

Monday, August 27, 1990

Symbol of spirit lights up night, shows desire to win

By LINDA BAYLOR
Special to the Battalion

Aggie bonfire is one of the most renowned spirit symbols at Texas A&M.

Bonfire stems from A&M students' burning desire to "beat the hell outta t.u." and is traditionally held the night before the Texas A&M vs. University of Texas football game.

The wooden structure is symbolic of the love Aggies have for their school, and the largest yell practice of the year coincides with it.

Early bonfires were not much to look at. The first bonfire, said to have burned in 1909, was nothing more than trash and boxes collected by Corps of Cadets members bored with studies and excited over the ensuing football game with UT.

It stood only about 12 feet tall and had no centerpole, but was remembered most by the stolen outhouse on top of the structure. The fire was welcome warmth to the cold night.

Bonfire's first yearbook appearance was in the 1928 Longhorn, Aggie's original annual.

The all-log tradition began in 1936 after a local farmer complained his barn was stolen for the previous year's bonfire.

The college provided saws, axes and trucks to help cut down cottonwood trees for the first bonfire with non-stolen materials.

Centerpole's tradition began in 1946. The following year two logs were coupled together to form a 50-foot centerpole, which started the tradition practiced today.

In 1969, bonfire reached a peak of 109 feet, 10 inches — the tallest ever in the United States. Concern for safety since has limited bonfire's height to 55 feet.

Safety concerns also caused bonfire to be moved in 1955 from its original location on the Gen. Ormond R. Simpson Drill Field, north of the MSC, to its present location at Duncan Field.



Battalion file photo

Eight senior redpots lead an anxious crowd of students as they carry torches into the perimeter to light bonfire.

Duncan Field.

The MSC was constructed in 1955 and bonfire was moved for fear the flying embers would set the building on fire.

Though nothing has caught on fire, bonfire has had its tragic moments.

Bonfire workers can expect to receive minor injuries every so often, but two students have died from accidents relating to bonfire construction.

In 1955, Cadet James E. Sarran suffered fatal injuries when he was struck by a swerving car while on night watch of bonfire. Sarran was hit after pushing a fellow Aggie out of the way.

A&M student Wiley Keith Jopling died in 1981 after falling under the wheels of a tractor.

To prevent accidents from occurring, all students working at the cut site are required to take safety classes.

The half-hour classes are in September and teach students safety and basic use of axes.

Students operating tractors or chain saws attend additional classes. To participate at the cut site, students must have a sticker from the

safety class on their ID cards.

The cutting of trees for bonfire is referred to as "cut." Cut starts the first weekend in October and continues for nine weekends.

Both Corps members and civilians work on bonfire as long as they have taken the safety class.

Bonfire is a structured, planned operation. The Bonfire Committee, consisting of senior and junior bon-

fire leaders, coordinates all bonfire activities such as fundraising and acquisition of equipment.

The head of the committee and all bonfire activities is the "head stack," a senior who acts as a liaison between University officials and students.

Head stack has the final word on bonfire activities and does most of the public relations for bonfire. Decisions are made as a group, but the head stack deals with advisers, the University president and the Corps commander.

Bonfire leaders are called "pots." Pots make up the chain of command for bonfire construction. The name comes from the safety helmets all bonfire workers must wear while within the perimeter area of stack.

Pots are grouped by their color and are chosen the year before they serve by outgoing seniors.

Seniors, called "dads," pick who will replace them by looking at the person's previous bonfire work and leadership skills. Juniors learn the ropes through this father-son relationship.

Redpots lead the rest of the bonfire crew. Senior redpots basically supervise the whole production, while junior redpots do most of the actual organizing and instructing.

The head stack is always a senior redpot. There are five senior corps redpots and three senior non-reg redpots. Junior redpots are divided in the same way.

The five brownpots also are seniors — three are Corps members and two are civilians. Brownpots help junior reds get the stack built by providing much of the skilled labor.

Greypots are more commonly referred to as "climbers." Consisting of three seniors and three juniors, climbers work with lights, centerpole and perimeter poles.

Climbers also man the ax-handle

See Bonfire/Page 7E

MSC University PLUS

REGISTRATION
Begins Sept. 3rd - 12 noon
MSC Basement - 845-1631

FITNESS

Bellydance: \$30/student
T/Th, Sept 18-Nov 8 8:15-9:15pm

Hawaiian Dance: \$15/student
Tues, Sept 18-Nov 6 9:15-10pm

Tae kwon do: \$22/student
T/Th, Sept 25-Nov 1 7-8pm

Self Defense: \$22/student
T/Th, Sept 25 - Nov 1 6-7pm

Yoga: \$22/student
M/W, Sept 24-Oct 31 8:30-9:30pm

Intermediate Yoga: \$22/student
T/Th, Oct 9-Nov 8 8:30-9:30pm

COMPUTERS

Intro to Macintosh: \$15/student
M/W, Sept 10 & 12 6-7:30pm
T/Th, Sept 11 & 13 6-7:30pm
T/Th, Oct 2 & 4 8-9:30pm

Pagemaker 3.0/Mac: \$40/student
M/W, Oct 22-Nov 19 5:30-7pm

Microsoft Word/Mac: \$20/student
T/Th, Sept 25-Oct 4 6-7:30pm

Intro to DOS/IBM PC: \$15/student
M/W, Sept 10 & 12 6-7:30pm
M/W, Oct 8 & 10 8-9:30pm

WordPerfect 5.1: \$40/student
M/W, Sept 17-Oct 10 6-7:30pm
T/Th, Oct 9-Nov 1 7:30-9pm

Lotus 1-2-3: \$40/student
T/Th, Sept 18-Oct 4 6-7:30pm
M/W, Oct 22-Nov 7 6-8pm

SPECIAL INTEREST

Star Gazing: \$30/student
T/Th, Sept 25-Oct 18 6:30-9pm

Potpourri: \$12/student
Tues, Nov 6 6-9pm

Wine Appreciation: \$25/student
Wed, Sept 26-Oct 17 7-8:30pm

Creative Writing: \$28/student
Tues, Oct 2-Nov 6 6:30-9pm

Matting & Framing: \$25/student
Wed, Oct 10, 17, 24 6-8pm

Juggling: \$14/student
Wed, Oct 3, 10, 17 6-8:30pm

Plan Your Wedding: \$22/student
Mon, Sept 24-Oct 15 6-8pm

Wedding Cakes: \$10/student
Wed, Sept 26 7-9pm

Flower Arranging: \$18/student
Tues, Oct 2, 9, 16 6-9pm

Electronics: \$26/student
Thurs, Sept 27-Oct 25 6-9pm

Auto Mechanics: \$18/student
Thurs, Oct 4, 11, 18, 25 7-9pm

Bike Maintenance: \$20/student
Tues, Sept 18-Oct 9 7-9pm

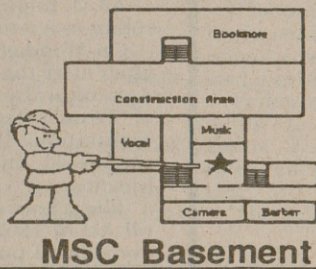
Guitar: \$28/student
M/W, Oct 1-Oct 24 7:30-9pm
Thurs, Sept 20-Nov 8 7-8:30pm

Intermediate Guitar: \$28/student
Thurs, Sept 20-Nov 8 8:30-10pm

FALL 90 WORKSHOPS

NONSTUDENT
Workshop Fees
are an additional
\$4 per class.

MSC Craft Center
845-1631



MSC Basement

BUSINESS

Accounting: \$25/student
Mon, Sept 24-Oct 15 6-8:30pm

Business Etiquette: \$15/student
Tues, Sept 25-Oct 16 7-9pm

Basics of Investing: \$16/student
Tues, Oct 2-Oct 30 7:30-9pm

Interviewing: \$12/student
T/Th, Oct 23-Nov 1 6:30-8pm

Resume Writing: \$8/student
M/W, Nov 5 & 7 6:30-8:30pm

PHOTOGRAPHY

Beg. Photography: \$28/student
Tues, Sept 18-Oct 9 6-9pm
Tues, Oct 23-Nov 13 6-9pm

B&W Darkroom: \$25/student
Wed, Sept 26-Oct 10 6-9pm
Tues, Oct 16, 23, 30 6-9pm

Visual Photography: \$18/student
Thurs, Sept 20-Oct 11 7-9pm

Video Camera & VCR: \$18/student
Thurs, Oct 11-Nov 1 7-9pm

Studio Portraiture: \$22/student
T/Th, Oct 2, 4, 9, 11 6-9pm

DANCE

Beg. C&W Dance: \$20/student
Wed, Sept 19-Oct 17 6-7:15pm

Adv. C&W Dance: \$20/student
Wed, Sept 19-Oct 17 7:30-8:45pm

Ballroom Dancing: \$18/student
Tues, Sept 25-Oct 23 7:15-8:30pm

Jitterbug: \$18/student
Sun, Sept 16-Oct 14 6-7:15pm
Sun, Sept 16-Oct 14 7:30-8:45pm
Mon, Sept 17-Oct 15 7-8:15pm

ARTS & CRAFTS

Calligraphy: \$26/student
Tues, Sept 18-Oct 30 7-9pm

Calligraphy II: \$22/student
Thurs, Sept 27-Nov 1 6-7:30pm

Cross Stitch: \$12/student
Wed, Oct 3, 10, 17, 24 6-7:30pm

Cornhusk Dolls: \$10/student
Tues, Oct 23 6-9pm

Drawing: \$18/student
Mon, Sept 24-Oct 29 6-8:30pm

Etched Glass: \$12/student
Tues, Oct 16 6-9pm

Knitting: \$34/student
Mon, Sept 17-Oct 22 6-9pm

Pottery: \$28/student
M/W, Sept 10-Sept 26 5-7pm
M/W, Sept 10-Sept 26 7:30-9:30pm
Wed, Oct 3-Nov 7 7:30-9:30pm
Thurs, Sept 20-Oct 25 7:30-9:30pm

Smocking: \$22/student
Mon, Sept 17-Oct 8 6-9pm

Stained Glass: \$28/student
Tues, Sept 11-Oct 9 6-9pm
Wed, Sept 26-Oct 24 6-9pm

Leaded Glass: \$28/student
Tues, Oct 16-Nov 13 6-9pm

Decoy Carving: \$32/student
Tues, Oct 16-Nov 13 6:30-9:30pm

Woodworking: \$28/student
Tues, Sept 18-Oct 9 6-9pm

LANGUAGES

Conversational Chinese: 6:30-8pm
M/W, Sept 24-Oct 31 \$35/student

Conversational French: 6:30-8pm
M/W, Sept 24-Oct 31 \$35/student

Conversational German: 6:30-8pm
M/W, Sept 17-Oct 24 \$35/student

Conversational Italian: 6:30-8pm
T/Th, Sept 18-Oct 25 \$35/student

Conv. Japanese I: 6:30-8pm
T/Th, Sept 18-Oct 25 \$35/student

Conv Japanese II: 6:30-8pm
T/Th, Oct 30-Nov 29 \$35/student

Conversational Spanish: 6:30-8pm
M/W, Sept 17-Oct 24 \$35/student
T/Th, Oct 2-Nov 8 \$35/student

Intermediate Spanish: 8-9:30pm
M/W, Sept 17-Oct 24 \$35/student

Conversational Russian: 6:30-8pm
T/Th, Sept 25-Nov 1 \$35/student

Sign Language: 6-8pm
T/Th, Sept 18-Oct 18 \$35/student

English as a 2nd Language: 6:30-8pm
T/Th, Sept 25-Nov 1 \$40/student

HEALTH & SELF HELP

CPR: \$18/student
M/W, Sept 17 & 19 6-10pm
M/W, Oct 8 & 10 6-10pm

Basic First Aid: \$22/student
M/W, Sept 24-Oct 3 6-9pm

Self Evaluation: \$20/student
Wed, Sept 19-Oct 3 6-8:30pm

Personality Discovery: \$18/student
Wed, Oct 10, 17, 24 6-9pm

Assertiveness Training: \$12/student
Thurs, Sept 20-Oct 11 7:30-9pm

Stress Management: \$20/student
Wed, Oct 17, 24, 31 6:30-8pm

Public Speaking: \$15/student
Thurs, Sept 27-Oct 18 6:30-8:30pm

Problem Solving: \$12/student
Thurs, Oct 11-Nov 1 7:30-9pm