

Fargo's dark comedy may leave mainstream moviegoers behind. AGGIELIFE, PAGE 7

Check out The Battalion's top stories for April 1. SEE PAGE 3



SLAUGHTERED The men's track team whips Texas in a dual meet. SPORTS, PAGE 9



THE BATTALION

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By Heather Pace THE BATTALION

More than 5,000 Texas A&M students turned out Saturday for the 14th annual Big Event, showing their gratitude to the Bryan-College Station community.

Volunteers spent the day landscaping, building porches and handicap ramps, and helping children at South Knoll Elementary with a carnival.

Lisa Hill, a freshman journalism major, said the Big Event involved people in her residence hall who do not often associate with each other.

"It was a fun experience that brought together people from my dorm to give back to the community," Hill said. "We built a brick patio from scratch, which is something we thought we couldn't do."

Despite accomplishing tasks for community members, many volunteers were surprised to find themselves helping people who they did not think were in great need.

Pam Wollgast, a freshman business major, said she would have rather helped people that really needed assistance.

"I expected to help needy people," Wollgast said, "but the people we helped were capable of helping themselves."

Wollgast's organization spent the morning picking up rocks from a pasture and doing yardwork at a house with three new cars in the driveway.

Heather Hewett, Big Event committee member and sophomore biomedical science major, said, however, that the purpose of Big Event is not only to help

those in need, but to contribute to the community as a whole.

"Sometimes there are people who need the help more than others, but it is important to remember that it is going back to all of the Bryan-College Station community," Hewett said. "It doesn't really matter who you are helping, as long as you are helping someone."

Some students said that though turning away people who request help would be difficult, the event would be more beneficial if stricter projects guidelines were established.

"It was a fun experience that brought together people from my dorm to give back to the community."

— LISA HILL
freshman journalism major

Allison Moran, a junior geography major, said a screening process would strengthen the process of matching A&M organizations with aid recipients.

She said that her organization, the Texas Environmental Action Coalition, usually spends the Big Event at Twin City Mission, a Bryan-College Station shelter.

When the Big Event's computer system failed to match TEAC with Twin City Mission, she spoke with a Big Event committee member.

"She told me that Big Event was not

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BIG EVENT

Sororities test handicap accessibility of campus facilities as part of Big Event

By Lisa Johnson THE BATTALION

Saturday, as part of Texas A&M's Big Event, 11 members of Delta Delta Delta and Sigma Epsilon sororities spent the morning in wheelchairs, rolling in and out of building entrances and bathrooms.

The project, the brainchild of James Jones, a sophomore electrical engineering major, was an effort to begin collecting up-to-date information about the handicap accessibility

of campus building entrances, restrooms and elevators.

Jones said he originally planned to collect the information this summer in order to revise A&M's Physical Accessibility Guide, which ranks the handicap accessibility of campus buildings and parking areas.

"In the past, the guide's evaluations for each building were done by the proctor of that building, so there were 15 different terms used to evaluate the accessibility of bathrooms," Jones said. "Evaluations of the same

conditions really varied tremendously. What I really wanted to do was to evaluate the information using a single set of standards."

When Jones found out that the summer was too late to collect information for inclusion in the Fall 1996 guidebook, he thought of the Big Event. He decided to use student volunteers to launch the project.

"I explained to them what they should look for: the location and accessibility of doors, braille in the elevators, etc.," he said. "We didn't get

all of the information because on the weekends, some of the buildings are locked, but I think we got off to a great start."

Volunteers got first-hand knowledge of what it's like to use handicap-accessible features, going through doors and into bathroom stalls in wheelchairs that Jones provided.

"I wanted the students to see what it's like to have to use the facilities on campus," he said. "Because a

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Dave House, THE BATTALION

Will, a fourth grade student, tries his hand at calf roping while Mary Kate Farmer, a junior wildlife and fisheries sciences major, watches at the Big Event Carnival at South Knoll Elementary School.

Students help out with carnival for Big Event

By Tauma Wiggins THE BATTALION

Saturday morning began a bit earlier than usual for many Texas A&M students who awoke to tackle their Big Event assignments.

The student volunteers spread throughout the Bryan-College Station community in teams, working all day on a variety of tasks.

Depending on the amount of work to be done, some Big Event teams were as small as 10 or as large as 200, which was the number of students needed to help out with South Knoll Elementary School's annual carnival.

The elementary school, which puts on a carnival every year to raise money for school supplies, usually utilizes parent volunteers. But this year, with the help of Big Event volunteers, more parents were able to enjoy the carnival with their children.

Becky Eden, a math teacher at South Knoll and carnival coordinator, said A&M students always volunteer for the carnival, but this year was the first time the Big Event got involved.

"This is our first time with Big Event, and it's been wonderful," Eden said. "The Aggies were here right at 10,

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Dave House, THE BATTALION

Fish Camp 1996 counselors from Camp Stansell wash wheelchairs as their part of Big Event.

U-Act conference brings out diversity among students

By Heather Pace THE BATTALION

Many Texas A&M students and faculty members have been advocating campus unity for years; participants in this weekend's U-Act conference took steps to achieve this goal.

About 16 people from all areas of campus attended the two-day U-Act retreat, which promoted greater understanding among diverse organizations and cultures.

Groups represented included, among others, the Asian-American Student Association, the National Organization for Women, Habitat for Humanity and several sororities.

Rajani Nair, a senior civil engineering major, said the wide range of perspectives added to

the retreat's effect. Nair said this retreat, her fourth, was unique because it was smaller than usual.

"Overall, it was a wonderful experience that enlightened people who hadn't met people from different organizations," Nair said. "It was smaller but more informative because I got to meet people from various areas."

Tanya Williams, a U-Act co-adviser, said the conference focuses on enabling participants to grow in their understanding of both themselves and others.

"The purpose of U-Act," Williams said, "is to get students from across campus to begin discussing issues: introducing them to other cultures, looking at their own cultural

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Commandant names new leaders

By Danielle Pontiff THE BATTALION

Maj. Gen. Thomas G. Darling, commandant of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, last week announced the students selected to lead the five major units of the Corps for the 1996-1997 academic year.

Joseph Royo, a junior elementary education major, will command the 1st Brigade, and Shawn McManamy, a junior history major, will command

the 2nd Brigade.

Royo and McManamy each will be in charge of more than 400 cadets in six Army ROTC companies.

Jim Harrison, a junior business analysis major, will lead the 1st Wing, which consists of 475 cadets from eight Air Force ROTC squadrons.

Alexander Burch, a junior finance major, will command the 1st Regiment's more than 400 cadets in six Navy and Marine ROTC companies.

Michael Hays, a junior management major, will command the Aggie Band. The band started this year with 390 members of mixed ROTC affiliation.

Darling said the new commanders were selected based on leadership abilities demonstrated during their first three years in the Corps.

"They are the ones who have direct objectives and goals for their unit," Darling said. "They have the qualifications we look for to represent major units on

the drill field, at outfit meetings and march-ins."

Junior cadets either applied or were nominated to be interviewed for the commander positions. They had to meet standard qualifications, including maintenance of a minimum 2.3 grade-point ratio.

A board of representatives from the commandant's office and the Corps Staff interviewed each candidate.

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College of Education holds round table

By Michelle Lyons THE BATTALION

Laura Welch Bush, wife of Gov. George W. Bush, was the speaker at the Texas A&M College of Education's 1996 Dean's Round table Friday night at the Pebble Creek Country Club.

For six years, the round table has been held to recognize teachers who have positively influenced their students.

Honorees, their families and friends, College of Education faculty and staff, and several education students were invited to attend.

Dr. Viola Florez, interim dean of education, described the round table in a press release as a "partnership of people who are

concerned about American education and who recognize that Texas A&M's College of Education is in a unique position to help make significant changes in education.

"The round table serves as the college's means of recognizing those educators who have dedicated their lives to learning and who have given so much of themselves to their students."

Sponsors made \$1,000 donations to honor their former teachers, their relatives who are teachers, or their children's teachers.

The donations will provide students with financial aid, including scholarships, as well as helping the College of Education purchase equipment for academic programs.

Windi Fourdraine, College of Education

relations development coordinator and coordinator of the event, said that since the round table began, it has honored more than 100 teachers.

Twenty-one teachers were honored at Friday's round table, ranging from preschool teachers to higher education professors. Each was awarded a crystal, apple-shaped plaque and a certificate.

Dr. Barry Thompson, Texas A&M University System chancellor, was one of the educators recognized at the event. He said he was honored to be chosen for the award because he is more accustomed to receiving criticism than praise.

"I feel very positive about the fact that my colleagues would recognize me," Thompson said.

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