

Showing More Than School Spirit

By JOHN LEBAS
 THE BATTALION

Texas A&M students perusing through Playboy's "The Girls of the Big 12" pictorial in the October issue may notice two familiar faces among the featured women.

Hillary Schatz, a senior biomedical engineering major, and Nikki Willis, a senior kinesiology major, were selected by Playboy to appear in the issue that hit newsstands Aug. 27.

Last spring, Playboy held auditions for the pictorial, and Schatz and Willis were among the A&M students who were interested in participating.

Schatz, "had tried earlier [to appear in Playboy], just for fun," and was encouraged by her boyfriend to give it another shot.

Willis saw the audition as an opportunity to get a "foot in the door," and take a step toward her goal of becoming a professional model.

Schatz, Willis and two other women from A&M, who will appear in the magazine, were selected from the preliminary audition to do May photo shoots for Playboy.

When Willis learned she was one of the four final contestants, she said she "jumped up and down."

"I was the only one home — I was so excited," she said.

Schatz said that at first, she did not know she had made the preliminary cut, but when she realized she was one of the four finalists, she was ecstatic.

"It was almost like a cartoon feeling," she said. "My jaw dropped."

The photo shoots were scheduled to be held at the ranch of The Dixie Chicken's owner, Don Ganter.

Willis said that during the shoot, she was a little nervous because it was her first time to pose nude, but said she eventually loosened up.

"The photographers — I mean, this is their job, so they're not saying, 'Whoa, look at her,'" she said.

Schatz's shoot was almost lost to the fickle Texas weather. The night before her shoot, it began to rain, making it impossible to use the ranch for the photo shoot. Schatz said some quick thinking helped solve the problem.

"Playboy had a row of rooms at the Holiday Inn, so we built a dorm room," Schatz said.

She and the Playboy crew collected assorted A&M paraphernalia, books, stuffed animals and a laptop computer, and transformed a hotel room into a replica of an Aggie dorm room. Her shoot was done in her "dorm room."

In July, Schatz and Willis were notified that their pictures had been chosen to appear in the issue.

Willis said that when she heard the news, she felt "the adrenaline flowing." But she did not see the magazine and picture until she did a radio interview in Houston.



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Nikki Willis said she wants to be a model

"I never believed that I would be in a magazine — nude."

- Nikki Willis
 senior biomedical science major

"The country is in a state where things like this don't matter, especially for me."

Hillary Schatz
 senior biomedical engineering major



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Hillary Schatz appears in Playboy this month

Former student records local artists' music from her home

By APRIL TOWERY
 THE BATTALION

When Annie Chang kicks back to relax on the weekend, chances are there are sounds of Pakistani love songs in the air.

Chang, a Class of '96 electronics engineering technology graduate, recently decided to take a break in her recording studio, Guinea Pig Studios, after five years of recording local bands such as Jasmine Lewis, the A&M International Music Club and, of course, Pakistani love songs.

She was recording music in her home, but after a recent move, she decided there was no room in her new residence for the equipment.

"I was going to sell my stuff," she said. "But I kind of missed recording. I've already been approached by a few bands who want me to record their demo tapes. I definitely get back into it once I figure out where to set up a studio."

Chang said she came to A&M to study veterinarian medicine, but soon discovered she was allergic to animals.

"That kind of changed my plans," Chang said. "I played bass in high school, so I started playing in some random bands and did some recording on a four-track on the side."

After meeting local band members, Chang said she realized there was a need for a studio in the Bryan-College Station area.

"A lot of the bands I talked to were wanting to record a demo tape," Chang said, "but they couldn't afford to go somewhere out of town and pay \$50 or \$75 an hour."

She mixed and produced tapes for the bands for \$5 an hour, then later raised the fee to \$7.50 an hour to pay for equipment.

Most of the bands Chang worked with were used to playing live shows and had never recorded in a studio before.

"The bands were enthusiastic and interested in their music, which made my job a lot of fun," Chang said. "It's a shame there isn't much of a music scene here. The musicians don't get paid well, and everyone is so conservative."

Chang started "gigging around" town with bands such as Dr. Love and Crossbone Butterfly, until she finally settled down as a bassist for Saltwater Llama in April 1996.

"Saltwater Llama's drummer, Baldy, had come in to record with his band Mister Ed, then later Knee Gaskit, so that's how I started playing again after three years of not being in a band," Chang said.

Chang is a video editor at television station KBTX, the local news channel, but has high hopes for her future.

"I want to be a recording engineer at a big studio," Chang said. "That's what I would like my career to be."

Chang said College Station has a diverse music scene that allows her to enjoy her job and learn about different types of music.

"I don't expect everyone to like every band in this town, but there is jazz, the college alternative, and there's heavier stuff," Chang said.

Chang is working on a compilation album and expects it to be ready for release in late September or early October.

"KANM, A&M's public radio station, has raised a lot of money and is going to put out a compilation album of local bands to support the local music scene," Chang said.

"Kristen Palme is in charge of putting the album together. I had the recordings, so I put the songs in the right order on a master tape and



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Annie Chang has recorded albums and demo tapes for local bands for several years

made the changes, so now we're just waiting on the artwork to be completed."

Chang said they plan to make 1,000 compact discs, which will take about one month to complete.

"They're going to sell enough to break even, then they plan to distribute some to radio stations in this area and in Austin and Houston, so that maybe the bands will get some radio coverage," Chang said.

The radio station also plans to give any leftover albums to the bands on the compact disk so they can

sell them at their shows.

The album features 10 bands, some of who are no longer in existence, Chang said.

"I think a few of the bands have broken up, but several are still pretty popular around here, like Lewis, Half-Life, Barry Manifold and Not It," Chang said.

Chang said she set a goal for herself several years ago.

"I wanted to make a difference," Chang said. "I told myself that by the time I left A&M, there would be a music scene."

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