

Capturing the spirit of Aggieland



Benjamin Knox combines his love of Texas A&M with his artistic talents

BY MELISSA PRICE
 THE BATTALION

A college student's job might consist of sacking groceries or working at a fast food restaurant — but while others were asking "paper or plastic?" Benjamin Knox was on his way to an art career.

Knox, class of '90, who is known for such prints as "The Undying Aggie Spirit" and "Some May Boast," was a sophomore at Texas A&M when he realized his summer lawn business was not paying the bills. He decided to tap into his artistic talent and began producing pen-and-ink drawings for outfits in the Corps of Cadets. His first print, which was for his outfit, Squadron Three, became so popular that Knox began his own graphic arts business his senior year.

Knox said he was somewhat nervous about his decision to sell his lawn business and pursue art because he did not know if people would like his work.

"I knew this was something I wanted to do," Knox said. "It was one of those things where I followed my dream, and luckily it worked out for me."

Knox said his art business boomed in 1990 when he began drawing prints for other universities. He has done prints for Texas Tech, Baylor, Louisiana State University and the University of Texas. Although Knox enjoys making prints for other universities, he said his first love has

always been A&M.

Because of his increasing popularity, Knox began running a gallery out of his home in 1990. He said that although this was occasionally an inconvenience, it was usually a lot of fun.

"Sometimes I would be awakened with phone calls at 1 a.m. from people wanting to see my art," Knox said. "It probably drove my roommates crazy."

D'Lisa Hidalgo, a sophomore biomedical science major, said she became familiar with Knox's artwork last year when her boyfriend was looking for a unique way to frame his diploma. Hidalgo said she likes Knox's artwork because it is a true depiction of life at A&M.

Hidalgo said there is something for everyone in Knox's drawings. She said she admires Knox because he is personable and can relate to A&M students.

"He's an original, and he is down-to-earth and really nice," Hidalgo said. "When we went to the gallery — well, it was raining outside and I guess he had taken off his shoes, because he was just sitting there with his socks on, drawing away."

Soon after graduating in 1993, Knox opened up the first artist-owned gallery in College Station.

Knox said the gallery's mission is to promote higher education through fine art. He said the gallery has donated many prints for scholarship purposes at A&M and is considering donating pieces to other schools for scholarships as well.

"We stand behind promoting higher

"This is my life. Creating artwork is therapy for me — it gives me a satisfaction to know I am growing through art."

Benjamin Knox
 local artist

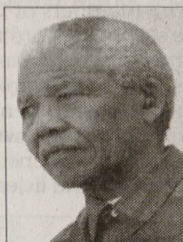
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Benjamin Knox, class of '90, has made a career of drawing prints for various universities and organizations. Here he is at work in his local gallery.

People in the news

Princess Di 'thrilled' to meet Mandela

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Talk about a mutual admiration society. Princess Diana said she was "absolutely thrilled" to meet President Nelson Mandela on Monday, and he responded that he was still trembling.



Mandela

Mandela praised Diana for her early work counseling people with AIDS and credited her with reducing prejudice against those with the deadly virus. "We saw her sitting on the beds of AIDS patients and shaking hands with them, and that changed perceptions dramatically with regards to AIDS," Mandela said. Mandela also complimented Diana for visiting children in Angola who had been crippled by land mines, saying her gesture helped South Africa decide to destroy its land mines. Diana arrived Saturday for a private visit. Her brother, Earl Spencer, lives in Cape Town.

Schwarzkopf to stay out of political arena

NEW YORK (AP) — If it wasn't already apparent, retired Sen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf says he has no interest in a political career. "Politics in Washington, D.C., has become a really mean business. Really mean and nasty," he said in the lat-

est issue of George magazine. "It's very intrusive upon your life, and more important, it's intrusive on your family's life. It's very hard to accomplish anything in such a hostile environment."

The field commander of the 1991 Persian Gulf War thinks his former colleague, Gen. Colin Powell, is, as they say in the Army, good to go.

"I think he will run. He's as good as any other candidate we've got out there," Schwarzkopf told George editor and publisher John F. Kennedy Jr.

Schwarzkopf, after hanging up his Desert Storm fatigues, turned his energies to various causes — among them the Nature Conservancy, the recovery of the grizzly bear and a partnership with Paul Newman in a camp for sick children.

He's resisted pressure to get into politics. "George Bush and Bob Dole each asked me to support them, and Ross Perot asked me to be his vice presidential candidate. I've had inquiries from the Democratic party," Schwarzkopf said. "But my reply to all of these requests has been that I can do more for my country by remaining apolitical than by getting involved in the political process."

NEW YORK (AP) — Kristen

3rd Rock star wary of brain drain TV

Johnson's parents wouldn't let her watch television, and

now, does she feel like a space alien? No, she just plays one on TV.

Johnson, the statuesque alien on *3rd Rock From the Sun*, told Details magazine she never watched sitcoms "until maybe two years ago, when I started auditioning for them."

When she has kids, she'll forbid TV just like her parents did, she said.

"I know that I'm biting the hand that feeds me, but TV can really suck the brains right out of your body," she said. "The only television I watch now are those newsmagazine shows with stories like, 'Does your mattress give you cancer? Let's find out!'"

NEW YORK (AP) — Opera Bartoli gives final show of season

singer Cecilia Bartoli spent three hours at a record store greeting fans and signing autographs just a day after missing a widely broadcast matinee performance at the Metropolitan Opera.

The Italian mezzo-soprano blamed a bad back for missing Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte" on Saturday. The Daily News cited sources at the Met as saying Bartoli failed to perform because conductor James Levine was ill with an ear infection.

Bartoli sang the role of the maid Despina on Wednesday when Levine was sick.

For what was to have been Bartoli's second and final performance in the part this season, with millions listening on radio, Despina was sung by Marie McLaughlin.

music review

James sounds tired, uninspired on self-ripoff album *Whiplash*

BY APRIL TOWERY
 THE BATTALION

Once a masterpiece is created, it is seldom duplicated.

English rock band James has tried to recreate the success of its 1993 album *Laid* with its latest release, *Whiplash*. *Laid*, the band's sixth album, sold 600,000 copies in America, a feat *Whiplash* is unlikely to follow.

The melodies of the songs are too similar. The only minute difference in *Whiplash* is some subtle experimentation with industrial sound. Where the previous James albums have boasted mellow pop songs thriving on simplicity and instrumentation, *Whiplash* is overproduced and lacks the beauty of acoustic guitar strumming.

Many of the songs on *Whiplash*



were improvised in a barn during Woodstock II in 1994. The framework is admittedly loose, and the songs are short and shallow.

James has always set itself apart from other bands with its powerful lyrics. In "Sometimes (Lester Piggott)," a track on the *Laid* album, Booth sings, "Sometimes when I look deep in your eyes I swear I can see your soul." The beauty of these words is diminished by the triviality of "Go to the Bank," from *Whiplash*, in which Booth sings, "I feel

so empty, so I might go shopping, just to buy those things that will make me feel much better."

Whiplash compares more to James' 1994 release *Wah Wah*, an upbeat pop album which experimented with improvisation and rock angles to create a solid tour album. *Whiplash* is an attempt to make money, to give listeners what they want to hear and to forget conveying a message through music. The band could have pulled it off if they had not already done so three years ago with *Laid*.

If *Laid* did not exist, *Whiplash* would be the best album of the decade. However, the melodies of *Whiplash* are recycled, and the lyrics are all too familiar.

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James