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WHOOPISTOCK CELEBRATION

THE UNITY CONTINUES. . . Students celebrate cultural diversity

By Jennifer Gressett
The Battalion

The second annual Whoopstock Unity Fest turned Simpson Drill Field into a cultural melting pot Sunday afternoon.

Students from a variety of campus organizations participated in the fest, which was created last year in an effort to combat the KKK demonstration in College Station.

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KAREN CHAVIS, FORMER A&M STUDENT

unite last year," Bahai Club President Peyam Barghassa said.

The Bahai faith believes in uniting mankind and fostering racial harmony, Barghassa said.

"We believe anything we can do to promote unity is essential," Barghassa said.

But while the thought was there, the people weren't. In fact, only about 300 students attended the fest this year — about half of last year's turnout.

That didn't bother Alpha Phi Alpha President Reginald Broadus, though.

"I just think there are other student activities going on today," Broadus said. "But I do think students are catching on, and hopefully next year's attendance will increase."

Broadus led nine members of Alpha Phi Alpha in a step demonstration, a historical dance which derived in Africa. The "ice cold Alphas" referred to their demonstration as a modern adaptation of what the American soldiers brought back from World War II.

Other Whoopstock entertainers included the Aggie Wranglers, the International Music Club, and Fade to Black dance ensemble.

However, a majority of the crowd was attracted to Whoopstock by Karan Chavis, a local artist who performed her R&B talents with the Big Apple Trio.

Back by popular demand from last year's fest, Chavis is a big supporter of Whoopstock.

"I think it's a great opportunity for the different cultural facets of this university to work together," Chavis said. "And that's a trick wherever you go — not only to display their talents, but to somehow tie them together."

Whoopstock wanted to include students from diverse backgrounds by including a variety of talents, RHA representative Barrett Fromme said.

While the Aggie Wranglers awed the audience with their boot-scootin' jitterbugging techniques, the International Music Club was entertaining the audience with a live belly dancer. But without this event, those two cultures may never have been exposed to one another.

"We really wanted to create an Aggie tradition, but we wanted to change the norm," Fromme said.

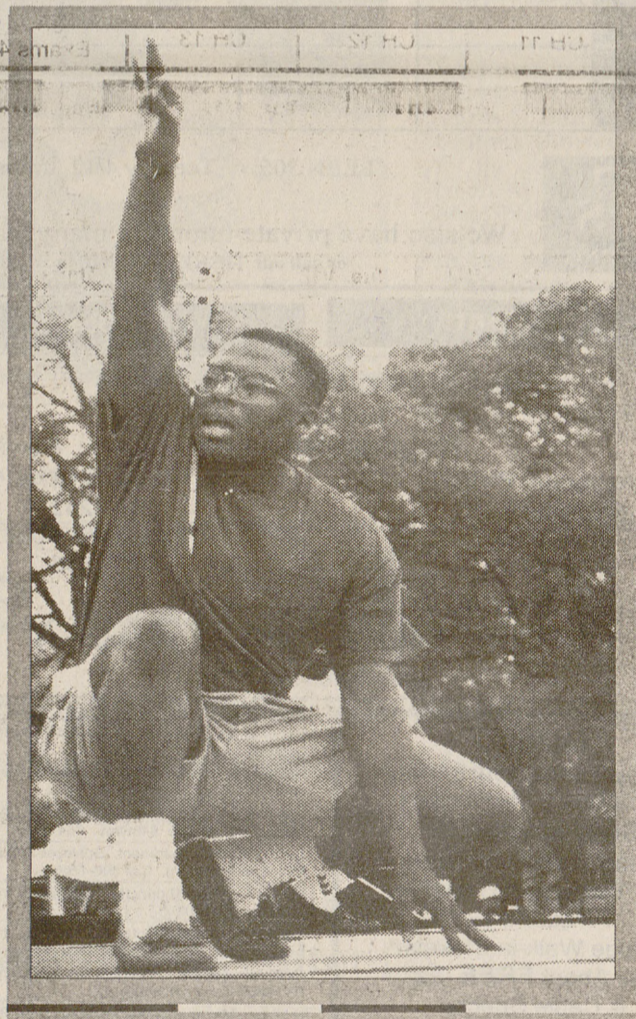
And tradition seems to be the key word.

"In order for something to succeed at A&M, it has to be a tradition," Barghassa said. "And Whoopstock is a tradition that this school needs."

• Photo (right) by Kyle Burnett •
• Others by Roger Hsieh •



(Top photo) The Aggie Wranglers showoff their country dancing prowess Sunday afternoon at Simpson Drill Field. (Right photo) Former student Karen Chavis joins the celebration singing some swing and rock.



(Top photo) This year Whoopstock was organized by (starting from the top, clockwise) Sheri Schmidt, Abby Cook and Lynn Selzer.

(Top right photo) Vince Allen, with Kappa Alpha Psi, performs a intricate dance routine utilizing a cane.

(Right photo) Members of Alpha Phi Alpha perform a high-flying, energetic dance.

(Left photo) Yasmine, a belly dancer, dances to the Middle Eastern music played by the International Music Club.

