

## Singers tout love of A&M, country

By Aaron Meier  
THE BATTALION

The Singing Cadets began its existence at Texas A&M College in 1894 as the All Male Glee Club. The club later became the Voice of Aggieland. In 1939, it became known by its current name, the Singing Cadets.

The Singing Cadets are a long-standing tradition at A&M. In 1939, they performed at the Sugar Bowl, the game that gave the A&M football team its only national championship. They have performed for every still-living president and at such legendary places as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. They have performed on television on *The Bob Hope Christmas Special* and *The Sullivans Show*.

The Singing Cadets are currently holding auditions. The very select group, which fluctuates between 25 and 30 members, is looking for male students not only with excellent singing voices, but also those who also positively represent the male student body of the University.

David Kipp, director of the Singing Cadets, has conducted the group for one year and said the Singing Cadets represents some of the best men on campus.

"We have some cadets who are actively involved in Student Government or Fish Camp," Kipp said. "The guys make great impressions and make great role models when we travel around."

Kipp said he expects around 60 to 100 male students to apply for one of the 12 to 15 slots they will fill this semester.

Jim Brown, the service committee chair of the Singing Cadets and senior marketing major, said in the first two semesters of one's career as a Singing Cadet one receives the title of "buffo." After the first two semesters, the cadet is known as an "old man."

"The buffo program is reflective of being a fish in the Corps of Cadets," Brown said. "The buffo 'whip out' like in the Corps."

One of the most visible symbols of the Singing Cadets, the yellow buffo, appears during the first two weeks of one's career as a cadet.

The buffos craft the yellow boards, known as "keys," using sandpaper to shape them and hand-painting the Singing Cadets logo on them.

A small booklet filled with the names of several high-profile people at the University, as well as the names of all the "old men" in the Singing Cadets, is affixed to the back of the key. Some non-Singing Cadets that the buffos have to interview include Dr. Ray Bowen, president of the University, and Dr. J. Malon Sutherland, vice president of student affairs.

During the two-week period, buffos must get the signatures of all the people who appear in their booklet. In order to get these signatures, the buffos must answer a question posed to them. The question has something to do with Aggie history or tradition.

Kipp said this process benefits both the Singing Cadets and the buffo.

"The questions the new cadets must answer make them better informed about the University, making them better ambassadors when they perform in places that may not know a lot about Texas A&M," Kipp said.

This past break, the Singing Cadets performed on a nine-city tour across Texas. The group visited Dallas, Austin, Waco and Amarillo, and Brown said audiences enjoyed its traditional military-style performances.

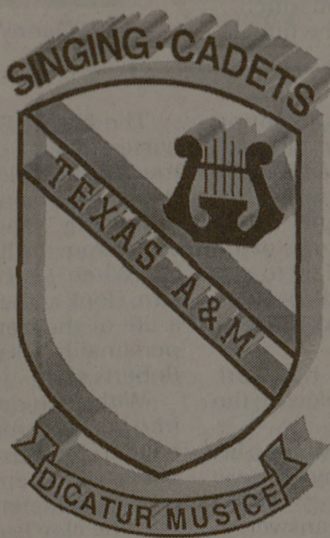
"It gives you such a good feeling to see the crowd glowing as you finish one of the patriotic numbers we perform," Brown said.

A typical performance consists of several different music styles. This year, the choral group performs music from the Broadway musicals "Phantom of the Opera" and "My Fair Lady." However, Brown said the Singing Cadets favor the patriotic section of the program above all the others.

"My favorite number in the program is when we sing Lee Greenwood's song, 'God Bless the USA,'" Brown said. "The song gives you such a good feeling about the country we live in."

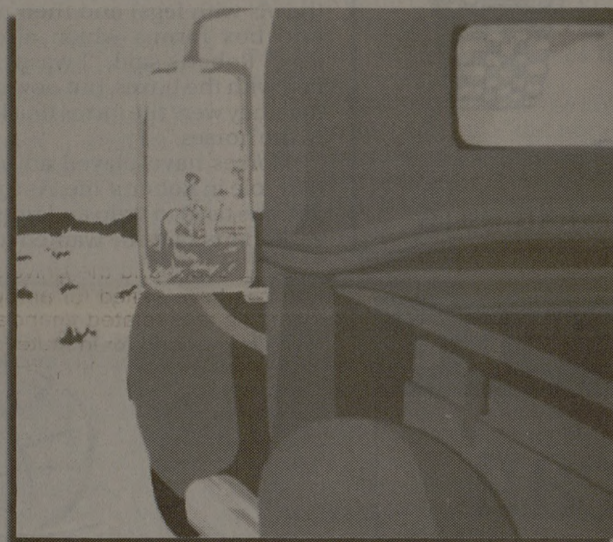
Brown said even though the travel schedule takes time away from winter break, the audiences make it worthwhile.

"It's amazing how you can go 1,500 miles from College Station and still feel at home," Brown said.



Dave House, THE BATTALION

"Cricket" and "Phoenix" represent Rebecca Roberts horse sculptures.



Debbie Little's "She Was Always in His Blindspot" is showing at the Art Council's Local Color Gallery on University Drive.

**"Summer may change for winter;  
/ Flowers may fade and die. /  
But I shall ever love thee /  
While I can heave a sigh?"**

found in "Lucille Pease" by Debbie Little

## HOW THE WEST WAS WHIMSICAL

By Aaron Meier  
THE BATTALION

The art of the West often evokes images of craggy-faced cowboys, bronco riding and the open plains. Artists such as Fredric Remington and Norman Rockwell have made the cowboy an American legend.

Certain important aspects of life in the West, however, have been omitted from public perception. Two Texas artists, sculptor Rebecca Roberts and painter Debbie Little, are exploring those ignored aspects of western existence.

Both artists, whose work is currently on display at the Arts Council of Brazos Valley Gallery, appear in an exhibition titled "The Whimsical West," showing now through Feb. 15.

Little said she explores the image of the cowgirl in her work.

"I started doing the cowgirl image on a lark when I noticed more attention had always been paid to the cowboy," Little said. "During my research, I discovered the strength of the cowgirl and my lark turned into a mission."

Little's work spans the history of the cowgirl, from the old West to the modern-day rodeo era.

In a piece titled "Mail Order Bride," Little looks at the hardships of living in the unsettled west of the late 19th century. The collage shows a father with his two small children standing over the grave of their dead mother. Looming over this splintered family is a faceless woman, the mail order bride.

Little's work frequently includes the collage technique. This usually is comprised of an original drawing

by Little and a small piece of history, such as an old photo or a small keepsake. In "Mail Order Bride," Little uses five separate collage pieces to tell the story of the family. The first collage piece shows the family over the grave, and the second represents the mail order bride.

The other three layers depict woman and family uniting. A 1909 edition of *The Chicago Daily* and an 1890 issue of *Ladies Home Journal* both advertise for mail order brides and appear in the collage. The final collage layer is an old faded letter, representing the first contact the woman has with the family.

Bea Slattery, curator of the exhibition, said Little's work appeals to many audiences.

"The subject matter is accessible to all people," Slattery said. "Even little children follow the paintings using the titles and the images."

Another example, "Her Mind Wasn't on the Rodeo," also uses the collage technique. Little depicts a cowgirl with a rodeo number on her back lifting her eyes skyward, longing for her love. Her love appears in the piece as a photograph of a man sitting on a tree limb.

Roberts works in a different medium with different subject matter, but remains loyal to the western theme. She works with clay, molding it into the shape of horses.

Roberts said her work began with a functional purpose in mind. She crafted bowls and other such earthenware.

"It got to the point where the functional works gave me no time to create, so I took a sabbatical to keep all the work alive," Roberts said.

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Little's "Barrel Racer" is among her works focusing on cowgirls living in the old West.

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