whip out as he walked around campus, but most Corps members knew something was up.

After work, Tracht returned to the Quadrangle where

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— Dale Tracht
experiential education
assistant director



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Dale Pracht, assistant director of experiential education at the Career Center, has his head shaved by senior marketing major Tyler Smith Monday evening in White Hall. Pracht was the Gator Company academic

coordinator for the past four years and challenged the company to obtain the highest GPR in the Corps. They achieved their goal so Pracht shaved his head and joined the fish for drills and formations Tuesday.

Bonfire Memorial nears completion

By Sara Foley
THE BATTALION

As the fifth anniversary of the 1999 Bonfire Collapse approaches, the construction of the Bonfire Memorial has reached its final stages and is slated for completion in late October or early November.

The construction is ahead of schedule, but not ready for public viewing, said Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Vynn Rosser.

"It is still an active construction site, so we ask that students don't look at it yet," Rosser said.

The dedication of the memorial is scheduled for Nov. 18 at 2:30 p.m. and will feature University choral groups and speakers who will be announced as the date approaches.

A private memorial service will be held for the families of the 12 students who died in the collapse on the evening of Nov. 17.

Student Advocate for Bonfire Legacy and Continuance Abby Howell said students should visit the Bonfire Memorial Website to learn about the significance behind the memorial before the dedication.

"The architects have put a lot of thought into it. Everything (on the memorial) has significance behind it," Howell said.

The memorial's architects will give a presentation describing the symbolism of the memorial on Nov. 17 at 8 p.m. in Rudder.

In addition to the dedication service, MSC Hospitality, the host committee for the Bonfire Memorial, will distribute 40,000 maroon balloons in Rudder plaza for students to show their support for Bonfire, said Vice Chair of MSC Hospitality Charles Glover.

Glover said the event is being planned with the expectation that up to 40,000 people could be in attendance.

Senior history and political science major Kris Plummer, who worked on Bonfire during the 1999 collapse and has since been involved in the off-campus Bonfire, said the importance of the memorial transcends the animosity between students who are for or against the return of an on-campus Bonfire.

"A lot of people think that the administration has set up this day for political reasons, but their reason isn't what is important. What is important is honoring those who died," Plummer said.

Gates aims to enhance undergrad programs

By Sara Foley
THE BATTALION

University President Robert M. Gates said at the Faculty Senate meeting Monday night that the enhancement of undergraduate programs is the principle goal for this school year, targeting enrollment management, the honors program, summer school and electronic courses as the principle areas for improvement to the Faculty Senate Monday afternoon.

"We will review, adapt and adopt the best practices identified from peer institutions that serve to enhance the quality of under-

graduate education here," Gates said.

In other action, the Faculty Senate outlined a plan to assess the effectiveness of the core curriculum requirements and issued a new requirement for faculty members to clearly outline learning objectives for each course in the core curriculum.

Gates said that by next year, 245 new faculty members will have been hired under the faculty reinvestment program, and that 145 new faculty members have already been hired.

English associate professor David Myers said he worried that the hiring of new faculty could have unfavorable effects on undergraduate education.

"Those of us in the liberal arts caucus are worried that new hiring decisions under the faculty reinvestment program are being driven by narrow research agendas to raise the profile of a department," Myers said.

Gates said the Faculty Reinvestment Program has multiple purposes, only one of which is teaching, but that every new faculty member would be required to teach.

"This is being financed by students," Gates said. "Every new faculty member should be told from the outset partly where their new salary is coming from and that's

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Open house opens doors for women

By Erin Price
THE BATTALION

There are many more opportunities for women today, and Women's Open House, which kicks off today, could shed some light on how Aggie women can reach their full potential, said Sara Bendoraitis, a graduate assistant in Gender Issues Education Services (GIES).

Texas A&M still has a male-dominant attitude, Bendoraitis said, and events such as the Women's Open House, which is sponsored by GIES, help raise awareness for women's issues. The campus is still traditional, with most upper administrative positions and tenured professors

being male, she said.

"Our campus has been making small steps each year to provide more avenues for women," Bendoraitis said. "The Women's Open House gives everyone, not just women, the chance to see what A&M has to offer them."

The open house will be held Tuesday in the MSC Flag Room from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. About 25 tables, sponsored by the Women's Center, Recreational Sports, University Police and the Health Center, will offer information, prizes and resources pertaining to women's issues, she said.

Bendoraitis said that after a mass e-mail was sent to

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Open House

The Women's Open House, sponsored by Gender Issues Education Services, kicks off Tuesday.

- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the MSC Flag Room.
- Tables from Women's Center, Recreational Sports, University Police, the Health Center and others.
- Will focus on issues pertaining to Aggie women.

ANDREW BURLERSON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: SARA BENDORAITIS

BLOODY GOOD JOB

Last week's Red Cross blood drive sponsored by Alpha Phi Omega met 98 percent of its goal.

- 1,075 pints of blood were donated in five days
- More than 4,500 lives can be affected by the week's worth of blood donations
- 6,077 pints of blood have been donated since April 2003

WILL LLOYD • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: JAN HALE

Red Cross blood drive achieves 98 percent of goal

By Stacy Thompson
THE BATTALION

Last week's Red Cross blood drive took in 1,075 pints of blood in five days, achieving approximately 98 percent of its goal.

"It was an amazing blood drive. Texas A&M University is always our No. 1 provider of blood. We affected over 4,500 lives in one week," said Jan Hale, marketing and community relations manager of the Southwest division of Red Cross Blood Services.

The service organization Alpha Phi Omega (APO) sponsored the drive to engage students in the service of their community. APO holds five blood drives a year

with various blood donation organizations. There are two in the fall, two in the spring and one in the summer. The primary adviser to APO Darby Roberts said the blood drives are spaced out according to the statistic that an average human can donate every 56 days, roughly five times a year, or approximately every two months.

"It's a tradition — blood drives are here five times a year (so that) students can plan for it," Roberts said. "It is a quick, easy and fun thing to do that students can get involved in the community."

There is enormous pressure for college students to donate blood because of the constant necessity for blood in hospitals. Some students,

for health reasons, cannot donate blood for health reasons. Sophomore business administration major Kellie Logan cannot donate because she does not meet the weight requirements.

"Well there's nothing I can do about it," Logan said. "I'd love to, but I don't want anything harmful to happen to my body. There are regulations for a reason."

Theresa Evangelista, territory manager for the Bryan-College Station Red Cross Center, said there is no substitute for blood and that blood is crucial in saving lives.

"We hope that if they (college students) start as donors in college that they

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