

# BONFIRE '93

## From start to finish, the burning desire...

By Susan Owen

THE BATTALION

Ten thousand trees, five thousand Aggies and most of the fall semester were the requirements for the 1993 Fightin' Texas Aggie Bonfire.

The construction of the world's largest bonfire began this year when the first trees fell on Sept. 25 and will end tonight when the redpots lead the Aggie Band through the crowd and light the stack.

A&M students volunteer thousands of hours to cut, load and stack the logs.

Seven senior redpots and eight junior redpots are in charge of Aggie Bonfire 1993. Below them are the climbers, three seniors and three juniors. Five seniors are brownpots, and two senior and two juniors are centerpole pots.

Each men's residence hall has a yellowpot and two to five crew chiefs. Each Corps unit has a buttpot, a junior who wears a maroon pot.

On fall weekends from September through November, hundreds of Aggies wake up before dawn, pull on dirty clothes, grab axes and hard hats and head out to cut down trees for Bonfire.

A cold and windy thirty-minute ride in the back of a pickup truck gets the workers to this year's cutting site in Navasota, where land is being cleared for cattle raising.

"You get in your woods and you basically start clearing and make paths," said James Hobson, a freshman from Dunn Hall.

Yellowpots and buttpots supervise the cutting in their assigned areas. Workers chop down the trees and cut off the treetops and branches.

"Then you get people to carry the log out to the tractor path and the tractor pulls it to load site," Hobson said.

At load site, a nearby clearing, crews of workers pick up the logs and throw them onto flat-bed trucks until they are piled higher than the cab of the truck. Sticks jammed upright around the bed and chains hold the logs in place.

Jason Ayers, a sophomore from Walton Hall, said workers from Walton and Squadron 13 load trucks all day. Other halls and units are sent to load as they finish cutting.

Ayers said, "It's not a glamour job like cut and so dorms and units don't really like it when they get assigned to load — except for Walton."

On a good cut day, 10 truckloads of wood will arrive at the Bonfire field on the A&M campus.

David Williams, the Company F-2 buttpot, said F-2 and L-2 stay at the field all day to unload the trucks as they arrive. The chains are removed and eight workers climb on top of the piled-up logs to roll them off the truck.

Small logs are placed with one end under the lowest log on the truck. "That way logs can roll down the runners off the truck," Williams said. Crews pulling on ropes snap the upright sticks, and the logs roll off the truck.

Work began on the Bonfire stack after the centerpole was raised on Oct. 28. The centerpole, donated this year by a timber company in Lufkin, is made of two logs spliced together using steel plates and bolts.

Each year one Corps unit is allowed to fly a flag from the top of centerpole and wrap the splice in rope at "fish wrap." This year the honor was earned by Company E-1.

Junior redpot Nick Bown said, "They participated more in cut and brought out more people than every other outfit to cut."

The night before centerpole was raised, E-1 freshmen took turns wrapping a rope tightly around the centerpole splice. Sophomores had already wrapped the splice in cable.

Stack begins when centerpole is raised. "As soon as it went in, we tied it to the perimeter poles and started stacking that night," Bown said.

Senior climber Wes Bringham said, "The climbers put up the first and second stack cross ties, which are guides for the stack itself." Workers sit in swings hung from the cross ties.

Bringham said the senior redpots begin each stack by wiring together the first circle of logs that cover the centerpole.

"As soon as the wrap is done, that stack is open for anyone that wants to come get in a swing," he said.

Crews carry logs to the stack and slam first-stack



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Top: The 1993 Fightin' Texas Aggie Bonfire will burn tonight.

Upper Left: Freshmen carry the civilian half of centerpole.

Far Left: Jason Payne, a junior parks & recreation major from Rockwall, pulls a log towards himself to add to stack.

Left: A cadet in Company B-2 wires some logs together from his swing.

Right: The junior redpots steady the centerpole as David Reasoner, a senior climber, scales the pole. Centerpole was raised on Oct. 28.

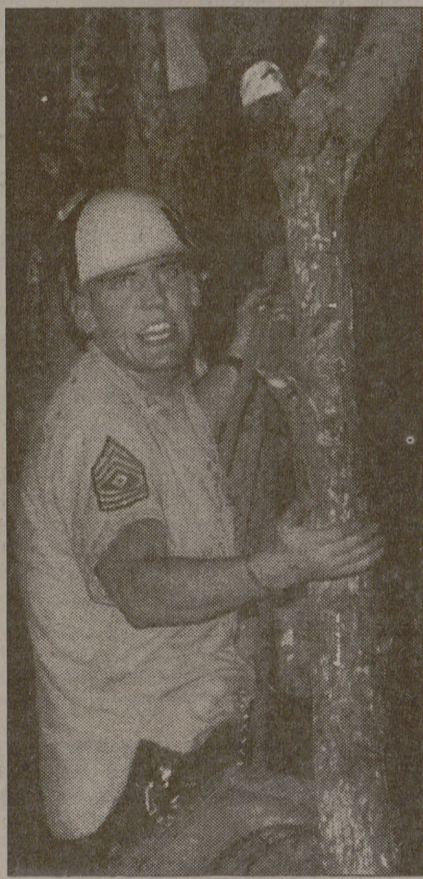
Bottom Left: Junior redpot Michael Owens saws the top off a log to level off the stack as the Dunn Hall yellowpot pushes the log towards the ground.

Bottom: A member of Company K-2 tops a tree at cut.

Bottom Right: The freshmen of Company E-1 tighten the rope around centerpole during fish wrap.



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