

Each year the Class Council raises money to give something back to the University on behalf of that class: a class gift. While the origin of class gifts is unknown, the earliest recorded gift was a flagpole given by the Class of 1912. It was the only flagpole on campus at the time. Since then, class gifts have evolved in terms of creativity and expense.

By KIMBER HUFF
THE BATTALION

Sounding Remembrance

In the summer of 1935, a few months before he should have graduated, Edwin "Pat" O'Brien Bellinger died during exercises at an Army cavalry training camp. Bellinger was the Corps' official bugler and a member of the Aggie Band.

Members of the Class of '36 decided to combine their class gift with a memorial to Bellinger. Fred Walker, Class of '36, recalled that the decision was a popular idea.

"The old bugle stand was beat-up so we had it rebuilt and dedicated it to him," Walker said.

The new bugle stand memorial was constructed mainly by members of the senior class in A&M's mechanical engineering shops. The stand was made of steel and concrete and weighed about 10 tons after its completion. It was dedicated on Mother's Day, 1936.

The bugle stand became a landmark on campus, surviving moves from Houston Street to the north end of the Corps domes in 1957 and then to the south end of the Quad in 1970.

In late February 1977, the stand was bombed in relation to anti-military sentiment, but damage was minimal. Armin Simpson, Class of '36, had it rebuilt and repaired.

The bugle stand was completely destroyed by a pipe bomb in early May. The bomb broke three residence hall windows and flung a piece of metal into a residence room.

"It was just one of those things," Walker said. The stand was never rebuilt.

Sealing Fate

Members of the Class of '78 donated a seal which was to be placed in one of A&M's most important buildings.

Andy Duffie, class president, said class members thought the Academic Building was "the heart of A&M," so preparations were made for a \$5,000 University seal in mosaic tile to be placed on the floor of the rotunda.

Joseph M. Hutchinson, an assistant professor in the College of Architecture, designed the seal, which measures 14 feet in diameter and is constructed of about 36,000 glass tiles in 22 shades of maroon, gold and green. The seal was so complex that it had to be assembled off campus, glued on large sheets, and brought on campus and installed in sections.

Though the original plans intended for the seal to be made of Italian glass tiles, Mexican glass tiles were used because the appropriate maroon color could not be found in the Italian glass. This substitution caused many problems

with the seal.

The Mexican tiles do not absorb glue well and are thinner and more uneven than Italian tiles. Not long after the seal was installed, it crumbled beneath the feet of students walking across the uneven surface. Students were also seen digging pieces of tile out of the floor to keep as souvenirs.

"The end result was not what we had hoped for in that the tiles did not allow for foot traffic to cross," Duffie said. "Heels and soles of shoes allowed for toes to catch the lips of the tiles. The original game plan was that the seal would be solid enough to be walked on."

Workers from the Brazos Tile and Floor Covering Company made four trips to the University to reglue lost tiles until a rope barrier was set up around the seal to protect it from pedestrians.

Duffie said the seal is still a beautiful addition to the A&M campus.

Burning Spirit

The Class of '83 wanted to create a monument that would hold an undying flame, much like the one on John F. Kennedy's gravesite. The monument was to be a symbol of the Aggies' undying spirit.

Unfortunately, the "Aggie Eternal Flame" wasn't quite eternal.

The original design was created by Dan Kardell and Ian Seaton, Class of '83, and former student Jim Vandenberg. A 12-pointed base (symbolizing the Twelfth Man) would support a pyramid-shaped base and a bowl holding the eternal flame. This fire was planned to be used to light Bonfire, yell practice torches and ceremonial candles for Muster.

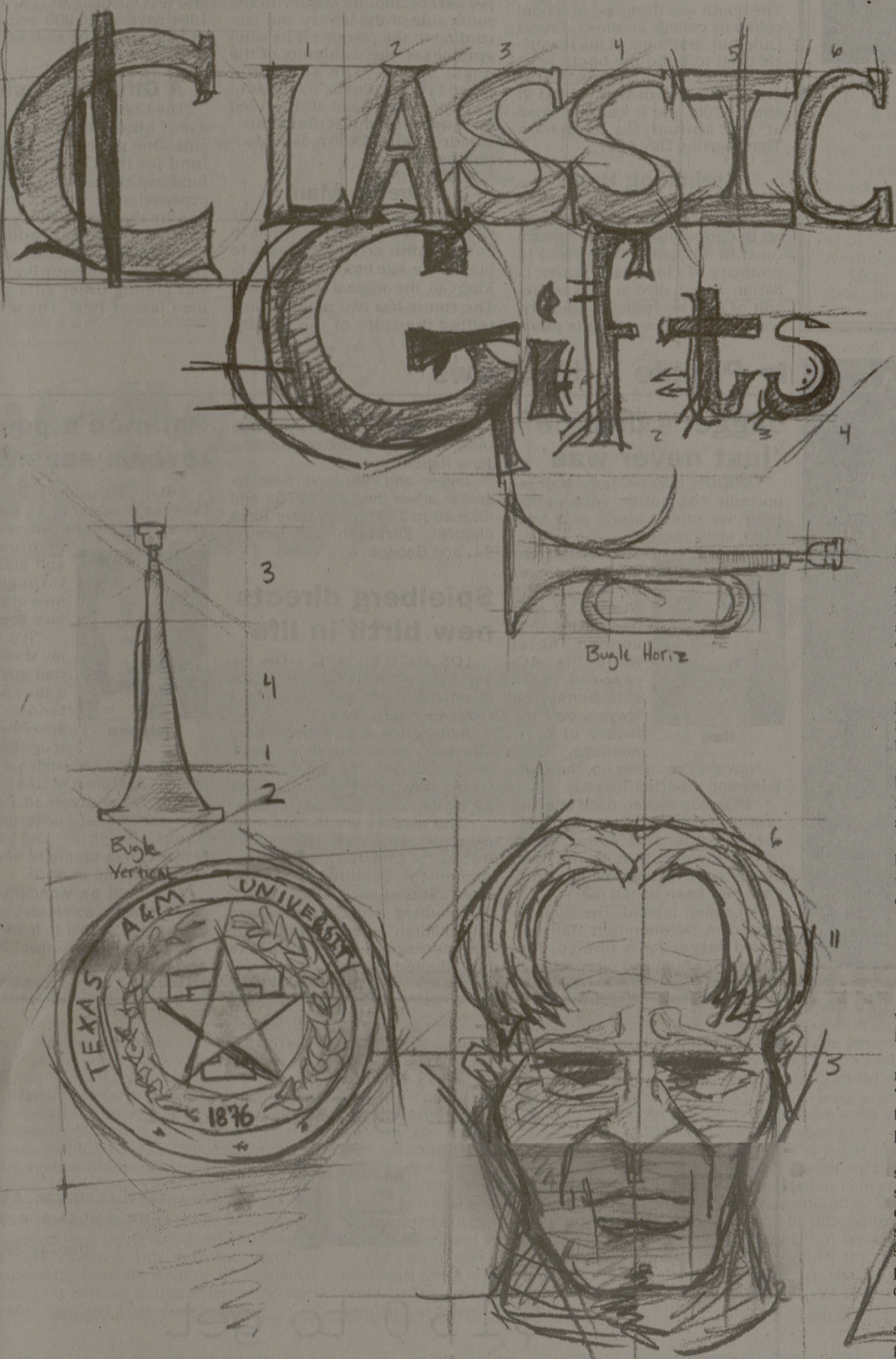
The Eternal Flame had problems, though. After the University Physical Plant refused to build the monument because of a lack of time, an inexpensive off campus contractor was hired.

The dedication of the Eternal Flame was scheduled for mid April 1983, but the contractor postponed its construction because of rain delays. A new contractor was hired and the dedication was in September 1983.

The Eternal Flame had to be shut down again, less than a year after its dedication, when all but two fountain nozzles fell off of the monument. At that time, the University decided to extinguish the fire permanently because maintaining the Eternal Flame was too expensive.

An endowment fund was finally created, and the fire was rekindled in April 1988 — after the Eternal Flame's gas system was reworked.

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