

# SMALL NAMES, BIG THREAT

*Michele Solberg takes the suit and tie out of her booking agency and manages to make it big in the world of corporate rock.*

BY AARON MEIER  
 THE BATTALION

Solberg said. Solberg said her music was well accepted in New York, where she gave at least one performance a week. Solberg said she does not imagine herself as an "urban girl," but the people of New York made an impression on her. "They are so open to new things there," Solberg said. "So many people are coming in and out of the city everyday bringing and taking different ideas and music."

Solberg said she enjoys being home and working on her music. The rock/folk artist has gained a large following in Austin, and her fans have placed her near the top at the Austin Music Awards. The awards show is the opening night of the South by Southwest music festival, and Solberg has repeatedly been chosen by her fans as one of their favorites.

Two years ago, her debut effort *Shrill* won in the Best Tape category, which is generally given to new artists who do not have the money to produce an album. Last year, she placed in the top 10 of Best Female Vocals, Best Singer-Songwriter and Album of the Year.

Solberg said she appreciates her fans' support. For now, Solberg said her largest accomplishment is that she supports herself financially through her music.

She said she looks forward to performing with her band and going to new places and experiencing new things.



Photo courtesy of Craig Hanna

Sam Pulley, Lara Abrams and Craig Hanna of Throw Away People

## Don't trash the band

BY SHEA WIGGINS  
 THE BATTALION

Stevie Ray Vaughn, Aretha Franklin and the bass player from Live have something in common. Their influences have brought three A&M students together to make unique music.

Throw Away People, a College Station band, started playing February 1996.

Lead singer Craig Hanna, a senior geography major, said Throw Away People is a Texas Blues band. "We have molded blues, jazz and funk together to make a high-energy, unique sound," Hanna said. "We are eclectic yet intense."

Hanna contacted friend and bass player Lara Abrams, a junior environmental design major, and drummer Sam Pulley, a junior mechanical engineering major, in January.

"I talked a long time about starting a band," Pulley said. "But it was like the dating game. We had to get from behind the curtain and play with each other to realize the potential of our music."

Hanna said each member contributes to the band's musical entity.

"Our songwriting and style are a group effort," Hanna said. "Sam's background is in jazz, and Lara provides the funky side of the music. The contemporary funk, rock 'n' roll and jazzy sides of the music are easy for our generation's ears to relate to. Then I try to sneak the blues into this contemporary mold."

The band members said they experienced music at an early age.

"Craig's father played old-school blues on the trumpet," Pulley said. "I submerged myself into soul bands and was inspired to play my instrument when I met the drummer for Blood, Sweat, and Tears."

"Lara listened to KISS when she was younger and pretended she was a bass player."

Abrams said she is comfortable being the only woman in the band.

"I like to work with these guys," Abrams said. "White Zombie and Smashing Pumpkins started the fad of girl bass guitar players. If we were an alternative band I would not feel as special, but in this line of music I do."

Hanna said the name of the band is symbolic.

"I read an article in a Houston paper about a homeless decorated veteran from Vietnam that was murdered by three teenagers," Hanna said. "It struck me that here was a guy down on his luck, like we all are sometimes, and he was not only overlooked but eventually killed by society. When I named the band Throw Away People, it was for those people like this, who seem to be easily forgotten by us all."

Pulley said these themes are prevalent in their music.

"We center on people in hard times, or hard relationships," Pulley said. "In this sense we are contemporary, in that kids our age can relate, and we can help soothe the pains of young life."

Hanna said some of their songs are created in College Station hangouts.

"I wrote one song, Java House Jive, in Sweet Eugene's," Hanna said. "Other songs are inspired from people we have actually met or had relationships with in College Station."

Abrams said their music is different at each performance.

"We take a Jimi Hendrix approach, in that we jam each time we play," Abrams said. "All songs are grounded in our moods that day and what we are thinking about. This leaves each song open to constant new interpretation."

The band has played at bars such as Northgate Cafe, and will play at the Brazos Brewing Company Saturday night.

Hanna said the band enjoys playing in College Station.

"We have played in Houston on the Richmond Strip," Hanna said. "One time we played for a biker benefit to raise money for a guy who fell off of his Harley. We were pilgrims in an unholy land, but it was a fun experience."

"Nevertheless, we like to play in familiar territory."

The band members said they hope to play at larger bars. They also hope to play the Austin and Dallas musical circuits.

Pulley said he enjoys playing for fellow students.

"Being able to play and pay tribute to our influences is an honor and pleasure in itself," Pulley said.

"The best reward is when students and friends can sit back, sip on a beer and enjoy what we do."

## MOVIE REVIEW

### Bulletproof

Starring Adam Sandler, Damon Wayans  
 Directed by Ernest Dickerson  
 Rated R  
 Playing at Hollywood 16

Another Adam Sandler movie, another suicide — it's all the same.

In this low-budget action film, Sandler portrays Archie Moses, partner in crime with Rock Keats (Damon Wayans).

Archie and Rock have been pulling off petty car thefts for a year, and when Archie gets the chance to work with a major drug dealer, he wants to involve Rock, because he knows his friend needs the money.

Everything seems fine until Archie discovers his long-time



Damon Wayans

pal is an undercover cop. At this point, things begin to heat up, bullets start to fly, and Archie and Rock take the audience on a round-trip journey through confusion.

Sandler, better known for his "Saturday Night Live" characters, puts in a few strategic one-liners and some good-willed physical comedy, but his character is not well-rounded enough for people to care whether he lives or dies.

Sandler, without effort, constantly upstages Wayans throughout the film.

As an undercover cop who gets his cover revealed, Wayans strangely looks like he is going to break into an uproar of laughter every time Sandler does something quirky.

James Caan (Frank Colton), a more accomplished actor, appears for about 30 minutes of the film, with his performance leaving nothing to the imagination.

When acting is a major fault in a feature film, one hopes the direction or action sequences can salvage it.

The direction of *Bulletproof*, by Ernest Dickerson, is dry as he has the actors bouncing all over the screen.

The action sequences are first-rate in the category of low-class, and in its attempt to be a well-performed, buddy film, it simply fails. D — James Francis

## Students advise with family ties

BY CECILE MAZZOLA  
 THE BATTALION

School Families is a program dedicated to exposing the students at Jane Long Middle School to positive, adult role models.

Jane Long Principal Keith Garringer, who played a key role in developing the program, said it was designed to give the students a safe place to discuss problems in their lives or school progress.

"In today's school environment everything is based on tests scores or grades, and unfortunately, time is not allotted to talk with the students," he said. "School Families allows [students] a chance to have a positive adult role model linked with their education."

Since the program began five years ago, Stanford and Hogg Foundation grants have provided funding for the expanding program.

Seven homerooms originally participated in the program, but now over 25 participate, ranging from the sixth to eighth grades.

The families meet weekly for group discussions during homeroom period, which lasts about 45 minutes, to mold the curriculum around the needs of the students in the family.

Rose Urbanovsky, School Families counselor and Jane Long counselor, said the program has two main goals: to allow students to interact with adult role models and to create a supportive atmosphere for the students to talk about problems and successes.

"They refer to things they learn and look forward to having School Families come," Urbanovsky said. Garringer said recruiting volunteers is the main problem with the program.

"Involvement from the community is not as numerous as it is from A&M," he said. "Most of our volunteers are Aggies, about 90 percent."

The Texas A&M College of Education helps with the program, providing student volunteers.

Susan Matlock-Hetzel, coordinator of student volunteers and an A&M graduate student, said students offer a variety of perspectives to the School Families.

"A&M allows me access to education and psychology majors and a diverse group of concerned students," she

**"Having positive role models like A&M students shows them there is a future that gives them hope."**

Keith Garringer  
 Jane Long Middle School principal

said. "Students at A&M expose the kids to a diverse group. They each have their own unique experiences to bring to the program."

Jill Hantman, president of the A&M Psychology Club and a junior psychology major, said volunteering as a peer adviser gives her a chance to be a positive role model and a friend.

"I gave them my phone number," she said. "I didn't want them to view me

as a threat." Garringer said there are high expectations for Aggies, but not unattainable ones.

"We expect regular attendance and sincere concern for the students," Garringer said. "We do not expect them to be counselors or solve complex issues — just listen and care."

The volunteers participate in a one-day training course at Jane Long at the beginning of each semester. During the course, they learn the program regulations and how to structure the families, along with role playing games and "ice breakers."

Adam Westerfield, a sophomore business major, heard about School Families through Circle K, a part of Kiwanis International. Westerfield, who was the only business student and the only man to volunteer, worked with five sixth-grade students at Jane Long.

He said the training course offered invaluable techniques that helped him deal with issues brought up during group discussion.

"One day we played a game we learned during training," he said. "We each wrote down a problem that we didn't want to openly bring up, then put the slips in a hat and drew. We didn't solve the problems; instead, we offered solutions and examples. The [kids] appreciated getting advice from their classmates."

Garringer said an important aspect of the program is the visibility of A&M students it provides to those at Jane Long.

"The program shows these students that there is a future," Garringer said. "For many of them, the reality of A&M is as far away as Mars. Having positive role models like A&M students shows them there is a future that gives them hope."