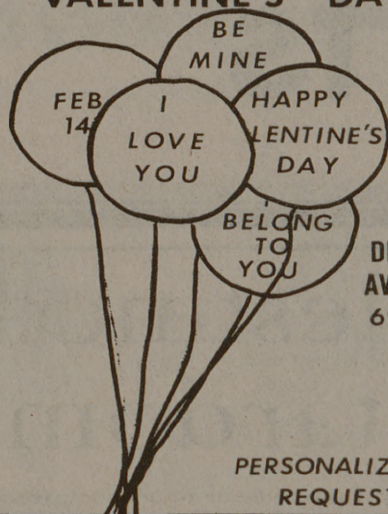


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Battalion/Page 12
February 11, 1983

First-ever out-of-town meet

Aggie gymnasts prepare for UTA

by Dayna Boren
Battalion Reporter
Male gymnasts at Texas A&M have been without a paid coach since the Texas Gymnastic conference was formed in 1978. But

after a lot of hard work and a lot of fund raisers, the gymnasts will start training this semester with a new full-time coach. Texas A&M gymnastics is not a varsity sport, thus Aggie gym-

nasts can not compete in the NCAA conference. Therefore, they compete in the Texas Gymnastic Conference, which presently consists of six teams. Because of the limited number of teams in this conference, Texas A&M also competes against teams from out-of-state, such as Memphis State, which will meet the Aggie gymnasts later this semester.

This Saturday, however, the gymnasts will be competing in their first out-of-town match, which will take place against UT-Arlington. UTA was ranked fourth in the conference last year, while the Aggies were ranked in second place.

Mark Hartwell, a senior veterinary student, has been the team captain and gymnastic club president for almost four years. During this time, the team has grown from a handful of amateurs into a good competitive collegiate team, Hartwell said.

"Gymnastics is not a sport ... it's a way of life," said Hartwell. "There's more acquired skill in a sport like gymnastics than in any

other sport that I know of, and there's less glory and recognition for what you do. That is why gymnasts understand each other so well ... they know what each other is going through."

To finance out-of-town meets, the team raises money through various fundraisers such as car washes, T-shirt sales, and gymnastic club dues. The club fund pays only for the gasoline, and individual team members finance their own food and uniforms. Lodging is usually provided by private individuals or through organizations such as the Aggie Mother's Association.

Because of previous financial problems, a scholarship fund was set up this semester to help raise money for the team. This was originated by the faculty sponsor, Mickey Stratton, and financed by Ramiro Galindo, whose son competes for the team. Both Stratton and Galindo are former Aggie gymnasts. Already, the fund has \$18,000, most of which has been donated through private individuals.

Despite the minor financial setbacks, team members seemed

very optimistic about the past season of the team. Co-captain Meyer, a freshman environmental design major, said he believed gymnastics purely for the love of the sport.

"I competed all through high school, and I really enjoyed it, so what else I would do? It is in gymnastics," Meyer said. Another team member, Garomore Cid Galindo, said he is glad the team is not part of the NCAA because if it were, he would no longer be able to compete. "I don't have the time to train for the Olympic rings in my spare time like that ... I just can't do it," Galindo said.

In order to stay on the team, members must attend practice regularly. Most team members average about 15 hours a week to prepare for coming events. If a member repeatedly missed practice, they were asked to quit the team.

"Considering that I have been disciplined, I think we've done pretty damned good," Hartwell said.

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United Press International
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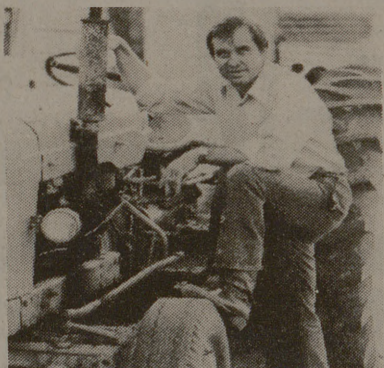
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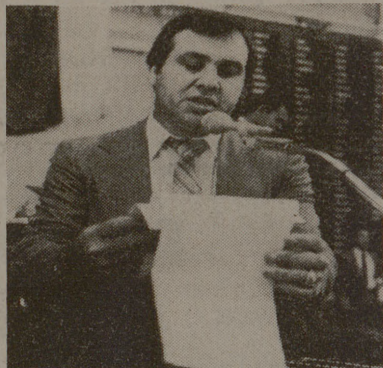
Dan has been a teacher of government, economics, and math at Cypress-Fairbanks High School in Houston and Vernon High School in Vernon.

Dan has authored two books, *Ten Tall Texans* and *Monument To A Black Man*.

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