



# THE BATTALION

"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

Volume 103 • Issue 123 • 8 Pages

The Batt Online: [http:// bat-web.tamu.edu](http://bat-web.tamu.edu)

Monday, April 7, 1997

## Ags give time, services for Big Event project

*Toby Boenig, former student body president, gave the keynote speech Saturday morning.*

By LAURA OLIVEIRA  
THE BATTALION

The Big Event provided a flood of service projects for Bryan and College Station Saturday afternoon despite rainy weather early in the day. Over 3,800 Texas A&M students did their part to give back to the community.

Participants trimmed hedges, painted houses and removed Christmas lights for residents in the area.

Jamie Hood, a sophomore chemical engineering major and a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, worked with other members at the event. The group painted two sheds, cut trees and helped with other odd jobs for a family in Bryan.

"They were so appreciative," he said. "They

even cooked all of us a really good meal."

Brooke Hybarger, Big Event director and a senior accounting major, said the event is a gesture of thanks to the community for putting up with students for nine months out of the year.

"Big Event has gotten the misconception over the years that it is just for the needy, but that is not the case," she said. "It is for the entire community."

Former Student Body President Toby Boenig gave the keynote speech at the kickoff, which began at 9:30 a.m. in front of the Administration Building. Boenig encouraged students to help others. He expressed appreciation for the help he has received from students after becoming partially paralyzed in a tubing accident last May.

Erica Flores, a junior community health major, participated with Sigma Phi Lambda in the event and said Boenig's speech was inspiring.

"When he stood up at the end it was so awesome," Flores said. "He is an incredible individual. After his speech I felt really motivated to work the service project."

Participants were assigned to jobs at the Big Event headquarters at Bonfire site.



Amy Dunlap, THE BATTALION

Jennifer Collet and Sherryl Smyer, sophomore chemical engineering majors, plant flowers as part of Big Event Saturday.

Hybarger said rainy weather during the week kept some participants from coming out to the event, but overall the day was a success.

"A lot of jobs canceled on us because they thought it was going to rain, but we could not have asked for better weather," she said.

### ► Gay Awareness Week

## Events include exhibit, speaker

By REBECCA TORRELLAS  
THE BATTALION

Seven copies of the exhibit are currently being displayed all over the country.

Gay Awareness Week begins today, and events will focus on religion, legislation, oppression and family.

Bradley, president of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Aggies and a senior political science major, said the week's activities are intended to create positive awareness.

"The idea behind having these [programs] is to show we're real people too," Bradley said.

"Love Makes A Family," a traveling photograph-text exhibit, will be on display this week in the MSC Flagroom.

Peggy Gillespie, interviewer and administrator for Family Diversity Projects in Massachusetts, said the display portrays a variety of families of all races with gay or lesbian moms, dads, grandparents and teenagers.

"The purpose of this exhibit is to educate people," Gillespie said. "We want to get people to respect other people."

**"The idea behind having these [programs] is to show we're real people too."**

Bradley  
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Aggies  
president

Gay Awareness Week officially begins Monday at 7:30 p.m. with a speech by Rev. Michael Piazza of the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, the largest gay and lesbian church in the world.

He will speak at Friends Congregational Church on the corner of FM 2818 and Southwood Drive.

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## Endurance Challenge

### A&M's SEAL Platoon took first place in the contest

By JACKIE VRATIL  
THE BATTALION

Cadets in camouflage and face paint ran through mud Saturday for the chance to take home the title of champion of the Endurance Contest.

Sponsored by the Navy/Marine ROTC and the Corps of Cadets, the contest consisted of eight teams — five from Texas A&M and teams from Rice University, Oklahoma and Florida.

The contest was comprised of five events: a 500-meter swim, a 3-mile run, an obstacle course, a stamina event and the finale, a 1.5 mile log-carrying run.

Will Hodge, 1st sergeant of the SEAL Platoon and a junior business management major, said the competition let participants be involved in something related to what they plan to do in the future.

"The contest is a fantastic opportunity for [those of] us who plan on going into any special operations later once we are out of college," he said.

John Ostermann, commanding officer of the SEAL platoon and a senior exercise technology major, said the contest was intended to motivate participants.

"It is useful later in life, whether you are planning on going into the military or not,"

he said. "It's a way to get all of us guys together with fierce, friendly competition."

Scott Hobbs, adviser for the team and a senior exercise technology major, said the contest helps participants get their names out.

"We are hoping, somewhere down the line, that high-ranking military officers will come and watch the competition," he said. "Then, when a piece of paper comes across the desk, (the officer) will be able to put a face with a name."

Ostermann said this competition is orientated to what cadets are all about.

"For the most part, we are all wanting to go into the Navy SEAL program," he said. "So when the selecting is done, this makes us look better. It is providing a way for our groups to get noticed."

"It says, 'We're here and we have a good program.'"

The contest started five years ago and has been held at A&M each year.

Hobbs said he has seen the competition grow and change.

"The competition is getting greater, the quality of the athletes is better and the times each year go down," he said. "Plus, we have made the run and the swim longer."

See **CONTEST**, Page 4



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Mark McCauley, a member of the Bulldog Platoon and a freshman business administration major, climbs across one of the obstacles in Saturday's Endurance Contest.

## A&M Gymnastics Teams sweep championships

By MATT WEBER  
THE BATTALION

There is no place like home. Just ask the Texas A&M University Gymnastics Club.

This weekend, 154 competitors from 19 campuses, from junior colleges to universities, converged at the Student Recreation Center for the 1997 NAIGC National Collegiate Championships, the largest gymnastics meet of the season.

The Lady Aggies took the national title in 1995, but their hopes of a repeat were spoiled by the University of Miami-Ohio, who judged A&M out for the title last year.

The Lady Aggies would not be denied again.

Both the men's and women's teams finished on top of their respective divisions Saturday to take home the 1997 NAIGC championships. The men's team tallied a composite score of 130.6 to defeat runners-up Texas and Virginia Tech. The women took the top spot over the University of Miami-Ohio and Texas with a team total of 142.675.

This is the first time both the men's and women's squads have finished No. 1 in the same season.

Shane Thompson, the men's team captain and a senior member, said A&M felt confident going into the meet despite facing most of the competition for the first time.

"We were prepared," Thompson said. "We were totally prepared."

The men's squad was led by freshman Neal Mansfield, who placed in the top 10 in five of six events to finish with a seventh-place all-around score of 45.500. Mansfield finished third in the floor exercise, fifth on the horizontal bar, sixth on the rings, seventh on the parallel bars and 10th on the vault.

Mansfield said he was happy with his performance in the floor exercise, although it was not expected.

"Well, the floor exercise usually is not my best event, but, I was happy with that," Mansfield said.

Also coming up big for the men's squad was senior John Sides, who placed fourth in the vault, seventh on the horizontal bar and eighth on the pommel horse and parallel bars to finish with an all-around score of 42.550, good for 10th. Freshman Jeff Schmulen also contributed with a third-place effort in floor exercises.

On the women's side, team captain Lori Blakley and a junior member, brought the Aggies' their only first-place in an individual event with a score of 9.400 on the balance beam. She also added an eighth-place finish on the uneven bars and a ninth-place effort in the floor exercise for an all-around total of 36.200, fourth-best in the women's division.

See **GYMNASTICS**, Page 8



Robert McKay, THE BATTALION

The A&M Women's Gymnastics team celebrates after winning first place in the NAIGC National Collegiate Championships. The men's team also finished first.

## Pageant's proceeds to benefit charities

► Participants were nominated by their sororities.

By MARISSA ALANIS  
THE BATTALION

Mandy Jones, a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority and a senior marketing major, was crowned Miss Greek A&M Thursday night at Rudder Auditorium.

Delta Sigma Phi, an A&M fraternity, sponsored the pageant, which featured a formal wear category and a question-and-answer segment. Nineteen women from various sororities participated in the pageant.

Jones said the event was her first pageant and she was nervous being onstage.

"I was a little surprised (about winning), but I guess [I was] excited," Jones said. "All I wanted to do is get through without making a fool of myself."

Half of the \$500 Jones won will go to her sorority, while the remaining half belongs to her. The makers of

the crowns for the Miss America, Miss Universe and Miss USA pageants designed her crown.

Jones has been a Fish Camp co-chair and an executive member of the 1997 Conference on Student Government Association. She currently is a member of the CBA Fellows and the A&M Ladies Leadership Society.

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### THE BATTALION INSIDETODAY

**SWEEP:** The Aggie Baseball Team gathered its first sweep of the season against ISU.  
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