

ONE FOR ALL

A&M's win over TCU sets up a SWC title showdown with Texas.

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SCHOOLING THE CRITIC

Stidvent: Students who write hate letters need a bit of coaching.

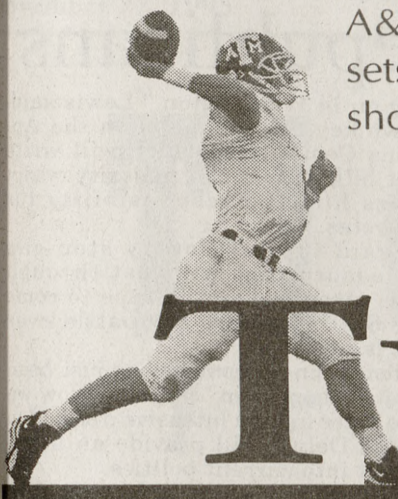
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THE BATTALION

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Bonfire burns in Galveston tonight

The A&M-Galveston Bonfire is made of discarded wooden pallets and is about 36-foot tall this year.

By Lisa Johnson
The Battalion

The display of the "burning desire" of Aggies everywhere begins tonight in Galveston with the third annual Texas A&M at Galveston Bonfire on the Bolivar Peninsula.

In 1993, the A&M-Galveston student committee on inter-campus affairs began the Bonfire when the University at Galveston was brought into the A&M System.

In an effort to bring the spirit of the College Station campus to the branch in Galveston, student leaders from both campuses met that fall to discuss which A&M traditions could be effectively transplanted.

Steve Wilson, A&M-Galveston student body president and a senior maritime administration major, said after the discussion a small Bonfire was thrown together in about six days and was burned a week before the A&M-University of Texas football game. Last year, Galveston Bonfire activities were taken over by a Bonfire Committee of more than 50 A&M-Galveston students.

Instead of redpots, who supervise A&M's Bonfire construction, the Galveston Bonfire is overseen by six "blazers." Wooden pallets were collected this year from maritime industries at local ports and used to build Bonfire.

Construction of the Bonfire takes two days once the pallets have been moved to the site.

Attendance at the first Galveston Bonfire was comparatively small, but both participation and Bonfire size have grown over the last two years. The Bonfire in 1993 was made out of 150 wooden pallets. Last year, it

was made of 400 pallets, and this year's has doubled to 800 pallets.

Todd Wolfe, general blazer and a senior marine biology and marine fisheries major, said there are no height limits for the Galveston Bonfire.

"This year, with the 800 pallets, we expect the height of the Bonfire to reach about 36 or 37 feet," Wolfe said. "Although we haven't set any height limits for the future, I expect that this year's Bonfire will be the maximum height possible because of the danger of the sparks from the fire causing a grass fire on the peninsula."

Like Bonfire held on main campus, Bonfire at Galveston symbolizes "the burning desire to beat the hell outta t.u.," Wilson said.

The Bolivar Peninsula is half an hour from campus, and the A&M-Galveston junior yell leaders traditionally hold their first yell practice on the second deck of the ferry on the way to Bonfire site.

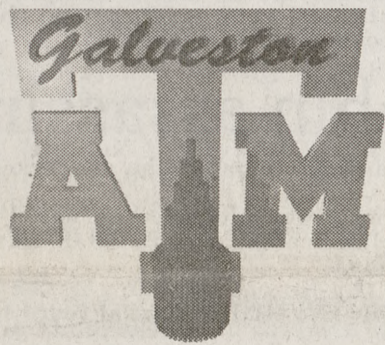
The event site, an isolated stretch of beach on the peninsula, adds to the Galveston flavor of the event, Wilson said.

The Bonfire at Galveston is traditionally a week before Bonfire in College Station so students from A&M-Galveston can attend Bonfire in College Station.

"One of the best things about going to school here at A&M-Galveston is that we get to do twice as much partying," Wilson said. "We get to participate in all of our traditions here and then head to College Station to party on the main campus."

Andy Webb, a senior redpot in College Station and a wildlife and fisheries science major, said Galveston Bonfire is a good demonstration of inter-campus unity.

"I think that what they are doing with Bonfire at Galveston is very cool," Webb said. "It's very important to build up spirit for what you believe in, no matter where you are. To me, this really symbolizes a togetherness and unity between campuses."



Counting on a ticket



Sterling Hayman, THE BATTALION

Eddie Gautier, a senior agricultural economics major, James Moody, a senior accounting major, and Elizabeth Whitley, a junior accounting major, camp outside of G. Rollie White Sunday. The trio is aiming to get good tickets for the A&M-University of Texas football game.

By midnight, they could hardly find a place to sit. But that didn't stop hundreds of eager Aggies who started lining up Thursday for tickets to Saturday's football game against the University of Texas. The crowd kept swelling in anticipation of the opening of the ticket office at 7:00 a.m. today.

Although most campers are assured of tickets by having sports passes, several students said they were camping out just for fun. Others said they were worried that they would not be able to get tickets for their friends or parents who want to attend the game that will decide the Southwest Conference title and possibly

a Sugar Bowl berth. Julie Johnson, a senior education major who came back early from Thanksgiving break to camp out for tickets, said her parents could not understand why she was going so far out of her way for tickets. "They thought I was nuts," she said. "I was like, 'Well, I'm an Aggie.'"

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Lecture series brings Bosnian, Croatian officials to campus

The ambassadors will focus on the governmental rights of those involved in the European conflict.

By Kristin Homyk
THE BATTALION

Bosnian and Croatian representatives will discuss foreign conflicts and international ideas with the Texas A&M community tonight.

Petar A. Sarcevic, ambassador to the United States from the Republic of Croatia, and H. E. Alkalaj, ambassador to the United States from the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, will speak at 7:30 p.m. in Rudder Theatre during "A People Divided: A Discussion of Self-Determination," a presentation of the MSC Wiley Lecture Series.

Dr. Betty Unterberger, moderator for the discussion and an A&M history professor, said the ambassadors will focus on

the governmental rights of the people involved in the current European conflict.

Unterberger said those governmental rights are key to understanding the concept of self-determination.

"The classic definition [of self-determination] historically is the right of peoples to determine what kind of government they want themselves," Unterberger said. "The criteria for the determination really have varied over time."

Unterberger said that those criteria include common languages, religions and ethnic backgrounds.

"The single most important criterion is historical experience," she said. "That is, the kind of experience that people have shared together, regardless of what their language is or their ethnic background is."

The discussion by the Bosnian and Croatian natives will provide better understanding of the nature of the conflict and the possible resolutions,

See LECTURE, Page 5

Winter in Aggieland
MSC Hospitality celebrates holiday season

A tree-lighting ceremony, a Christian practice, will take place at 12:30 p.m. today in the MSC Flagroom. Students who recognize Kwanzaa and Hanukkah will then explain their practices.

By Tara Wilkinson
THE BATTALION

MSC Hospitality is spreading seasonal cheer and celebrating the winter holidays this week on the Texas A&M campus with its annual tree-lighting ceremony, Noonday Program performances and craft fair.

"Winter in Aggieland" begins today in the Flagroom with a tree-lighting ceremony and will continue with Noonday Program performances each day and a craft fair Thursday and Friday.

A gigantic spruce tree decorated with ornaments representing more than 300 student organizations will be lit at 12:30 p.m. during a ceremony presided over by Dr. Malon Southerland, vice president of student affairs.

Cari Pope, MSC Hospitality holiday and cultures executive and a sophomore industrial engineering major, said the Christmas tree is typically recognized as a Christian symbol, but the main purpose of the tree in the Flagroom is to stir Aggie pride.

"It is important for people to realize what our tree symbolizes," Pope said. "It's not representing Christianity itself; it's representing A&M."

Students who celebrate Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday, and Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday, will explain their practices and beliefs after the tree-lighting ceremony, Pope said, in an effort to make students aware "that it isn't just Christmas coming up."

"We're not emphasizing one particular holiday," she said. "We want to celebrate that it's the winter break and recognize that there are several cultures that celebrate in different ways."

Eric Curley, a sophomore chemistry major who celebrates

Kwanzaa, said he is glad Kwanzaa will be discussed during the tree-lighting ceremony because many people are unfamiliar with its meaning and purpose.

Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday since 1966, is celebrated in addition to Christmas, not as a replacement.

Each day of Kwanzaa, from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, has a theme, such as unity, purpose or faith.

"The reason we celebrate Kwanzaa is to uplift our community," Curley said, "and to bond our community closer together through the seven days of the holiday."

In another attempt to diversify the winter holidays at A&M, banners printed with the message "Happy Holidays" in 13 languages are hung in the Flagroom.

The winter celebration will continue with Noonday programs, a series of performances to be held Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Flagroom.

Noonday programs range from performances by the A&M Dance Arts Society on Monday and the TAMU Flute Choir on Tuesday to a Christmas skit performed by Bowen Elementary School students on Friday.

More than 70 craft vendors will set up stands in the MSC hallways for the week's grand finale craft fair.

The craft fair will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday.

Trisha Fields, MSC Hospitality advertising executive, said a wide variety of crafts will be for sale at the fair, which has been a successful Hospitality event for several years.

"They have blankets, pillows, clothes, jewelry, miniature Bonfires ... anything you can imagine that is Aggie," Fields said.

Students have an extra incentive to visit the Flagroom this week because they might run into Santa Claus.

A Hospitality member dressed up as Santa will be wandering around the MSC handing out "Winter in Aggieland" informational flyers.

Fields said Santa volunteers have a secret agenda.

"It's typically a guy who uses his Santa suit as a way to flirt with girls," she said.

