

Groups shatter

By BRIDGET HARROW

The Bonfire Alcohol Awareness Committee will coordinate another media campaign this year aimed at eliminating alcohol from the bonfire site. In upcoming weeks, flyers, posters, public service announcements, and billboards will be aimed at decreasing the consumption of alcohol at bonfire.

"We want to let people know that one, if they are going to drink, drink in moderation and two, not to bring it to the bonfire site," said Ann Coombes, chair for the Bonfire Alcohol Awareness Committee.

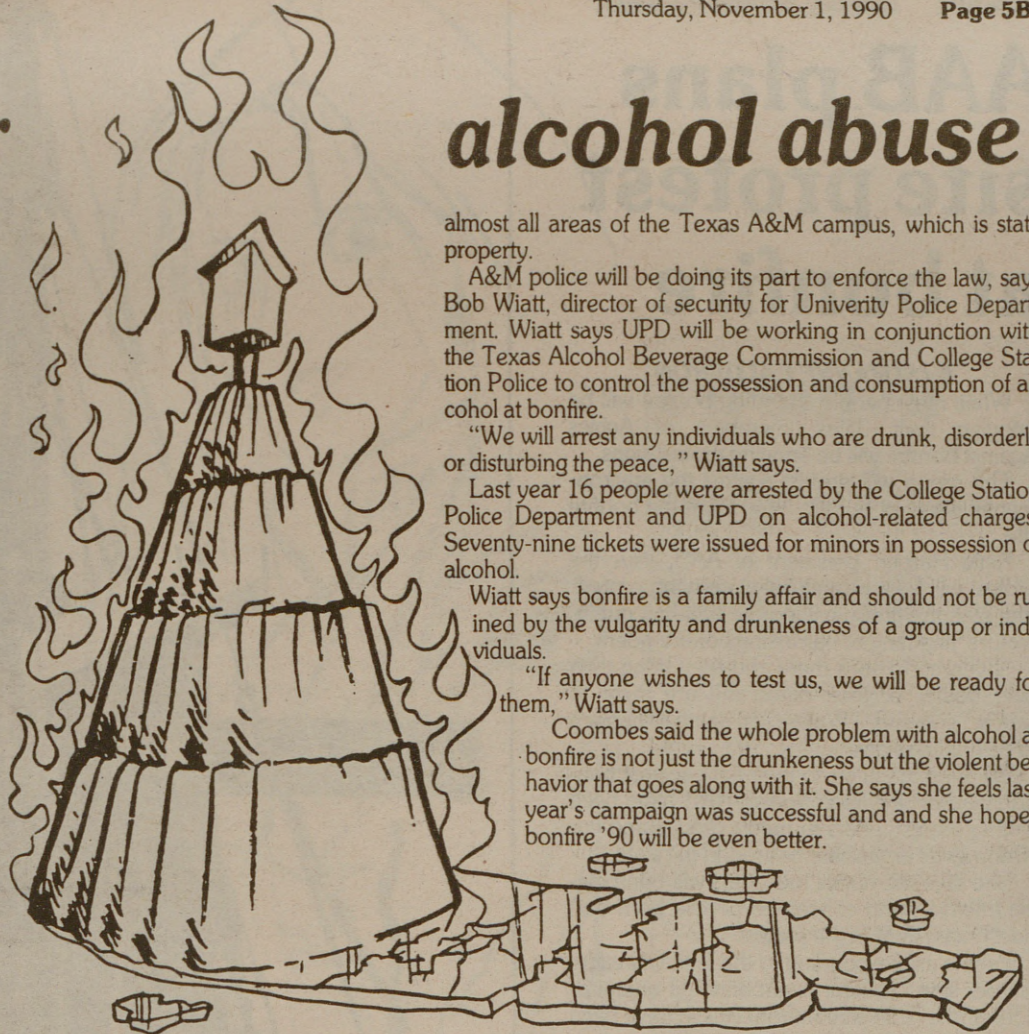
"Keep Alcohol from Shattering the Tradition" will again be the slogan used to discourage alcohol consumption at bonfire, Coombes said. The committee decided to keep the same slogan because they feel consistency will pay off in the long run, she says.

"If everyone hears it year after year, they might get the message," Coombes says.

The Bonfire Alcohol Awareness Committee is a mainly student-run committee with representatives from many student organizations such as Student Government, the Residence Hall Association, Off Campus Aggies, the Graduate Student Council, the Interfraternity Council, Student Publications and others.

"We (the committee) wanted the message to be from the students to the rest of the student body and visitors to campus to respect the laws and the tradition of bonfire," Coombes says.

Coombes says one of the main problems of controlling alcohol at bonfire is many people, especially visitors to Texas A&M, do not know it is illegal to consume or bring alcohol in



alcohol abuse

almost all areas of the Texas A&M campus, which is state property.

A&M police will be doing its part to enforce the law, says Bob Wiatt, director of security for University Police Department. Wiatt says UPD will be working in conjunction with the Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission and College Station Police to control the possession and consumption of alcohol at bonfire.

"We will arrest any individuals who are drunk, disorderly or disturbing the peace," Wiatt says.

Last year 16 people were arrested by the College Station Police Department and UPD on alcohol-related charges. Seventy-nine tickets were issued for minors in possession of alcohol.

Wiatt says bonfire is a family affair and should not be ruined by the vulgarity and drunkenness of a group or individuals.

"If anyone wishes to test us, we will be ready for them," Wiatt says.

Coombes said the whole problem with alcohol at bonfire is not just the drunkenness but the violent behavior that goes along with it. She says she feels last year's campaign was successful and she hopes bonfire '90 will be even better.

Improved safety cuts down injuries

By ISSELLE MCALLISTER

Special safety precautions taken at bonfire this year may make serious accidents a thing of the past, said Junior Redpot Trent Kelley.

At the request of the Texas Municipal Power Agency, everyone at the bonfire cut site and perimeter is required to don special protective gear, he said. Hard hats, safety glasses, leather boots and denim jeans are the standard cut and stack uniform. The crews also tape their hands to prevent blisters.

With axes swinging, the woods can be a dangerous place. Therefore, cut classes are a must for anyone participating in cut, he said.

Bonfire crews learn basic safety strategies at cut class. The senior redpots teach how to carry and sharpen a machete and ax, how to avoid danger, and what safety equipment is required.

The redpots receive extensive training themselves before they teach others. Their training comes mostly from experience, Kelley said. As juniors, the redpots meet often with their "dads" — their senior counterparts — to learn something new, he explained.

The junior redpots then share the information with yellowpots, the civilian dorm coordinators, and bonfire butts, the Corps outfit coordinators.

The bonfire butts position was created this year to further enhance



ERIC H. ROALSON/The Battalion

Safety goggles and helmets ("pots") help decrease the risk of injuries at cut site.

safety. In the past coordinators had to split their responsibilities between the Corps outfits and the dorms. Now each group receives individual attention, which decreases the opportunity for accidents.

Like most other things at bonfire, knowledge is handed down by tradition, he said.

At cut, he said everything moves "like clockwork." With radios, cellular phones and other equipment, they are able to coordinate everyone's efforts and keep abreast of potentially dangerous situations.

"Things have really come a long way."

Troy Bullock, senior head civilian

said that accidents have decreased a great deal from years past.

About 25 serious accidents occurred last year, and only two have occurred this year, he said.

"Safety has just been fantastic," Bullock said. "If it keeps going like this, we might cut our accidents down to zero."