

## State and Local

# Aggies donate \$1,162 into fund for former student's transplant

By Janet Goode  
Staff Writer

Former Texas A&M student John Stone, Class of '84, seeking funds for a liver transplant, called on fellow Aggies last week to help him raise over \$350,000.

And a lot of Aggies came through for him — donating a total of \$1,162 at a table set up in the MSC.

Scott Donahue, Stone's friend and fund-drive coordinator, said the response by students and faculty has been impressive.

"Everybody seems to be super as far as donations from students and faculty goes," Donahue said. "Every afternoon I go out there (to the MSC) at 5 p.m. and count the money. Every afternoon people stop by at the last minute when we are counting the money and ask if they can still donate."

Most of the donations, he said, have come from individuals.

"We're having people leave \$100 checks in the fishbowl," he said. "Ev-

ery time I pull one out, it kind of makes my hair stand on end and I get chill bumps."

Only one Texas A&M organization, the Deer Park Hometown Club, has made a collective donation, he

including the putt-putt course and Wolf Creek Car Wash.

Donations collected since Sept. 23 and sent to the American Transplant Association in Stone's name, total close to \$10,000, Stone said.

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— Scott Donahue, fund coordinator for John Stone

said, which was \$50. The only city-organized A&M club that has donated is one in Kansas, which donated \$200, he said.

Tom Turbiville, owner of College Station's Putt-Putt Miniature Golf Course, gave \$450 in proceeds to Stone last week from benefit golf games held everyday between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Several businesses around town have fishbowls set out for donations,

Donahue said the response has been good because people realize how serious the situation is.

What they may not realize, he said, is that Stone is the perfect candidate for a transplant. Stone's liver will not have to grow with his body like one would if the recipient were a baby. Also, Stone is in relatively good physical condition and his chances are extremely good for a successful operation and life there-

after, Donahue said.

Donahue said what he does not understand is the reasoning of the doctors and administrators who are requiring Stone to raise this money before he gets the operation.

"If you were in a car accident and were sent to an emergency room, they would do anything they could to save your life no matter what the cost," he said. "I can't understand why they don't do that in a situation like this — where they know it's a life or death situation. They won't do anything without the money."

Stone still needs \$110,000 to be put on the waiting list to receive a donor and then another \$250,000 to pay for the operation.

Other events planned to raise money for Stone include:

- A Brazos Landing benefit for John Stone set for Friday, Oct. 30. The band will be Fusion.

- A table will be set up Saturday afternoon by Rudder fountain and John Stone will be there to accept donations and answer questions.

# State representative asks for Mattox's ruling on liability insurance

McALLEN (AP).— State Rep. Juan Hinojosa, D-McAllen, has asked the attorney general for a ruling on the constitutionality of a new Texas law that requires all drivers to carry liability insurance.

Merchants along the border have complained that business has dropped since the law went into effect Sept. 1.

Hinojosa, who said he believes the law is constitutional, said he asked for the opinion from Attorney General Jim Mattox as head of the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence.

"I think it's constitutional," Hinojosa said. "It doesn't discriminate against anyone. It simply states that anyone who drives on Texas highways must carry liability insurance."

Hinojosa says the law has affected international trade by reducing the number of Mexican

nationals who drive into Texas to shop, visit and do business.

Examining the issues would give legislators additional information to determine whether to keep the law in its current form, amend it, or implement another program, the letter says.

McAllen attorney Allen Smith said he is preparing a lawsuit on behalf of some merchants in his city 10 miles from the border.

No one opposed the law last spring when it went before the legislature, Rep. Renato Cuellar, D-Weslaco, told a group of Hidalgo County elected officials last week.

"I know the intention of the law was not bad, but if it's now going to hurt, we need to look at it," said Cuellar, who was one of the people asking Hinojosa to request the attorney general's opinion.

# Students prepare for bonfire as A&M tradition burns on

By Elisa Hutchins  
Staff Writer

Bonfire season has opened again at Texas A&M. Students have started chopping down timber for one of A&M's most cherished and feverishly-backed traditions, which is in its 78th year.

The first mandatory Corps cut for the 78th Texas A&M bonfire is Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., about 15 miles from campus, off Grimes County Road 190, said Dennis Mitten, a bonfire coordinator — otherwise known as a "redpot."

Cutting started last weekend for civilians at the same location and Mitten said about 500 people participated over the two-day period.

"People who showed up were very enthusiastic," he said. "We cut about

## Cut dates

Scheduled cutting dates are from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the following dates:

- Oct. 10, 11.
- Oct. 18.
- Oct. 24, 25.
- Nov. 7, 8.

1,000 trees. New students have been hearing about bonfire for months now and I think the next cuts will be just as successful."

The land is owned by the Texas Municipal Power Agency, Mitten said, and the agency is letting stu-

dents use the land free of charge because it wants the land cleared.

The tradition holds that students work on bonfire and look forward to seeing it burn because it is a symbol of Aggie spirit and a desire to beat the University of Texas in its football contest on Thanksgiving Day.

Mitten said students and faculty who want to volunteer to work on the bonfire need a safety card that shows they completed the one-hour safety course, which was taught Sept. 28-30. Anyone who does not have a card, he said, can get one at the entrance of the site by attending a 15-minute safety course.

The bonfire has grown to an average height of 90 feet since its humble beginnings in 1909, according to University Archives files. The first bonfire was 12 feet tall and it only

took a few minutes for the cardboard boxes and trash to burn.

In 1942, wood replaced scrap wood and cardboard boxes and a center pole was added in 1945.

Throughout bonfire history, students have endured countless injuries such as snake bites and cuts to assure a roaring blaze, and two have died in the process.

In 1955, James E. Sarran, a sophomore from Brownsville at the time, died when he pushed two of his friends out of the way as a car struck the student's guard post.

Wiley Keith Jopling, a student from Nacogdoches, was crushed by a tractor-trailer in 1981 and died later from injuries.

While the task of building the bonfire is a major undertaking, it isn't the only chore. Aggies also must

keep an ever-watchful eye out for saboteurs.

Two UT students were arrested and expelled from school in the late '50s after they tried to drop a small bomb on the bonfire from a single-engine plane. They completely missed the stack and as they flew away, some A&M students copied down the plane's serial number and turned them in.

Two decades later, in 1977, a College Station patrolman was arrested and later fired for trespassing to try to ignite the bonfire prematurely. He said he attempted the stunt on a dare and was wearing a Texas Tech University T-shirt when police apprehended him.

Although many attempts have been made to damage the bonfire, it has been canceled only once. It was

canceled in honor of former U.S. president John F. Kennedy when he was assassinated Nov. 22, 1963.

The stack has withstood the weather, UT students and campaigns to abolish the tradition because some professors were concerned about destroying large forest areas. It also has been scrutinized by some local citizens who consider it a nuisance.

But the bonfire returns every year, and this year, Mitten said, promises to produce the best Aggie blaze in A&M history.

To get to the cutting site, turn left from Texas Avenue onto Harvey Road and cross Hwy. 6 under the East Bypass. Turn right off Hwy. 30 and turn right again onto Grimes County Road 190.

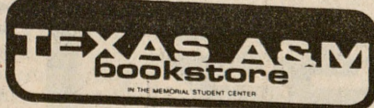
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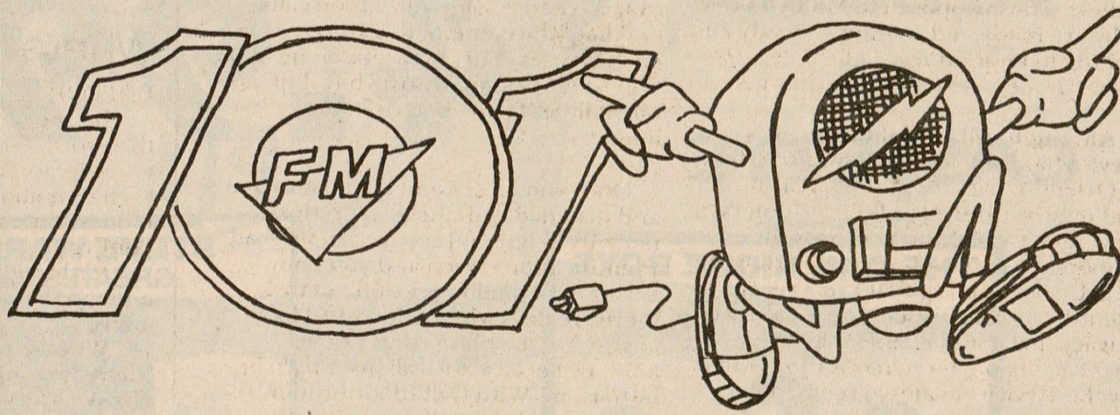


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