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No Battalion Friday

The Battalion will not be published Friday in conjunction with classes not being held because of the A&M-University of Texas football game.

A&M Bonfire — legendary tradition

By CLAY WEBER
Battalion Reporter

John Adams, a former student of Texas A&M University, remembers attending a meeting in New York a few years ago and meeting a man who asked where Adams went to college.

"Texas A&M, sir," replied Adams. "Ah, yes, Texas A&M," the man said. "I don't think the school that builds the big bonfire which burns a month and a half?"

Jokingly, Adams said "No, sir, only three weeks." Adams said the man didn't bat an eye. In truth, the Texas Aggie Bonfire will probably burn for about one or two days and the 1978 version will be lit at 7:30 p.m. at the Intramural field behind Duncan Dining Hall.

The planning for the Bonfire, which symbolizes the Aggies' love for their school and their burning desire to "beat the hell out of t.u.," is a year round job. Wood cutting and stacking begins weeks before the Texas game.

The precise planning and construction of bonfires of past years is a far cry from early bonfires, which were hurriedly made of ash, outhouses and old boxes.

One understandably irate rancher discovered in 1935 that his new barn provided fuel for that year's Bonfire. Since the early days, Bonfire wood has been cut on places where owners allowed Aggies to clear the land.

The flame which will light this year's bonfire was lit at Memorial Stadium in Austin and will be transported to the Bonfire site by residents of Walton Hall.

Harry Davis, College Station fire marshal, said streets behind Jersey Street will be closed in order to clear the way for emergency vehicles if they become necessary. Police will block off streets connecting Jersey.

In past years people were parking on those streets and walking to the Bonfire," he said. "The cars would cause a problem we've never needed to reach the site quickly."

Davis said two or three emergency vehicles would patrol the area of the Bonfire, with special emphasis on the area where the most sparks are blowing.

He also said that watering down the

roofs of the houses in the area would be left up to their occupants. Davis advised people living near the bonfire area to remove debris from the top of their houses to avoid having them set afire by stray sparks.

Last year's Bonfire cost taxpayers about \$800 in man-hour wages for the fire department to patrol the Bonfire area, and this year's fire should cost about that much, Davis said.

Origins of the Bonfire are somewhat hazy, but accounts in old yearbooks indicate that the first one was probably around the turn of the century.

"In 1912 we beat Texas, and when the Corps came back through Bryan they stopped there and made an impromptu fire of trash and whatever else they could lay their hands on," Adams said. "They must have made some of the people in Bryan mad because when they returned to the campus they were met by the college president and the commandant." Adams said the tradition of holding the Bonfire before the Texas game probably began sometime around that period.

The first centerpole went up in 1946. Up until 1955 the Bonfire was built on the drill field but was moved to preserve the trees planted around the drill field in honor of the Aggies killed in World War I.

The largest Bonfire was built in 1969 and was 109 feet high. The outhouse at the top of the centerpole of the Bonfire is usually painted orange and white to represent the University of Texas Tower. Aggie Band members build the outhouse.

UT also has a Bonfire before the game. In fact, many of the pranks surrounding the Texas A&M-UT rivalry have included the Bonfires of both schools. In past years there have been numerous attempts by both schools to destroy or light each other's bonfire prematurely. The Aggies kept their under close guard before the game. Both schools have tried to bomb the other's bonfire with gasoline bombs from airplanes.

There is another Bonfire tradition which might interest Aggies: if the centerpole of the Bonfire stays up past midnight the night of the burning, the Aggies are supposed to beat UT.

Austin Aggies giving rides to downtown Corps parade

Since parking places will be few and far between in Austin for Friday afternoon's parade by the Corps of Cadets, the Austin A&M Club has made special transportation arrangements for cadets and spectators.

Corps members have been encouraged to carpool to the downtown parade site, and drivers will let off their passengers. Cadets and others may park their cars in the parking lot of Disch-Falk Field, the University of Texas baseball field. From there, they will be transported by buses to the A&M Club to the parade site.

Buses will run from 12:45 to 2:45 p.m.

The Corps will conclude its parade at the baseball field, but anyone wishing to ride back to the parking area may catch a bus at the northeast corner of Seventh and Brazos streets from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

The parade route, about 22 blocks long, will begin at Third Street and Congress Avenue, and will include portions of Eleventh and Trinity streets and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The parade will begin at 3:30 p.m.

Gamblers travel for dogfights

Editor's note: This is the third of three articles on gambling in and around Bryan-College Station. The reporter spent three months researching the story as an observer and through interviews. Because of the sensitive nature of the material, the names of "inside" sources have been changed. The identity of the reporter also has been protected by the use of a pseudonym.

By BARNEY J. LEPERIE
Special to The Battalion

The crowd seems in good spirits today. Hot dog stands and beer concessions are busy and everyone is examining the beautiful dogs in the arena.

But this isn't a dog show. The judges aren't giving a "Best of Show" award today.

See that dog there? In a few minutes his body will be dripping in blood. He will be battered and mangled, fangs dangling from his mouth. The crowd — maybe 2,000 people — will be roaring with excitement.

Not a pleasant picture, is it? This is the sport of bulldog fighting in which dogs are pitted against other till they fight to their death, or until they are worn from cuts and gashes, they can go on no longer?

Why? The answer is simply put by one insider: There's a lot of money involved, a lot of gambling involved.

You learned of the fight from a personal friend or through Pit Dog Report, an underground magazine published by Raymond and Sharon Holt of Houston and distributed throughout the United States. They report recent matches, advertise cups available and keep the circle of close followers informed.

Tickets are sent out in advance to tell prospective spectators where and when to meet.

Perhaps it is in the backwoods somewhere in Texas or Louisiana.

The crowd is getting anxious for the opening fight to begin. Referees conduct the matches and check the dogs over before they enter the ring.

The dogs fight in a ring that must be 14-feet square with walls 30 inches high, usually lined with canvas or carpet.

Maclean's magazine describes the scene in its May 1978 issue: They were getting conditioned. One of the dogs was held and the man that was in charge started checking it over. He started licking it to be sure that there was no poison or foreign material on the dog that could cause the other dog to die. He licked it all over, the back and down the sides of the legs and over the front of the chest and neck. And then he went in and licked the other dog.

Bets are being placed and the excitement begins. In the opening round Wayne White vs. Bobby Ackles. Male pit bull terriers will be pitted against each other both weighing in at 58 lbs. The referee for the match is Tom Clampt.

The following appeared in Pit Dog Report describing a match: Both dogs were very big and powerfully built. Wayne's dog was a light buckskin with a black mask named "Major." Bobby fought with a black dog out of the Eli bloodlines who was called "Smokey." Major controlled the early part of the fight and the black dog began to weaken. A "turn" (dog cowers away) was called on the black dog and a handle made at the 26 min. mark, the black dog gave a slow scratch. As the fight progressed each dog made several good scratches and the black dog appeared to get his second wind. At the 1 hr. 28 min. mark, the black dog failed to complete his scratch and made Wayne White and "Major" the winner; (ed. note) I am sorry to report that "Major" has died since that fight from an adverse reaction to some medication.

Texas Ranger Stewart Dowell of Tyler, who helped bust the "Texas Derby" last May said, "There were Cadillacs, motor



Elephant Walk: seniors walking aimlessly around the Texas A&M University campus like old elephants about to die, symbolizing their usefulness to the Twelfth Man is at an end. One of the traditions of Bonfire, the walk was held at noon Wednesday. Juniors participated by "shooting" the seniors in attempts to hasten their "death." Of course, seniors retaliated by quadding their tormentors.

Battalion photo by Robert Cook

For Bonfire celebrations

Visiting hours extended

Visitation hours for residence halls at Texas A&M University have been extended to 1:30 a.m. following Bonfire and the concert on Thursday, says Ron Blatchley, associate director of student affairs.

The extension came Tuesday following a request submitted to Blatchley by Lynne Andrus, president of the Residence Hall Association.

Andrus said that the concert being presented by Town Hall following Bonfire on Thursday night would last until approximately midnight. Since Friday has been designated a school holiday to allow students to drive safely to Austin, Thursday is, in effect, the same as a weekend night, Andrus said.

The extension of visitation hours will

allow dorm students to participate fully in the Bonfire celebration, she said.

Blatchley said residents of each dorm could vote to accept or reject the time extension.

Bruce Cummings, president of Aston Hall, said he didn't expect any of the dorms to reject the extension. He said he thought it is traditional to extend hours after Bonfire.

Corps' visitation hours have also been extended to 1:30 a.m.

Regular weeknight visitation hours are until 6 p.m. for Spence, 9 p.m. for Mosher, and 10 p.m. for other residence halls. The Corps dorms do not have visitation hours during the week.

Student VP resigns post

By DILLARD STONE
Battalion Staff

Fred Bayler, newly appointed student senator, rose quickly through the ranks at Wednesday's Texas A&M University student senate meeting.

Bayler was elected vice president for rules and regulations after Austin Sterling resigned at the meeting. Only three hours before, Bayler had been appointed to fill an off-campus undergraduate vacancy in the senate.

In a prepared statement, Sterling called his reasons for resigning as "strictly personal."

Bayler was elected by the senate at the Wednesday meeting because, according to the student body constitution, a new vice president must be chosen within 14 class days after a vacancy occurs. Wednesday's meeting was the last regularly scheduled one of the semester.

The senate Wednesday approved a bill recommending a change of the University Rules and Regulations to revert to the former graduation with honors policy.

The new policy states that designations for graduation with honors, effective June 1, are: cum laude, 3.5-3.69; magna cum laude, 3.7-3.89; summa cum laude, 3.9-4.0.

Old designations were: cum laude, 3.25-3.49; magna cum laude, 3.5-3.749; summa cum laude, 3.75-4.0.

The senate's recommendation will be forwarded to the University Rules and Regulations Committee for consideration and action.

Sterling voiced the rules and regulations committee's feelings about the bill.

"I don't think the committee and senate of spring 1976 did a credible job of investigating this bill (the one which raised the grade requirements) before passing it," he said.

The higher requirements were instituted, he said, because of a fear initiated by the Class of 1975, which graduated 31 percent of its members with honors.

Sterling said this was the exception rather than the rule. The average for all other classes in the last eight years was 20 percent, he said.

The senate also approved a bill recommending that the University administration maintain the present Q-drop policy. The bill was adopted in response to suggestions by administrators that they were considering shortening the present Q-drop period, which allows a student to drop a class without penalty up to the fifth day after mid-semester grades are posted.

In other action, the senate approved a set of by-laws and postponed a bill to change the on-campus parking policy next year.

Sterling said the parking bill was tabled until next semester because the University Traffic Panel will be meeting soon and considering changes in parking and traffic regulations.

Any proposed changes should be made after the panel meets, he said.

Joe Beall, vice president for external affairs, reported that next semester's Student Purchase Program would be run at no cost to student government.

Local merchants are sharing the \$2,800 cost of printing and distributing the discount-coupon book, he said.

Office cleaning reveals Declaration

United Press International
CONCORD, N.H. — Office workers cleaning a Statehouse vault stumbled across priceless parchment originals of the Bill of Rights and 11th Amendment and a rare copy of the Declaration of Independence that "looked too good to be real."

The documents, in clear handwriting lettered on only slightly soiled parchment that feels crisp to the touch, were unveiled at a Tuesday news conference.

Secretary of State William Gardner said the documents were found eight weeks ago stuffed into the end of a 15-foot long metal storage tube.

"There's no telling how long they'd been there," he said.

"They looked too good to be real," Gardner said. "This may be the finest copy."

Officials put the documents in an unguaranteed car and drove them to two experts in Massachusetts, who authenticated them, he said.

George Cunha, director emeritus of the New England Document Conservation Center in Andover, Mass., which helped authenticate the documents, recommended they be insured for \$1 million

each. "But in my opinion you can't put a price on them," he said. "They're so precious it's impossible to put a price on them."

The just-discovered Bill of Rights and 11th Amendment are among the originals sent to the nation's 13 states in 1789 and 1793, he said.

The Declaration of Independence was an engraved copy made on orders of President John Quincy Adams, Cunha said.

"There are no more than 25 or 30 of those in existence today," he said. "It is important in its own right."

Gardner said the engraved copy is in better condition than the original document, which is kept in Washington.

The documents will be sent to experts for cleaning and lubrication to make their curled edges lie flat, which will take about two months. Eventually they will be displayed at the Statehouse.

Gardner said he didn't know for how long the three documents had been missing. Historians first alerted state officials to look for them seven or eight years ago, he said.

"Before then, apparently no one had ever asked," he said.

