

'Action!' — Film Society prepares to bring back Texas Film Festival

By Haley Stavinoha
THE BATTALION

Movie lovers — prepare to be thrilled. The MSC Film Society of Texas A&M is busy at work preparing for the Texas Film Festival.

The festival will feature independent movies by minority, regional and independent directors, and is scheduled for February 22-26.

Two years ago the film society brought director Spike Lee to A&M for the first Texas Film Festival. Lee talked to students interested in films and the filmmaking business. Lee's films were shown at the festival as a career retrospective.

Even though the society did not hold a festival last year, they hope to make up for that with a big festival this year.

"This year we will have a film festival, no matter what," said MSC Student Program Advisor Penny Ditton.

Danny King, chief of staff of the film society, said the main reason for the festival is to promote awareness of independent films and their directors.

"They're not just for entertainment, they can be a real history lesson or learning experience," King said.

The society's main focus right now is to find a big name filmmaker for the feature speaker and one for the closing ceremonies.

Film society Chairman Joe Leih went to the Telluride Film Festival in Colorado and the South by Southwest festival in Austin. At the festivals, Leih talked to some independent filmmakers about coming to A&M. Leih is now busy sending out invitations.

Ditton said at the first festival, several independent filmmakers came and some of their films were picked up by large movie studios and produced nationwide.

"The film festival is to educate the community about other films besides the big blockbuster ones," Leih said. "We want people to see movies in a different light and to have a special appreciation."

Ditton said she is hoping to know all the plans of who is coming to speak at the festival by the end of November.

She also said the problem isn't finding someone interested in coming to preview their own movies, it's raising enough money.

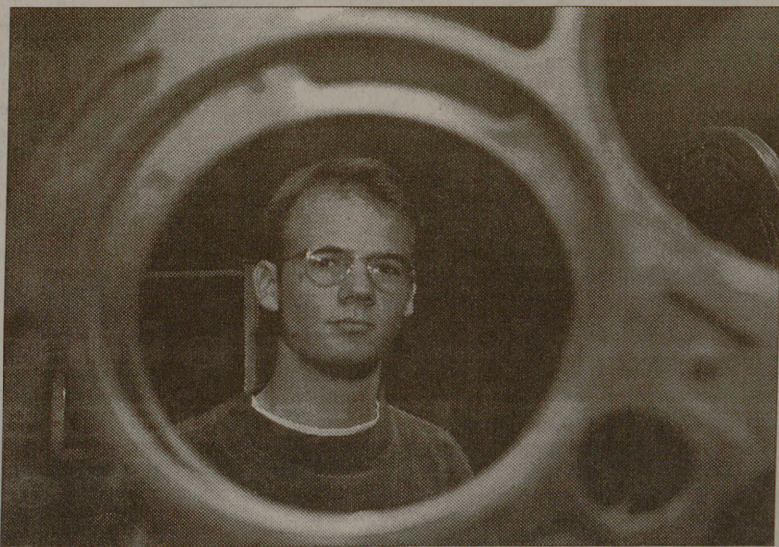
Ditton estimates \$10,000 dollars is needed to have a productive and successful festival.

The film society pays for food, lodging and travel expenses of the speaker.

"Our motive is not to make money," King said. "If we break even, we'll be happy."

The society has applied for a grant, and has asked the Brazos Valley Arts Council to help sponsor the event.

By the first of December, Ditton hopes to have the majority of the money collected.



Nick Rodnicki / THE BATTALION

Joe Leih, MSC Film Society chairman, is planning to bring back the Texas Film Festival to feature independent filmmakers

The film society is also in charge of Aggie Cinema, which shows blockbuster and alternative movies to students in Rudder Auditorium on weekends.

They also sponsor the Film on Video, which is held biweekly in the LRD (sixth floor of Evans library).

The movies, shown every other Tuesday, are musicals and action films.

Knox's prints show A&M influence

By Constance Parten
THE BATTALION

Former A&M student Benjamin Knox is known for his pencil, pen and ink representations of Aggie traditions, and he unveiled his latest exhibit at the Benjamin Knox Gallery last Friday.

Knox's new exhibit features nine watercolor paintings including "March Through Time," a commemorative piece celebrating the Texas Aggie Band Centennial, two San Antonio Riverwalk paintings and two watercolors capturing the spirit of Baylor University and the University of Texas.

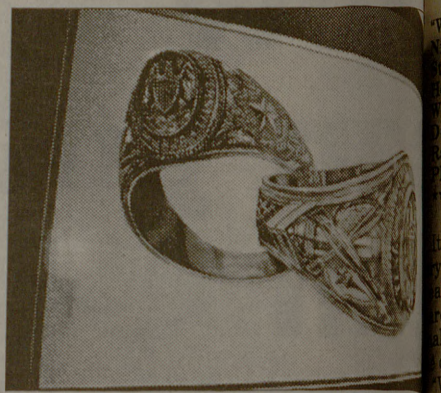
"I try to capture feelings for people," Knox said about his artwork. "I think that's why my A&M prints have been so successful."

Knox began his art career during his sophomore year at A&M. He was running out of money, so he decided to approach his Corps outfit, Squadron Three, to see if they were interested in a drawing for the outfit. The print was so popular Knox decided to start his own graphic arts business during his senior year in the Corps.

"I produced four new outfit prints, which included colored inks for the first time and 'Campus Collage' depicting the Texas A&M campus," Knox said. "After that I started doing prints for other outfits."

Knox's business grew, and after completing four years in the Corps, Knox moved to Colorado where he expanded his market by drawing prints for Texas Tech University and the University of Texas.

When Knox returned to College Station, he produced two of his most popular A&M prints,



Tim Moog / THE BATTALION

Benjamin Knox's "Bonded Aggie Rings"

"Founders of Tradition" and "Miss Revell." Another of Knox's popular prints, "Aggie Rings," was the first print Debbie and Dr. Charles purchased. The Bivonas first saw Knox's pre-game exhibits in the Memorial Student Center when they were students at A&M.

"We both really liked his work," Debbie said, "so I decided to buy 'Aggie Rings' as a gift for Charlie. The funny thing was, he bought a print to surprise me with also."

The Bivonas own several Knox prints, and also purchased them as presents for friends. "We bought the t.u. print for a friend of mine," Bivona said. "We didn't keep it in the house as long since it was t.u., but we liked it."

Claire Ochoa, Knox's fiancée and executive director of Knox's Gallery, said she is in awe of his ability to turn ideas into beauty on canvas.

"It amazes me how he can turn what he sees in his mind's eye into something tangible," Ochoa said.

Ochoa and Knox met when Knox was finishing his degree in environmental design and Ochoa was a graduate school studying exercise physiology.

Knox said he needed someone to handle the end of his new gallery, and Ochoa had been experiencing for that sort of thing. So she took charge of the end and their relationship grew from there.

"Claire is a vital part of my life and my work," Knox said. "We laugh a lot and do really silly things here at the gallery. We probably drive the staff crazy."

Knox and Ochoa are planning on marrying this summer, and Ochoa will join Knox at his gallery in Colorado. The gallery in College Station, which is designed, will remain, and they will rely on New Line to maintain it.

Ochoa credits the gallery staff with its success. "There's not a day I don't count those blessings," Ochoa said. "If it weren't for them, running the gallery from Colorado would be almost impossible."

Knox said although he is expanding his business matter, he will continue to do A&M pieces. "I pioneered the idea of fine art prints for A&M and I will continue to work on new Aggie prints," Knox said. "This is where it all started for me, gallery will always be here."

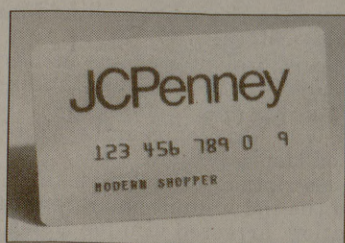


Tim Moog / THE BATTALION

Benjamin Knox's "It's Bonfire Weather"

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