

State and Local

Strait receives warm welcome from 7,800 fans at A&M concert

By Staci Finch
Reviewer

From the moment he walked onto the stage in G. Rollie White Coliseum Friday night, George Strait knew he was welcome in Aggieland. Some 7,800 fans stomped, screamed and whistled when Strait took the stage and swung into "Dance Time in Texas."

Strait was treated to a special welcome at Texas A&M. After his opening number, he held up a 12th Man football jersey with his name emblazoned across the back.

"Coach Sherrill gave me this today," he said. "He said I could be part of the 12th Man."

The crowd loved this show of Aggie spirit, and from then on Strait held the crowd in the palm of his hand.

Fans applauded and sang along as the country music star worked his way through such hits as "All My Exes Live in Texas," "Amarillo By Morning" and "Ocean Front Property." Strait also proved beyond all doubt that he is more than a handsome face on stage. His rendition of Hank Williams' "Lovesick Blues" sounded like Hank himself had come to sing. Strait's voice broke in all the right places, and his falsetto and Bob Wills proud.



Country music singer George Strait

Photo by Jay Janner

While true country music fans may have gone to the concert for the music, most female fans were there to get a glimpse of the man himself. Girls of all ages ran to the edge of the stage with their cameras, hoping to capture Strait on film. And Strait obliged, looking down at the fans and smiling into their cameras. Strait

acknowledged his female fans throughout the concert, cocking his eyes from under his hat brim and waving, causing some to gasp, some to cry, and all of them to scream louder than before.

At the end of the concert, all the girls lucky enough to rush the stage had only one boot on as they waved

the other frantically in hopes of getting Strait's autograph. Those whose boots were signed couldn't believe their luck. But of all the fans at the concert, no one was more excited than seven-year-old Lesley Becker.

When she waved her bouquet at the edge of the stage, Strait leaned down and took her flowers from her, shaking her hand as he did, and smiled into the little girl's eyes. Becker was so overwhelmed that all she could do was bury her face in her mother's shoulder. Throughout the rest of the concert, Strait smiled and waved at the girl several times, and Becker was still too overwhelmed to talk when it was all over.

Technically, the concert had a few problems. The sound man couldn't seem to control the reverb on the bass, and there were a few feedback screeches. At times, the light man had a hard time finding the right soloist to spotlight. But the music more than made up for the few technical problems, and a better balance of vocals and music couldn't have been found in a studio.

Those who skipped the opener and came late missed a great show. Holly Dunn came out ready to sing, and gave the audience 45 minutes of her best. She moved easily from song to song, treating the audience to such hits as "Why Wyoming," "Too Too Many," "Love Someone Like Me" and "Daddy's Hands."

Foot patrol adds 'personal touch' to officers' duties

By Clark Miller
Staff Writer

Officer Brad Lamb of the College Station Police Department shines his flashlight on the young man urinating behind the Dixie Chicken. Lamb's partner, Officer Walter Sayers, asks the man if he is aware that there are public restrooms available indoors.

The man, caught in a position that makes it impossible for him to lie, nervously tells the officers that the restroom in the Dixie Chicken was crowded. The man has more excuses, but Sayers cuts him off and tells him to use better judgment in the future and leaves. A chorus of "Thank you's" comes from the young man and his friends as Lamb and Sayers walk away.

"We try to help as much as we can," Sayers says. "We don't want to take anybody to jail."

Sayers and Lamb are part of a new program implemented by the CSPD to foster better relations between the community and the police department. The department began sending officers on foot to College Station's Northgate area on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at the beginning of this semester.

Sgt. Gary Norton says that in the past, officers would patrol the area by car and only get out when they spotted a problem. The idea behind getting the officers out of the cars and onto the streets is to create more personal contact, Norton says, not to create more arrests.

"We're not patrolling any more than we were in the past," Norton says. "We're just more visible now."

Churches and businesses in the Northgate area are supporting the new program.

"It's a great idea," says Don Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken.

Ganter says when people see officers walking around and talking, it eliminates some of the fear customers have of uniformed officers.

"It's really been a good thing," he says. "I hope they keep it going."

Hugh Sterns, manager of the Brazos Landing restaurant and bar, agrees.

"The thing I like about the foot patrol is that it is more personal," Sterns says. "The cops used to come in cars and seemed like aliens to the area."

The Rev. Melvin Brinkley, director of the Wesley Foundation-Methodist Student Center, says the police foot patrol is a good idea, but thinks there is still room for improvement.

Brinkley spoke at a College Station City Council meeting Aug. 13 and complained of damages to A&M United Methodist Church, located behind Rocco's.

"Overall, I think (the foot patrol) is a good idea," Brinkley says.

On the street behind the Dixie Chicken Friday night, a man squeals his tires on the pavement for the benefit of people walking to the parking lot.

The man doesn't have his headlights on, so Lamb points to the lights to let him know they're off. The man points back to Lamb using his middle finger.

Both officers watched the car disappear down the street, its lights finally coming on.

Sayers says, "He must not have known that it's not polite to point with that finger."

Lamb and Sayers continue walking, waiting for their next opportunity to help the patrons of the Northgate area.

Munitions plant explosion destroys building

HOOKS (AP) — An explosion rocked a Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant, but it was relatively minor and caused no injuries, officials said Sunday.

The explosion Saturday evening involved about 800 pounds of black powder stored in an 8 foot by 8 foot storage building. The building was one used for drying the powder in preparation for use in production, officials said.

A rough estimate of the damage from the explosions is \$100,000. Col. Bob Kibler, commander of the munition plant, told the *Texarkana Gazette*.

The ammunition plant, which sits off U.S. Highway 82 about 25 miles west of Texarkana, occupies about 50 square miles and has some 1,400 structures. It is a major Army maintenance point for rebuilding combat and general purpose vehicles and other kinds of Army ordnance.

The plant is adjacent to but not part of the Red River Army Depot.

A man answering the phone at the depot Sunday who would not give his name said only the commanding officer, who was not available,

could answer questions about the incident.

Bowie County Sheriff Thomas Hodge said Sunday any information about the incident would have to come from the depot because it is government property.

The building is on the military reservation in Texas' northeast corner off U.S. Highway 82 about 25 miles west of Texarkana.

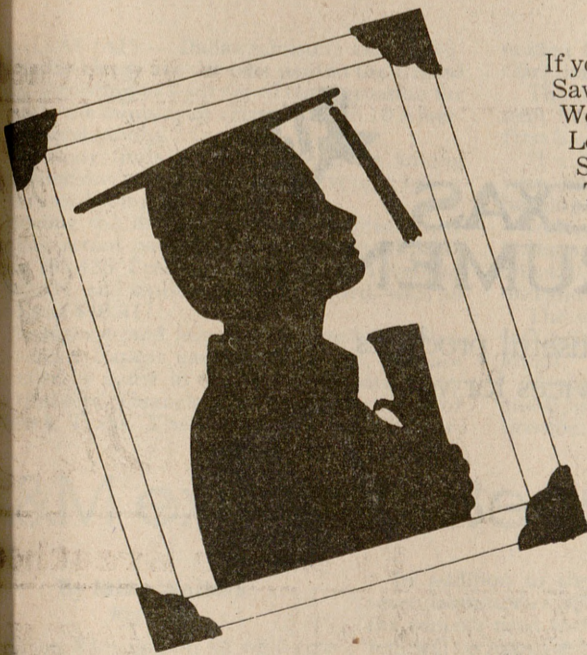
Troy Woodruff, a civilian employee stationed five miles from the plant, said he had heard nothing of an explosion until reporters began calling late Saturday night.

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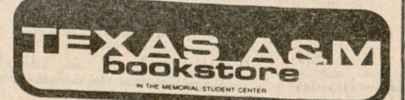
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