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Getting together: Profiles of new A&M clubs

Medicine Tribe members protest, work to solve problems with action

By Thomas Boylan

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

In its four months of existence, The Medicine Tribe already has made its mark on the Texas A&M campus. The Tribe is the group that boycotted classes on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, put the tombstone commemorating what they called "the death of the constitution" on the MSC lawn, and stood outside Shisa Dining Hall, handing out flyers about world hunger as Thanksgiving drew near.

Derek Kalahar and Todd Honeycutt organized The Medicine Tribe in October 1988 because they believed that current campus activist organizations were insufficient, they said.

In Kalahar's words, "they just weren't active enough." "We just didn't feel that the existing organizations brought enough attention to the issues," he said. "We wanted something more rebellious."

He and Honeycutt were members of Students Against Apartheid when they decided to form another organization called The Free America Society last year, which failed when no one showed up for the first meeting.

The Medicine Tribe is a re-vitalization of the Free America Society's concept, which was to make people aware of major issues. There are

about eight members in the club, and all but one are A&M students.

Kalahar said the group's main emphasis is "to bring up serious issues and make people think about them, make them aware of what's going on around them." He said he is concerned that too many issues are going unaddressed and wants people to think about what is going on in the world.

"A lot of people don't give a damn about anything," Kalahar said. "Alex P. Keaton *en masse!*"

Kalahar said he does not yet know what kind of response the group ultimately will receive.

"In the future, (students) will either become callous and ignore the Medicine Tribe or keep hearing it and think," he said. "The Medicine Tribe confronts them."

The Medicine Tribe's name was concocted during a phone call between Kalahar and Honeycutt. Kalahar was enrolled in an Indian anthropology class at the time and was looking for a name an Indian sound to it, and Honeycutt was listening to a Bob Dylan album and happened to catch the word "medicine" in it.

"Medicine Tribe" sounded good, they decided. They later rationalized the name, saying that the world was a sick place and that they were providing medicine for it, Kalahar said.

Anyone who would like to join the group can go to its meetings. The

club has no president or superior officer, trying to create a "round table" for discussion. The group sets no agenda, so, according to the founders, no one must behave in a structured manner.

Kalahar said that he and Honeycutt usually come up with most of the ideas for activities and dominate the group's meetings, but said that the objective is to discuss all ideas freely, then go out and act on those ideas. One of the guiding principles of the organization is to act on ideas, not just discuss them, he said.

A Medicine Tribe action may take several forms, ranging from skits to flyers. To date, their activities have included:

- a mudslinging contest at the MSC on Election Day, a parody of the Bush and Dukakis presidential campaign.

- a protest of world hunger near Thanksgiving.

- boycotting classes and campus eateries on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day when the University held classes.

- erecting a memorial to the "death of the Constitution" on the MSC lawn on Inauguration Day.

The organization is not recognized by the University, but it has begun the process. Last week, Terry Anderson, an associate history professor, agreed to serve as the group's faculty adviser.

Kalahar and Honeycutt are both

sophomore psychology majors. Kalahar is from Houston and Honeycutt is from Longview — "the buckle of the bible belt," as he calls it.

Their sources of information about world events are varied.

Kalahar said he enjoys the television program 60 Minutes. "They ask serious questions, and I like the way they don't back down," he said. To keep up on current events, he reads the *Houston Chronicle*.

Honeycutt does not have a television. He is a fan of commentator Paul Harvey and said he enjoys columnists Mike Royko and George Will.

Kalahar said he was not sure if the Medicine Tribe will last after he and Honeycutt graduate. "I wouldn't be surprised if it ceased to exist when I put my cap and gown on," he said.

But Honeycutt said he believes that if it becomes a recognized campus organization, the Tribe will survive for a while longer.

People interested in the Medicine Tribe can contact Derek Kalahar at 260-1889 or Todd Honeycutt at 260-6306. The group usually meets every Sunday somewhere off campus — often at the Brazos Landing. Kalahar said the Tribe is always looking for new members — people who want to be active, not just discuss the issues.

Coalition gets to roots of conservative politics, Christian civil principles

By Cray Pixley

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

The Texas Aggie Grass Roots Coalition Club is a newly-recognized campus organization dedicated to educating students in biblical principles of civil government and encouraging Christian students to serve in student government.

The club is an affiliate of the Brazos Valley Grass Roots Coalition and shares many of its aims, but puts an emphasis on bringing students with Christian concerns into campus, local and state government.

Ricardo Davis, interim president of the BVC and a graduate student in chemistry at A&M, was instrumental in bringing the club to campus.

"Our organization is a non-denominational and non-partisan group that hopes to motivate men and women of integrity to hold positions in civil government," he says.

"Our chapter is the first university affiliate of the statewide Texas Grass Roots Coalition," Davis says.

Although the TAGC will prepare students to become public servants in campus government positions, educating members 0500 about government will be of paramount importance.

"By providing Christian students with the necessary scriptural teaching that fosters a biblical world-view and philosophy, we will give them the foundation to serve as responsible citizens and officials," Davis says.

The club meets on campus every third Monday of the month and collects \$10 in dues for a yearly membership.

Dues go toward the TGC newsletter that each member receives.

During each meeting, the club reviews a tele-conference call from Adrian Van Zelfden, president of TGC, which gives an update of current events at the state level as well as any local issues that need to be discussed.

The call from Van Zelfden goes to about half the chapters in the state and keeps members informed of events at the capitol and around the state, Davis says.

The campus chapter members are studying a workbook, "God and Government: A Biblical and Historical Study."

"The book discusses the scriptural view of government and the early history of Christianity's influence on the U.S., its leaders and its philosophy of civil government," Davis says.

Although education and campus elections are the chapter's current primary goal, Davis says the chapter intends to become involved with issues at the precinct and state level as the need arises.

Acting TAGC President John Booher says members will be encouraged to write to government representatives about forthcoming issues that concern its Christian membership, such as the Roe vs. Wade abortion questions.

"We will try to write and talk with our local representatives about anything that goes against Christian morals," Booher says.

The chapter plans a field trip to the state capital where members will be able to meet with state Grass Roots representatives to discuss lobbying efforts.

"We also plan to be involved in the local political awareness campaign that the MSC Political Forum sponsors," Davis says. "In addition, we will show free videos that will address specific problems within government and how people can deal with those problems."

It is important to encourage good, honest students to give of themselves to student government, he says.

"Members can take their first steps in standing up for the right in government here at A&M and then take this experience into the state and local level when they leave college."

The next TAGC meeting will be Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. Students interested in attending should check for the room number at Rudder Tower.

Group practices non-destructive testing for flaws in materials to save time, money

By Thomas Boylan

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

They don't smash, twist, crush or stretch things. They test things — materials — but not the way it used to be done, which was to smash, twist, crush or stretch them.

They look for flaws or defects in everything from jet engine parts to railroad rails, and after they're through looking at an item, it's ready to use.

Make sense? To the American Society for Nondestructive Testing, it's more than sense, it's the whole point. Before World War II, materials testing was destructive. To find out whether a part was holding up under strain, it had to be strained until it failed. Its failure point was then used as a reference for other, similar items.

Would you like to find out if your car's crankshaft is over-stressed and ready to fail? The ANST might be able to find out without removing it and twisting it until it breaks.

Testing materials for defects is big business and an increasing concern for inspectors and manufacturers, says Don Bray, faculty adviser for Texas A&M's chapter of the ANST.

Airline companies in particular have had to pay increasing attention to tiny flaws that often cannot be seen with the naked eye. Small cracks and defects can cause catastrophes without warning when airplane fuselages fail or engines tear off. Finding problems can be more difficult than repairing them though, as in the case of hairline fractures on the surface of the fuse-

lage of an airliner — there's a lot of area on the outside of a 757.

Finding problems that cannot be seen is what nondestructive testing is all about.

Test Methods

There are five main methods of nondestructive testing, Bray says. They are ultrasonic, magnetic, radiographic, penetrant and eddy current.

The most widely used technique is penetrant. In that process, the item to be tested is coated with dye, the

see how well a given material was holding up, and in the late 1940's, the ANST was born.

In magnetic testing, the object to be tested is magnetized and dusted with tiny metal filings. The filings gather around any surface cracks, attracted by the break in the magnetic field.

More elaborate and technical processes can find defects deep within solid objects.

David Stanley, a graduate mechanical engineering student, dem-

onstrated ultrasonic testing in which sound waves are used to "see" into a solid block.

The sound waves, emitted from a probe, bounce off any cracks or defects within the material. The reflections are detected by the probe and displayed on an oscilloscope.

Using ultrasonic testing, the experimenter can tell the approximate size, shape and location of a flaw that otherwise would be completely invisible.

Bray noted that the destructive testing of the past had the disadvantage of losing the tested object. If turbine blade from a jet engine had flaws and was tested to failure, that

engine might not be useful again. Parts are not necessarily interchangeable after they've been under the stress of a jet engine.

Also, if the part was unique and projections are based on its behavior, the projections would be wrong. That part might have done things no other could. Finally, once the test was over, it could not be repeated. The object was gone.

Testing by Manufacturers

By designing a part so that it can be tested easily, parts for everything from cars to 757s can be checked more quickly and less expensively.

Random destructive testing is costly.

A percentage of all materials must be destroyed each year to find out how well they're holding up.

Economically, testing makes structural materials more competitive. Bray described a case in which United States steel manufacturers were complaining about losing sales to cheaper, imported steels.

However, those steels, from Japan and Germany actually were not cheaper.

They were, in fact, more expensive, but their manufacturers were willing to certify that the steel was free from defects because they were testing nondestructively.

Bray added that the U.S. is competitive now, but began testing about 20 years too late.

The ANST is a nationally chartered organization. For more information or to join the organization, call Howard Strahan, graduate student and president of the local chapter, at 845-4361 or Don Bray at 845-5114, or go by Room 403T of the Engineering Physics Building.

Local restaurant may become cultural center, provide forum for alternative artistic expression

By Cray Pixley

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

As rain and lightning spread across the sky outside, a different storm is pounding the stage inside Brazos Landing.

Two men, backed by a screen showing a man in various stages of undress, play minimalist music while the vocalist hovers between screaming and murmuring a stream of lyrics.

"Hey, it's just an act," the vocalist of "Abandoned Orgasm" says to a quiet and perhaps stunned audience.

He follows this announcement by miming the shaving off of his chest hair and pretending to slice his wrists, which are doused with ketchup.

The band's bizarre poetic performance and video of genitalia is followed by more serene poets reading from their original works. The

poems are tame in comparison with the opening performance.

This mixture of art forms was part of an open poetry reading given last week at Brazos Landing.

The reading is the first bid in Brazos Landing owner Hugh Stearns' attempt to give students at Texas A&M and members of the community an open forum for creative expression.

Stearns says he always has considered his business to be a place that provided an outlet for alternative art forms.

He is fostering a fine arts college forum since A&M does not have one.

"From music, art and now poetry, the stage of the Brazos Landing has always been open for alternative means of expression," he says. "If A&M would put in a college of fine arts, it would really change the face of education. There would be a stronger stirring of cultural events."

"Since A&M doesn't have a fine

arts college, we decided to have one for them," Stearns says.

Stearns says he hopes to encourage not only poetry, but also painting, video productions and theater through his open forum.

"One of my employees is working on an original play, and I hope that we will be able to present it here sometime," he says. "In this way, I would be encouraging theater."

Brazos Landing already sports original paintings and sculpture from area artists.

"The Landing itself is a sort of free-form piece of art," Stearns says. "I was talking to a guy about the amount of light coming into the place, and he said if I got him the cardboard, he would do a sculpture for the window. He did a great piece of art for the window."

It would be nice to see College Station become as much of a cultural center as possible, Stearns says.

"Around most universities there is a bohemian, creative crowd that

does not fit into the framework of the university," he says. "A&M has this crowd who are interested in the arts, but they are scattered and there is no focal point for expression."

Through the Brazos Landing, Stearns is seeking to organize creative individuals and realize these focal points for their creative expression.

The creative strains would be encouraged throughout the community and the A&M campus.

The poetry readings are free to the public now, but Stearns says he may charge some fee if the readings become more frequent.

"If I did charge, the money would go toward starving artists or the production costs," he says. "I don't know what more I can do to further the arts than provide a place where alternative means of expression can take place. I'm involved with the Free World Press, an eight-page

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How to organize an A&M club

By Stacey Babin

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

Many students know how to get involved with clubs on campus. They can go to MSC Open House, check bulletin boards or call organizations' officers to get information on joining. Many people, however, don't know how to start a club.

"It's really a simple process," said Student Activities Adviser Jan Paterson.

Anyone with an idea for a new club is encouraged to apply for University recognition with the Student Activities office, she said.

The office gives a Policy and Procedures book and a Student Organization Guide to anyone who wants to form a new club.

The first step in starting a club is to find out the level of interest in the new group from other students, Paterson said.

The person or people who want to start a club can place an ad in the paper or have an organizational meeting to see what kind of response the club gets.

If there is an interest, paperwork is the next step.

The group's leaders or officers must fill out a signature card, Paterson said. The card sets up the club's account and signifies who can spend the money from that account, she said. Signature cards also serve as a contact card to be kept on file for those who want information about the club.

The club then must request official University recognition. The name and purpose of the organization are identified at this point.

"We want organizations that are successful, so we don't want groups directly competing with each other," Paterson said. "Of course, we have a number of service organizations, but we want organizations that are unique and have a direction, a purpose."

All organizations must have a constitution, she said. The constitution form the Student Activities office has is simple, Paterson said.

Many groups, like hometown clubs, can just fill in its officers' names. For other groups the process is more complex.

Advisers as well as group leaders must sign the paperwork.

Faculty advisers can be associated with a certain club's department, and may be assigned to that group, she said. But groups often choose their own advisers.

"We usually just leave the decision up to the group," Paterson said. An adviser must be a full-time A&M employee.

"The adviser is a representative of the University and, therefore, is a connection between the organization and the university," Paterson said. "This gives the students guidance and, because the purpose of the organization is to learn and grow, (the adviser) is one more positive experience."

After a group officially is recognized, it can apply for a room or cubicle on campus. Each organization must explain why it needs a space and what it will be used for, Paterson said.

If the space is being wasted, the group may lose it, she said. Officers also are required to set office hours for the club.

All groups have the chance to be recognized, Paterson said.

As a state university, she said, Texas A&M must follow the U.S. Constitution. Groups have the freedom of assembly, speech and worship, she said.

Only groups that disrupt the "educational environment" might lose their recognition, she said.

"The responsibility is on the group's part for not losing its privileges," Paterson said.

No group, she added, has the right to restrict membership on the basis of sex, color or religion. However, some groups, of course, such as honor societies, have certain standards that must be met for membership.

Organizations are encouraged to have guest speakers and to meet regularly, Paterson said.

"The organizations are an opportunity for leadership and working together," she said. "You learn about yourself, others and new ideas."