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## Organization provides comaraderie for 'older Aggie'

By Terri Welch  
The Battalion

Attending college at an older age than most students can be a difficult experience.

Students Over the Traditional Age (SOTA), an organization designed to help those wanting to meet people a little older, plans several social activities a semester and holds a transitions conference for older Aggies.

"There are over 7,000 students, both graduates and undergraduates, that are classified as over 24," says Robert Dickens, a 26-year-old mechanical engineering graduate student from Houston, and president of SOTA. "The majority are graduate students, but a lot are undergraduates."

Dickens says these students deal with a variety of problems that most traditional aged students don't.

"Feeling really awkward and out of place is part of the experience," he says. "(Older students) go through many of the same things freshmen do, but at a different point in their life."

Most older students are single and support themselves completely, Dickens says. They are trying to coordinate part time jobs and pay off loans at the same time.

Doris White, treasurer of SOTA, can identify with this situation. A 35-year-old junior mechanical engineering technology major from Amarillo, White says she was tired of being a secretary and wanted more of a challenge.

"When I graduated from high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do," she says of her decision not to attend college right away. "After working a while at several



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Students Over the Traditional Age (SOTA) provides social functions for A&M's older students. Pictured here are (front row, left to right) Ray and Kim Modglin, Doris White (treasurer), Rod Schaffter, Lisa Preston, (back row, left to right) Robert Dickens (president), Karen Wade, and Tommy Armstrong (vice president).

places, I decided I wanted to do something technical to make more money. That is why I came to A&M."

It was a tough decision for White to make, considering she had no family support. Her friends thought she was making a big mistake.

"A lot of people told me not to do it," she says, pointing out, "it was real strange. I thought they would be happy (for me)."

White says when she started classes, she was very self-conscious about her age and didn't in-

teract with the students socially, just scholastically.

"There were a lot of times where I finally would ask the other students, 'How old do you think I am?' and they always answered younger than I was, so that was good," she says.

Classroom interaction problems and making ends meet have not taken the most effort, she says. Finding a roommate has posed the biggest challenge. As people get older, they become more set in their ways.

"I think younger people might

expect me to mother them, that's not true," White says, also have a lot of my own and I'm not sure if someone younger would appreciate me as much as I do."

White says it was hard to get to A&M and be by herself. She helped her to meet people of her own age and adjust to college.

Dickens and White encourage any Aggie who is over the traditional age to join them at 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28th at 3-C Building for their next meeting. Call 7387 for more information.

## Social Distortion refines 'rockabilly on speed'

Continued from page 11

band also adopted a new musical style, taking the sound of 50's rockers like Jerry Lee Lewis and Eddie Cochran and adapting it to the 90's. The band's 1990 self titled release "Social Distortion" took the group to the top of the alternative charts and led to a well publicized tour with Sonic Youth and Neil Young.

With "Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell," Social Distortion proves that the last album was no fluke. Ness and the boys refine the rockabilly on speed style that's been featured on the last two albums. Although shining moments are fewer on the new release, "Heaven and Hell" is a better album overall. The rough spots that occasionally marred "Social Distortion" are gone, ironed out by a new tightness to the band and consistently better songwriting.

Ness, as on earlier releases, focuses most of the songs on the pitfalls of fast living. Whether its women on "Bye Bye Baby," or a murder rap in "99 to Life," Ness growls out his lyrics with the intensity of someone who's been through what he's singing about. The rebel attitude that surfaced during the group's punk period is still intact, but it's now sharpened with a streetwise wisdom. Ness sings about life in the fast lane, but he also makes it clear that he doesn't make the same mistake twice.

"Heaven and Hell" also features some experimentation with the band's sound. With "This Time Darlin'," Social Distortion plays an actual tears and beers country song. Although this might seem like quite a leap, the group adapts well to a vintage country style, and the Johnny Cash-like "Darlin'" is one of the strongest cuts on the album.

Other memorable songs include "Making Believe," "When She Begins" and "King of Fools," a track that easily stands along with former tunes "Ball and Chain," "Prisonbound" and "Story of My Life" as one of the band's best songs.

Dave Jerden returns to produce the new album. After producing Social Distortion's last release, Jerden went on to fame as the co-producer for Jane's Addiction. However, instead of the lush sonic effects Jerden used on two Jane's Addiction albums, he wisely takes the opposite approach for Social Distortion. Jerden's production techniques utilize a "live in the studio" approach which gives the band's sound a crystal clarity. On CD, the acoustic guitar and percussion sound especially sweet.

Behind all the talk of changing attitudes, great production, and a sense of (gasp!) remorse, Social Distortion is still doing what they've always done best: producing kick-ass rock n' roll. The band probably stands as one of the last bands in a rebel rock style that started with the rockabilly kings of the '50s and continued through punk bands like the Clash. With "Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell," Social Distortion continues that tradition. Rock n' roll fans can be assured that as long as Mike Ness decides to write music, that vintage Chevy and a midnight cruise aren't very far away.



Robin McAuley and Michael Schenker of MSG

## MSG means 'Mostly scorching guitars'

By Chris Eklof  
The Battalion

MSG  
"MSG"  
Impact

MSG has been known by several names throughout its twelve year history, but it has always served one major purpose - as the vehicle for German guitarist Michael Schenker to deliver soaring harmonies and searing solos. MSG's latest self-titled album continues this tradition well.

Schenker demonstrated his musical ability to the world many times during his long career. He played two stints with the Scorpions (brother Rudolph's band that Michael helped form in 1973), made six albums with UFO in the '70s and most recently he played in the all-star group Contraband.

Schenker first formed this band in 1980 as the Michael Schenker Group and put out four albums under that moniker. In 1986, Schenker recruited Irish vocalist Robin McAuley and the band was renamed the McAuley Schenker Group. Now, with the release of their third album, McAuley says that MSG does not stand for anything at all.

Schenker, playing his trademark Flying V guitar, opens up the album with a blistering intro on "Eve" and rarely lets up on the accelerator from there. "Eve" has a catchy chorus to go along with the frenzied spurts of guitar work.

"Crazy" is the twisted story of a boy who is angry about how his father raised him. Years later, they meet in prison and he has the opportunity to pay back his dear old dad. "I'm gonna pay a little visit when they call lights out / He'll be kicking and screaming when he sees how I turned out."

On the ballad "When I'm Gone," the album's first scheduled release, Schenker spices up the slow song by throwing in guitar

twists behind McAuley's vocals.

The album's other true ballad, "What Happens To Me," spotlights McAuley's vocals more than Schenker's guitar. Most of Schenker's work on this song can barely be heard in the background as McAuley's vocals command most of the attention. Only on the standard-required-guitar-solo-the-middle-of-a-ballad does Schenker make an audible impact.

McAuley has a truly unusual voice. At times on the hardest songs, his voice is grungy at rough, but on the ballads it shines through crystal clear. More importantly, the unique qualities of his voice give MSG an overall different sound that sets them apart from the crowd.

"MSG" contains several songs that yearn to be ballads, but Schenker keeps them away from that with his heavy guitar work. Just when you think a song with a pretty name like "We Believe In Love" or "This Night Is Gone Last Forever" will be a slow song, Schenker kicks his guitar into overdrive and speeds the song up.

The last song on the album, "Never Ending Nightmare," is an acoustic gem that gives a different perspective on the guitar wizardry of the normally high-voltage Schenker. Using an acoustic guitar has become the latest fad in rock music and several hard rock bands have discovered quite a bit of commercial success through its use.

However, that is not the motivation behind this acoustic track. MSG enjoys playing acoustically and recorded an acoustic EP in Europe last fall. MSG has also just launched an eight week acoustic tour that includes late February dates in Austin, San Antonio, Houston and Dallas.

MSG does not stand for anything anymore as far as McAuley and Schenker are concerned, but to the listener it seems to stand for Mostly Scorching Guitars or Mostly Schenker's Guitars.

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