

Bonfire born of limbs



Battalion photo by Ken Herrera

There's gotta be a better way

It's not that modern technology has passed Bonfire by. The physical labor involved in constructing such a massive torch has been tradition, a way of putting a personal effort into Texas A&M's famous bonfire.

By RUSTY CAWLEY
Battalion City Editor

Sixty-feet tall at its centerpole, a stack of hewn logs towers above the field behind Duncan Hall. It is the Texas A&M University bonfire, a tradition as old as the Twelfth Man, midnight yell practice and hula-hula caneck, caneck.

But the A&M bonfire hasn't always been that tall. And the material burned hasn't always been as classy as hardwood logs.

The bonfire tradition began in the early 1900s when students gathered trash, limbs, boxes, lumber scraps, debris and neighboring outhouses for the burning.

Early bonfires took place before almost every important game. Eventually, it came to represent only the Thanksgiving Day game with the University of Texas.

Sometimes the cadets were overzealous in their search for bonfire fuel. Like in 1935, when newly-appointed commandant Frank Anderson was confronted with an angry farmer whose barn had been stolen and reduced to cinder.

The next year Anderson ordered the cadets to use cottonwood trees cleared from an area near Easterwood Airport.

But even these bonfires were far from the towering infernos of today. The first centerpole was used in 1946. And the next year two logs were strapped end to end and placed in the center.

The demand for taller and taller bonfires has been an institution ever since.

Build it up to burn it down

Continued from page 12

... can be seen as technicians employing their scientific genius to send man skyward.

It is somewhat of a letdown to return to reality: a bunch of college students are using their technological genius to send a forest skyward.

A major feature of the whole area is the noise, consisting principally of two distinct sounds.

The main sound is music. Country and western, of course. The workers spit tobacco on the ground time to the blaring of country favorites. Some people even sing along as they trudge stackward under the weight of a small tree.

The second is sort of a mixed, main saw/shouting sound. The shouting portion comes from the redpots, or the cadets in charge, as they chide, chastise and encourage workers to strive harder. The chain saw portion comes from a couple of guys sawing up logs destined for the small fires located around the perimeter of the site.

about getting close enough to take pictures or just to see what was going on.

But, after I tried it from a distance without being attacked, I moved in closer and wandered around. As I passed by a group of guys standing near one of the light posts, I was addressed:

"Hey, what are you doing wearing that yellow hat, kid?" His tone was not friendly.

I innocently replied that it was the only one I had, realizing that I had made a mistake and hoping it was not a big one.

"Well, cover it up," I was told. The individual did not seem receptive to further questions, so I moved on and approached a uniformed senior standing outside the hard-hat area.

I asked him what I had done wrong and he explained that yellow hats were for dorm chiefs, red hats were for the overall supervisors, blue hats were for civilian chiefs, and black or green hats were for average workers.

These types of regulations were necessary, he said.

The Horses
In order to reach the higher por-

tions of the stack with supplies and smaller logs, the Bonfire crew has arranged a pulley system powered by about a dozen guys on the ground who pull the rope, then let it slip at the command of a leader.

The guys on the ground don't just grab onto the rope and pull. That would be unsafe and tiring. Instead, they brace against long pieces of wood which are rigged through the rope, and maneuver the rope simply by backing up or walking forward.

As the workers move back and forth, looking bored with their somewhat monotonous job, the vision of a well-trained team of horses hooked to harnesses inevitably pops to mind. The pulley crews, however, might not relish that image.

Profits

People are making quite a bit of money off this "best of Aggie traditions."

Some people are selling photographs of the stack in all its burning glory. Others are selling T-shirts with the Bonfire splashed across the front. Huge posters of the Bonfire

See BASIC, page 9

Learning About Hat Color

On my first night around the stack, I was a little apprehensive

Celebrating our first business anniversary we are offering, for a limited period of time,

20% DISCOUNT

on all Studio services.
Appointments necessary.
Expires December 10, 1977



846-5018
4103 S. TEXAS AVENUE
BRYAN PLACE BUILDING

GUYS & GALS
HAIRSTYLING

FOOTBALL FIESTA SPECIAL

Buy a Fiesta Dinner with soft drink or tea for only \$2.50.
Regular \$3.00. Good Monday thru Friday only.
Offer expires December 4, 1977.

One coupon per customer, please

Save **50¢**



1816 Texas Ave.
Bryan, Texas
823-8930

Valid at this location only

Sports Club
UNIVERSITY SQ. NEXT TO SKAGGS)
SUN. - CLOSED; OPEN FOR PRIVATE PARTIES (CALL 846-2415)
MON. - \$1.00 COVER 25c BEER
TUES. - NO COVER FREE DANCE LESSONS
WED. - LADIES NIGHT GUYS-1.00 GIRLS-FREE & GIRLS RECEIVE 3 FREE BAR DRINKS.
THURS. - DRINK & DROWN GUYS-3.50 GIRLS-2.50 FREE BEER, WINE & COCKES 25c BAR 50c CALL
FRI. & SAT. - BOOGIE TIME

"THE MUNCHIES"
THURS., FRI. & SAT: 4:30-7:30
FREE SNACKS, 50c BEER, 1/2 PRICE DRINKS

SOMETHING NEW!
STAY AFTER HOURS EVERY FRI. & SAT. TILL 3:00 A.M. FOR DANCING (NO LIQUOR)

You can sell that white elephant through **BATTALION ADVERTISING**

Pizza Express
Free Delivery
846-7785

SHEAR CLASS
FOR A CLASSY CUT, CALL **JERRY**
846-4771

Famolare puts America on its feet!

The greatest way you can move it is in Famolare's Get-There sole. We've got lots of styles to choose from.

"Just" ... Black or Brown Leather. **36⁹⁹**

Lewis' Shoe Stores
DOWNTOWN BRYAN

RAPID SHIFT
*Aggie Digit*TM
SOLID-STATE HAND HELD CALCULATOR AND STAND

SOLVE ARITHMETIC AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Not a toy, but a breakthrough in "Back to Basics" calculators. Based on sound mathematical theory, the 64 page instruction manual includes: rapid subtraction, addition, multiplication, division, squares, square root, cube root, random numbers, and user-accessible memory. Precise step-by-step directions with over 50 illustrations and 200 problems of a novel and curious arithmetic nature. May also be used as a calculator stand for electronic calculators.

Send check, money order, Bank American/VISA at \$4.75 + 25c post. per item (TX res. add 5% Tax). Include charge acct. #, expir. date, & signature. Print card holder name. No C.O.D.'s please.

TEXAS DIGITS
P.O. Box 35029
Houston, Texas 77035

Betcha Can't Eat The Whole Thing!

AS A "BEAT-TEXAS" SPECIAL, MAMA'S PIZZA IS OFFERING \$300 TONIGHT FOR THOSE AGGIES WITH THE HEARTIEST APPETITES.

Rules:
1. You have to eat a Mama's Special in one hour. 2. You can't leave the table.
3. You must not get sick.

WE WILL BE OPEN ALL NIGHT AFTER THE BONFIRE THIS FRIDAY!

CALL YOUR ORDER AHEAD!
807 TEXAS AVE. COLLEGE STATION
846-3380