

A&M Sports Car Club gives Aggies chance to burn rubber

By Kim McGuire
The Battalion

Racing a car is like being on stage, LeAnne Culp said. You pull up to the line, rev your motor and wait for the flag. You feel nervous, yet at the same time excited. Everyone watching you is a stranger. When the flag drops, everything disappears except the course in front of you.

Culp is just one of 60 members in the A&M Sports Car Club, a group of sports car enthusiasts who share a common interest in sports cars and racing. Like some of the other members, Culp says she gets a "high" from racing.

"I get a sense of satisfaction from racing," Culp said. "It's legal and it's fun and I get any kind of urge to speed out of my system."

Larry Brown, the former adviser of the club, said the organization has been around since 1967. Ever since, the club has been meeting and racing throughout the year.

"We usually meet out at the Riverside annex," Brown said. "It used to be an old airport."

"We set up cones on the run-ways and use that as our au-

tocross set up," he said.

Brown said that in the autocross the drivers race their cars a path marked with cones for about six tenths of a mile, traveling at moderate speeds of 50 to 60 miles per hour.

"About the only real risk you run is damage to your tires," Brown said. "It's a pretty safe deal."

Gary Hood who has been a member of the A&M Sports Car Club since 1985 said however that he has been to autocrosses where the cars raced at much higher speeds.

"Some of the cars go over 100 miles per hour," Hood said. "At a lapping session at Texas World Speedway last weekend, the straight-a-ways they were running about 75 miles per hour."

Besides the autocrosses, the club participates in rallies, Brown said. In rallies the drivers are given instructions that direct them from one given point to another. At points unknown to the driver, their time is taken and then determined at the end to decide the winner.

"What's neat about the rallies is no one knows where the point is or where they're going," Brown

said. "You get points added for the time that your over so obviously you want to get as close to zero as possible."

Brown said that the club will be busy in the fall with future meets.

"The summer is kind of slow because most of the members are gone," Brown said. "We've gotten together for autocrosses in Austin and Houston but that's about it."

"We have a lot of stuff planned for the fall though," he said. "Eventually we want to set up an autocross in Zachary parking lot and make it into a festival kind of like Aquafest."

Culp said she thought that the biggest event the club participates in is the Aggiecross at Texas World Speedway September 26-27.

"We have about one hundred to one hundred and fifty people that come from all over for that weekend," Culp said.

Culp said that since she has joined the club three years ago she has learned to appreciate cars.

"You really learn a lot about cars," Culp said. "If you find yourself in a trouble situation in just in normal traffic you know how your car is going to react."



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Stacy Pendergrass from Austin gives his car a final checkover before a day of driving at the Texas World Speedway, while members of the TAMU

Sports Car Club look on. Pendergrass built his car, a replica of an ERA 427, from a kit, which can go from 0 to 100 and back to 0 in 12.5 seconds.

"At least you learn how to make quick decisions," she said.

Hood agreed with Culp that racing has improved his driving skills.

"I've avoided a lot of major car accidents," Hood said. "When you race you learn how to make

evasive maneuvers."

Brown said that the club will get back into full swing in the fall. He said anyone with an enthusiasm for racing can join.

"A lot of the people in the club don't even have car," Brown said.

"Some of the people are in it for the excitement, others for the cars themselves and others for the friendships."

"And then others are in it because we throw pretty good parties."

Spielberg spins tale of fantasy

Williams, Hoffman journey to never-never land

By Kim McGuire
The Battalion

"Hook"

Starring Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts and Bob Hoskins
Directed by Steven Spielberg
Rated PG

"There's only one rule in this house," Wendy Darling tells Peter Pan. "No growing up."

"Ever."

But in "Hook" Steven Spielberg's remake of the

classic fairy tale, growing up is exactly what Peter Pan does.

"Hook" picks up where the fairy tale left off. Peter Pan grew up, forgot who he was, married Wendy Darling's granddaughter and became a corporate lawyer in the United States.

The story begins as Peter, his wife and their two children travel to London to visit Wendy (now an elderly woman). The adventure begins when Captain Hook, played to the hilt by Dustin Hoffman, kidnaps Peter's children and takes them to never-never land. In order to save them, he must turn back into the mythical boy he was.

For a director to make Peter Pan believable seems an almost impossible task. However, by cast-

ing Robin Williams as Peter, Spielberg comes pretty close to pulling it off. Williams is superb as the cold and calloused Peter Banning and later as the eternal child Peter Pan. Williams doesn't do the "off the wall" role like in the "The Fisher King" and "Good Morning Vietnam." Instead, does the "straight man" and does it quite well.

Dustin Hoffman is also spectacular as the menacing pirate Hook. Hoffman has perhaps the best lines in the movie and delivers them with a surprising comedic flair.

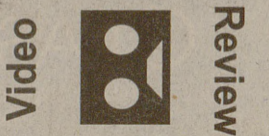
Other notable performances are Maggie Smith as Wendy Darling and Bob Hoskins as Smee, Hook's flunkie.

The only real disappointment in "Hook" is Julia

Roberts as Tinkerbell. As an actress, she seems forceful and stiff. She makes the viewers strain to believe she's a three inch fairy, floating around scattering fairy dust.

In all, however, "Hook" is a delightful fantasy film that is fun to watch. Never-never land is a cinematographical spectacular that is a wonder to behold. The set is about as close as reality as to how children imagine the magical place to be. Also, "Hook" addresses the importance of the family which is refreshing to see in movies.

"Hook" doesn't add anything new to the age old classic, nor does it take anything away. It does, however, make you want to never grow up.



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