

# AAB plans site protest at bonfire

By SUZANNE CALDERON

While most people attending bonfire will be bringing their dates, members of Aggies Against Bonfire will be bringing protest signs.

The group will protest against the environmental waste of bonfire Nov. 29 at the bonfire site.

Kelly Harper, president of AAB, says the protest will be a peaceful sign-carrying protest. She says the group will not be handing out literature, chanting or harrasing bonfire-goers.

"Everybody goes there and they bring their beer bottles or their dates and are there to watch," she says. "We are just going to happen to be holding signs."

To bring attention to their fight against bonfire, Harper says members of AAB have been writing protest letters to media groups and environmental organizations around the state.

She says she hopes the letters will bring media attention and concerned people from outside Texas A&M to the protest.

People are responding to the letters already, Harper says. Several environmental organizations and a radio station from Austin have been in contact.

Harper says AAB thought about having the protest at the cut-site, since they are protesting the cutting of trees, but she says by protesting the night of the bonfire they will be able to reach more people.

Last fall, when AAB was first forming, Harper says they were afraid to protest fearing the repercussions of being against such a strongly held Aggie tradition. But, this year, she says, they are counting on the fact that bonfire is a University sponsored event and that the University and law enforcement agencies will control the crowd.

In addition to the protest bonfire night, AAB is working on a video showing the progression of bonfire from the cutting down of trees to the actual burning.

Harper says AAB hopes to send the completed video to the Cable News Network and other news organizations. The video will be as unbiased as possible, she says, with the only intent to show what happens to the environment as a result of bonfire.

The group has also been in touch with environmental lawyers to find out if bonfire is meeting the proper regulations. Harper says bonfire is exempt from many state agency regulations. AAB is finding out what has to be done to be exempt and if A&M is meeting the requirements.

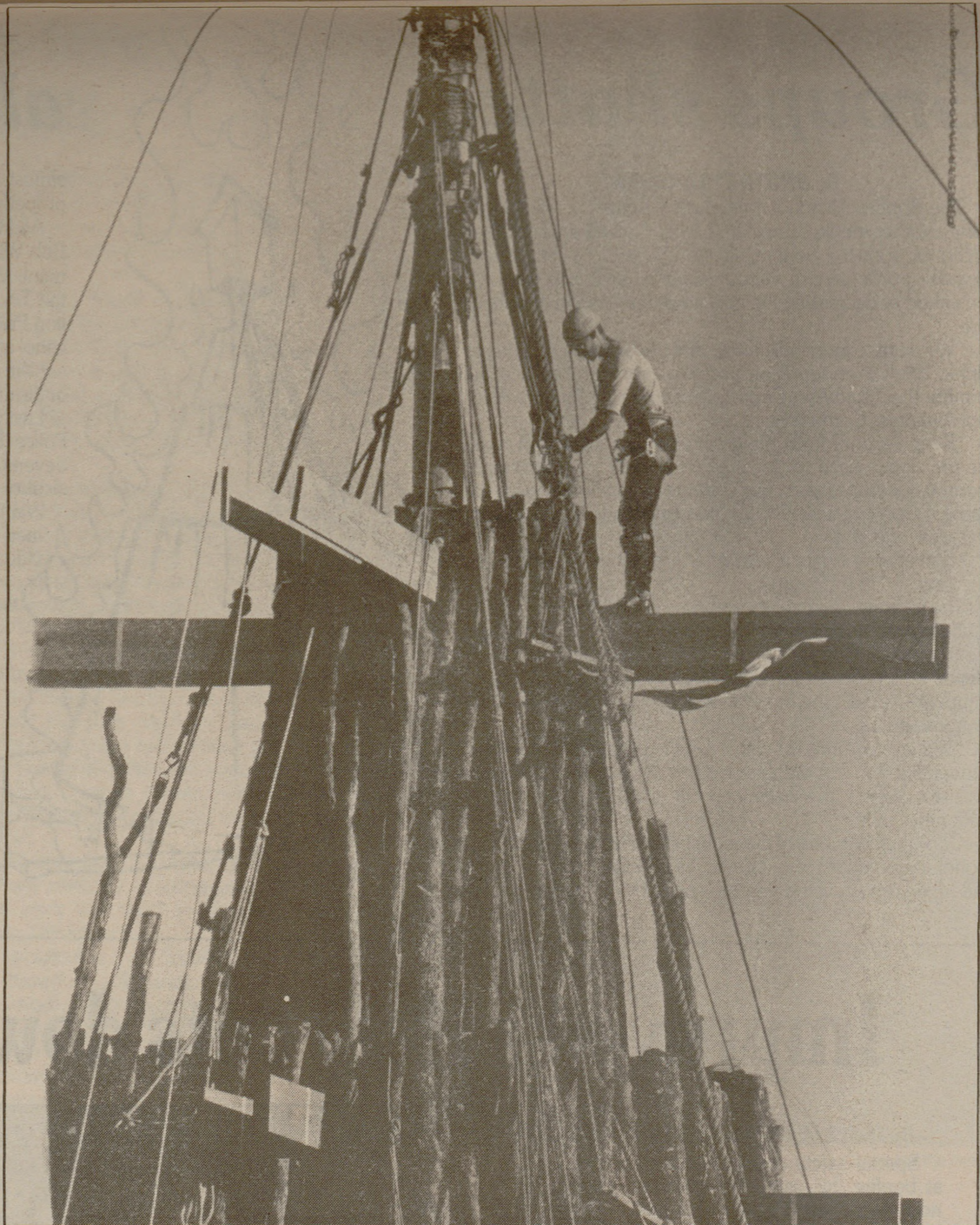
"The people who build it don't think about it, they just do it," she says.

Harper says she doesn't have an argument with people who have thought about bonfire and its good and bad points. She says she wants to reach the people who haven't thought about it and need to consider how harmful it is.

There are beneficial things people learn from working on bonfire like leadership and organizational skills, she says, but people can learn those same things without being destructive.

She says people need to realize that A&M has so much more to offer than bonfire.

"We are known for our land-management and wise use of natural resources and taught all kinds of ecological management techniques. We are suppose to be on the cutting edge of technology — there is so much going on at this university and so many other good traditions besides bonfire."



# Size reduction debate smolders

By LIBBY KURTZ

As the 81st bonfire nears, controversy continues to surround one of A&M's oldest traditions.

A proposal prepared by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Student Government Association recommended that the size of bonfire and the number of trees cut for the event be reduced by 50 percent by 1993.

The proposal stated, "By reducing the size of bonfire, fewer trees would need to be cut and burned, less student time would be required for its construction, and risks of both injury during construction and property damage would be reduced."

The Joint Ad Hoc Committee said the reduction would be accomplished by reducing height and diameter approximately 20 percent. Height would be reduced from 55 to 44 feet and circumference from 145 to 115 feet. The committee also recommended that the reduction should be done gradually. If the height was reduced approximately 2.75 feet and circumference 7.5 feet each year until 1993, the targeted size could be reached.

"By reducing height and circumference simultaneously, the overall appearance of bonfire could be kept the same," the committee stated. "By pursuing reduction gradually, the visual impact would be minor."

Bill Kibler, the University's adviser for bonfire, says a proposal concerning bonfire's size has been approved by President William H. Mobley.

"Bonfire's volume will be reduced," Kibler says. "But, the height will remain the same."

Kibler says that shaving a little of bonfire's height off would not help in decreasing the volume.

"Bonfire looks like an upside down cone," he says. "If we slowly reduce the circumference, we can also reduce the volume of the flames."

The bonfire adviser says the reduction will ensure the safety of the workers and the areas surrounding bonfire.

However, Peter Muniz, a yellowpot residing in Pur-year Hall, disagrees with the proposal.

"People would definitely notice a change in bonfire's size," he says. "Bonfire doesn't need to be any smaller. If anything, I'd like to see a larger bonfire, but I know that's not realistic."

Muniz says that morale among bonfire workers would be low if they were forced to build a smaller bonfire.

"The bigger the better still applies to A&M," he says.

Brennan Reilly, the SGA representative to the Faculty Senate, served on the committee.

"The proposal will have a positive influence on everyone," he says.

Joey Dollins, head stack redpot and chief student adviser for bonfire, also served on the committee.

"In order for bonfire to stay alive, there will have to be some changes," Dollins says.