THE BATTALION Page 13 WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1977



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 hullabaloo caneck, caneck But the A&M bonfire hasn't always been that tall. And the mate-

rial 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 over-zealous in their search for bonfire fuel. Like in 1935, when newlyappointed 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

smaller logs, the Bonfire crew has

arranged a pulley system powered

The guys on the ground don't just

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 vi-

sion of a well-trained team of horses

hooked to harnesses inevitably pops to mind. The pulley crews, how-ever, might not relish that image.

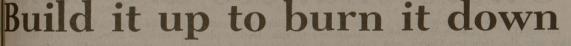
Profits

People are making quite a bit of money off this "best of Aggie tra-

Some people are selling photo-graphs 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



Continued from page 12 oying their scientific genius to d man skyward.

t is somewhat of a letdown to reto reality: a bunch of college dents are using their technologigenius to send a forest skyward. A major feature of the whole area e noise, consisting principally of distinct sounds.

he main sound is music. Counand western, of course. The kers spit tobacco on the ground

ler the weight of a small tree. he second is sort of a mixed, in saw/shouting sound. The ting portion comes from the pots, or the cadets in charge, as chide, chastise and encourage kers to strive harder. The chain portion comes from a couple of sawing up logs destined for the eter of the site.

Learning About Hat Color

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

about getting close enough to take tions of the stack with supplies and es, can be seen as technicians pictures or just to see what was going on

But, after I tried it from a distance by about a dozen guys on the ground who pull the rope, then let it slip at the command of a leader. without being attacked, I moved in closer and wandered around. As I passed by a group of guys standing grab onto the rope and pull. That would be unsafe and tiring. Instead, near one of the light posts, I was addressed: they brace against long pieces of wood which are rigged through the

"Hey, what are you doing wear-ing that yellow hat, kid?" His tone was not friendly. I innocently replied that it was the only one I had, realizing that I

ime to the blaring of country fa-ites. Some people even sing as they trudge stackward "Well, cover it up," I was told. was not a big one. "Well, cover it up," I was told. The individual did not seem re-

ceptive 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, all fires located around the blue hats were for civilian chiefs, and black or green hats were for av-

erage workers. These types of regulations were necessary, he said. The Horses

See BASIC, page 9 In order to reach the higher por-

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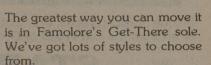
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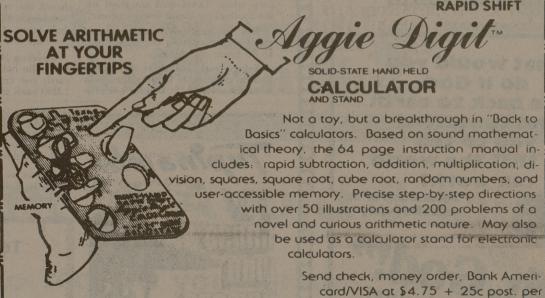
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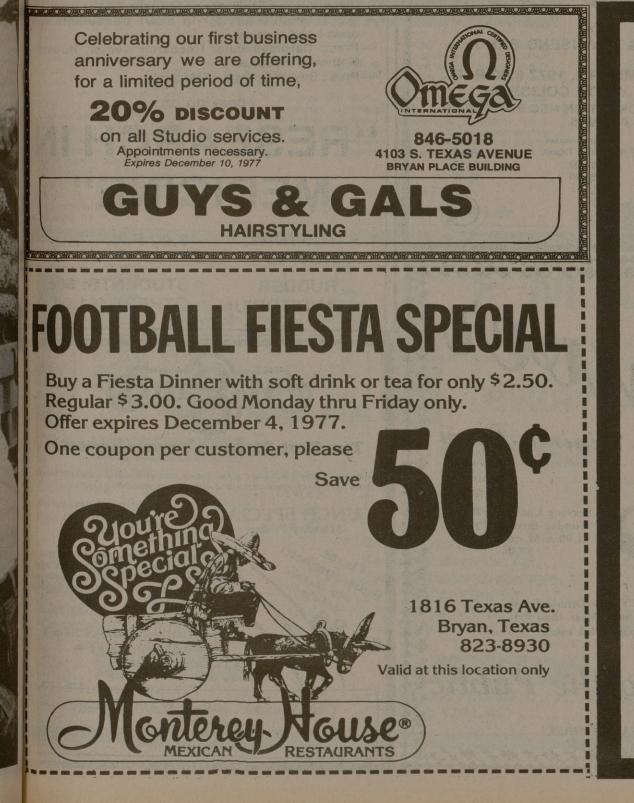
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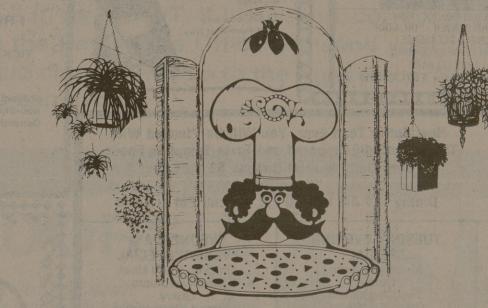
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