



SONDRA ROBBINS/The Battalion

Jennifer Live'y (standing), a junior history and french major from Dallas, and Courtney Carter, a freshman petroleum engineering major from Austin, select gag gifts for their bonfire buddies.

# Bonfire buddies provide support

By JOHN MABRY

Although it might look a lot like Christmas, many students have been cutting down trees and exchanging gifts as part of another tradition — bonfire buddies.

Bonfire buddies is a campuswide effort in which anyone can participate, although the majority of participants is dorms, the Corps, fraternities and sororities.

At the beginning of the school year, groups exchange lists of names pairing bonfire workers with buddies of the opposite sex.

Whether the two decide to keep their identities a secret from one another is up to them.

And whether someone has a good buddy or a bad one is strictly luck.

Doug Childress, a freshman wildlife and ecology major, said his experience with his bonfire buddies wasn't quite what he expected.

"They told me that they were going to be the best bonfire buddies ever because there were three of them instead of just one, and that I should feel lucky," he said. "Immediately I started feeling greedy, thinking my presents were going to be the best. But my first present was a calendar on a piece of posterboard written in those cheesy crayola markers, and there were lollipops like the kind you get free at the dentist on every day until bonfire. I didn't like it very much, so for their present I gave them a pumpkin with all the lollipops stuck in it, and then they never called me back after that."

Yvette Martinez, a senior speech

communications major and a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority, had a bonfire buddy that she said was "the best."

"My bonfire buddy was so wonderful," she said. "His gifts were the best I'd ever heard of. He gave me Halston perfume and some really expensive chocolate. When we finally met, we went out on and off for a while."

Like Martinez and her bonfire buddy, some bonfire buddies' relationships continue past the gifts, sometimes turning into romance.

Becky Calvo, a junior biomedical science major who is also co-chairman of Underwood Hall's bonfire committee, said she knows one girl who actually got engaged to her bonfire buddy.

"Things like that are rare, though," she said. "A lot of people see bonfire buddies as major scam time, though. But it's really just a way to meet people and make friends."

Philip Bennett, a freshman corps member, said, "Bonfire buddies is a good way to keep up the spirit of A&M. It also keeps people who work on bonfire motivated."

To keep them going at cut, bonfire buddies often incorporate motivational slogans into their gifts — "Kill trees," "Cut," and "Load" are examples used to decorate shirts and other presents they exchange.

Calvo said these gifts usually range in price from about \$5 to \$10, although some people spend more and others none at all.

## Reload crew serves refreshments, encouragement to bonfire workers

By LISA ANN ROBERTSON

The reload crew, a student organization, serves refreshments and encouragement to bonfire workers at Duncan Field.

"We're there to motivate the men and women who work out there," Kelli Klaevemann, director of the Bonfire Reload Crew, said. "We're there to serve it, not build it."

The staff does not go out to the cut sites. Rather it sets up a shack on Duncan and distributes drinks, cookies, and in cold weather, soup to bonfire workers.

The crew has been better able to serve this year since it joined the University's Bonfire Committee in the spring. The bonfire committee is made up of the redpots and those who build the stack, Women's Bonfire Committee (pink pots) and now reload crew. Reload crew was previously a committee of the Student Y organization. The change has been beneficial for each group.

"Before, we had to answer to bonfire committee and to Student Y," Klaevemann said. "Because of having to go through two channels, we weren't getting our job done as well."

Janie Metzger, reload crew adviser when it was part of Student Y, said "They're getting bigger, and like all good things they're changing to go with the times." Because the group was only ac-

tive in the fall semester, it often got squeezed between paper work.

The move was not prompted out of frustration, though. "It has been a very positive move for us," Klaevemann said. "We're improving relations with the other (bonfire) committees. We have more opportunities to get involved now."

Bonfire committee adviser Bill Kibler agreed. "Communication is certainly better and easier. In the long run, it will work much better to have the three entities under one group."

While the move has improved communications, it hasn't lessened the amount of work the crew does.

"Some people think that all we do is serve cookies," Klaevemann said. "It has turned out to be quite a project. It's a lot larger project than people think, and it's a lot of fun."

The crew sets up its shack when center pole goes up and works through push. Crew members are required to work two two-hour shifts. Supervising assistants work about four times a week in four-hour shifts and make sure supplies stay stocked.

They provide lemonade, tea, coffee, hot chocolate and soup. And they serve a lot of cookies. Klaevemann estimates that this year they will serve 1,800 dozen cookies.



ERIC H. ROALSON/The Battalion

Junior pinkpot Noni Richardson sells cokes to Charles Allen (left), a sophomore from Moore Hall, and T.A. Hennard, a senior from Crocker Hall.