

# Aggie Bonfire 1983



## Bonfire efforts praised

by Christine Mallon and Steve Thomas

Battalion Staff

The stack was shorter, the weather was better, the spirit was stronger — it all added up to one of the best Aggie bonfires in years.

"This year's bonfire was probably one of the most organized ones we've had at Texas A&M in a long time," Scott Strom, a junior bonfire coordinator, said Sunday.

The most important factor that contributed to the success of bonfire this year, Strom said, was the donations given to the bonfire fund by alumni, students, faculty and local merchants.

"We don't have any final figures yet on how much bonfire cost to build this year or how much money we raised through donations because it's hard to define what should be counted as a cash donation," Strom said.

For example, H.B. Zachry, class of '22, donated a new crane to be used at the bonfire site and

Zachry paid for all operating costs, Strom said.

Most of the money in the bonfire fund is used to cover insurance costs, which usually are a little more than \$3,000, Strom said.

Every student working at the cutting site or at the stack is covered under a bonfire insurance policy, he said, and all of the vehicles used also are covered for any major repairs.

Strom said most of the financial support came from local citizens and merchants.

Arthur Collier, of Collier Electronics in Bryan, donated a shack which was used for storage at the stack site and he also donated all the electrical supplies which were used, Strom said.

This year's Bonfire Benefit Barbeque, right after the Texas A&M — University of Houston football game, was dedicated to Collier.

About 5,500 different people worked on this year's bonfire, including the women's dorms — that's about one person per log, Strom said.

The only thing wrong with the 1983 bonfire was that it fell a little too soon, Strom said. Tradition says that if bonfire is standing at midnight, the Aggies will beat the Texas Longhorns.

"Oh well, it stood about an hour — which meant the Aggies would at least do good in the first quarter," he said.

"It was one of the prettiest fires I've ever seen," said Paul Tomaso, a civilian bonfire coordinator. Tomaso said bonfire construction went well this year, partly because there were few accidents and partly because the weather was so good. He thought it was the best built stack in four or five years.

Eby said the job took about 50 working days.

People from both on and off campus worked on the stack, but Tomaso said it is dorm spirit and comradery that really make it work.

It takes a lot of time to build the stack, but Tomaso says that's not an excuse for bad grades.

"People should know how to budget their time," he said. "I have good grades and I worked

on (the bonfire) as much as anyone."

Tomaso said bonfire, just like any organized effort, has a particular group who put in an enormous amount of work, and the rest take up the slack. He said there are about 60 or 70 people who do not have designated positions with the bonfire crew who really work hard and long.

Tradition plays a big part in the bonfire construction, including the use of axes to cut the logs instead of more advanced equipment.

"Half the fun of making bonfire is doing it with an axe," Tomaso said. "And you'll never see a dorm log go down with anything but an axe."

It took about 68 truckloads of between 100 and 200 logs to meet the bonfire's need for wood, but Tomaso said there is no destruction to the environment.

The wood is cut from land belonging to the Texas Municipal Power Authority, he explained, land that has been set aside to be stripmined for coal. All the trees on the land will be destroyed and replanted later.



photos by Dave Scott

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