

Learning the hard way

When it comes to weekend activity, students put down the books and pick up the bottles

By KEITH MCPHAIL
THE BATTALION

It is no secret that some Aggies like their liquor. And none is more popular than bourbon. While the amount of booze consumed in Bryan-College Station is hard to quantify, one thing is certain — a lot of liquor bottles are emptied in Aggieland.

Bobby Lee, a local bouncer and senior accounting major, said he believes the popularity of liquor in College Station is related to its soothing effects and the lack of alternatives in the Brazos Valley.

"It's a way to relax," he said. "It's pretty much the only way to chill out in College Station when your not working or studying. There's not a hell of a lot else to do — plus, it is fun, if you take it in a moderate amount."

Brooke Eoff, a College Station self-described social bug and senior accounting major, enjoys the "57 Chevy" at Fitzwilly's.

"Like it because its a big-ass drink with a lot liquors that I can enjoy slowly," she said. "And I love margaritas — I am the margarita queen."

Another popular Aggieland drink is the "Flaming Dr. Pepper." Jason Kempenski, a bartender at the Ptarmigan said they sell 250 on a good night.

It is difficult to add up the number of shots people take on Northgate, but it is considerable, claims Corey Dukes, a Dry Bean bartender and senior health major. "There is no way of telling how many we sell — there's so many," Dukes said. "I can sell 30, 40 or 50 shots in five minutes."

"We spend at least \$2,000 a week ordering liquor in the summer. In football season, that number is double."

Few know more about hard liquor consumption in Aggieland than J.J. Ruffino, owner of J.J.'s Package stores and class of '73 marketing student. January will mark the silver anniversary (25 years) of Ruffino's entrance to the Bryan-College Station liquor business.

"Crown Royal is by far the biggest seller in College Station," Ruffino said. "Bourbons are our number one distilled spirit."

Bourbons comprise 37 percent of the total liquor sold at J.J.'s stores. Crown Royal takes 11 percent of the total bourbon market, almost double its nearest com-

petitor Jack Daniels, which finishes second with only six percent.

While Bacardi rum has led the United States in sales, Crown outsells Bacardi three to one in Aggieland.

Other spirits that are popular liquor store pick ups in College Station include Jose Cuervo Gold, Smirnoff Vodka, Tanqueray Gin and Bacardi rum.

Ruffino feels that most college students are premium buyers. Over the years, he has noticed that people tend to buy what is well-marketed, and that, he said, tends to be the premium brands. At the liquor store people tend to buy image. The image associated with a certain spirit plays a significant role in selection. Buyers tend to choose a bottle that is line with their image of themselves, and the image they would like others to perceive.

"It's a lifestyle thing," Ruffino said. "I think it's the way most people think."

Recent months have seen a rise in the popularity of premium "trade up" liquors. This trend is especially strong in tequila and whiskey. Selections include the upscale tequila Sauza, small-batch bourbons and sin-

gle malt scotch. This trend goes hand in hand with the rise of premium cigars. Or in most cases, goes in the other hand.

Well drinks seem to be more popular at the bars, claims Mike Moore, a bartender at Shadow Canyon and senior marketing major.

"I think it is just a money thing," Moore said.

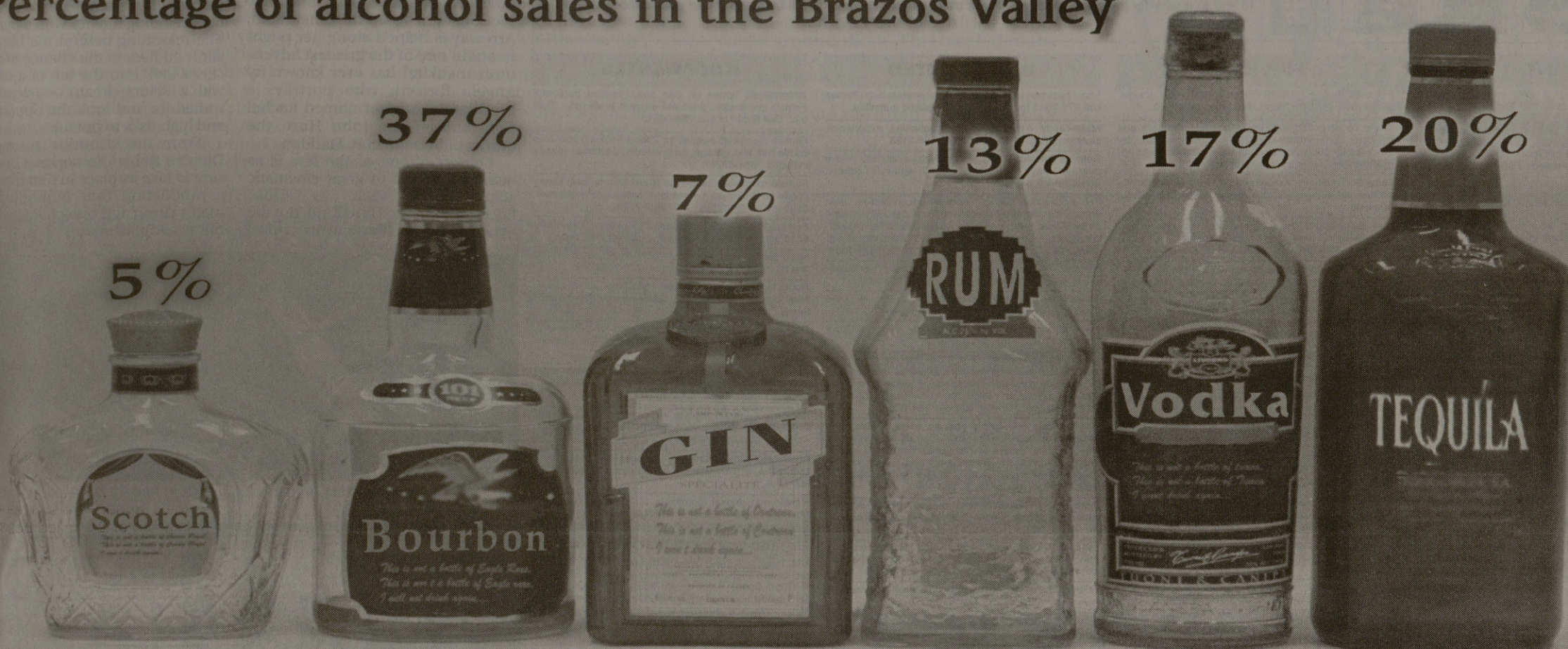
Some of the most popular well drinks include Bourbon and Coca Cola, Bourbon and Sprite, and Vodka and 7-Up.

While well drinks are more popular, when Aggies go premium at the bar, their spirit of choice is again Crown Royal. Moore said he also gets many requests for Jack Daniels, Jim Beam, Absolut, and Jose Cuervo.

"We sell quite a few shots of straight tequila," Moore said. "Sex with an Alligator," a shot invented at the Dry Bean, and margaritas are very popular."

Students may be found draining a bottle of Crown Royal at home, sipping a Vodka and 7-Up at Shadow Canyon, slamming a Flaming Dr. Pepper at the Ptarmigan or sucking down Liquid Cocaine at The Dry Bean. When the books are down, bottoms are up.

Percentage of alcohol sales in the Brazos Valley



Source: J.J. Ruffino

GRAPHIC: Brad Graeber and Tim Moog

Making Contact: Star-studded science fiction thriller lives up to viewers' expectations

By JAMES FRANCIS
THE BATTALION

Imagine spending a lifetime in search of life outside Earth. As a child, you would make continuous efforts to communicate with people miles away on a short-wave radio. This small step in your childhood would prepare you only for bigger and better dreams — to one day send a signal outside the realm of Earth and have a message sent back.

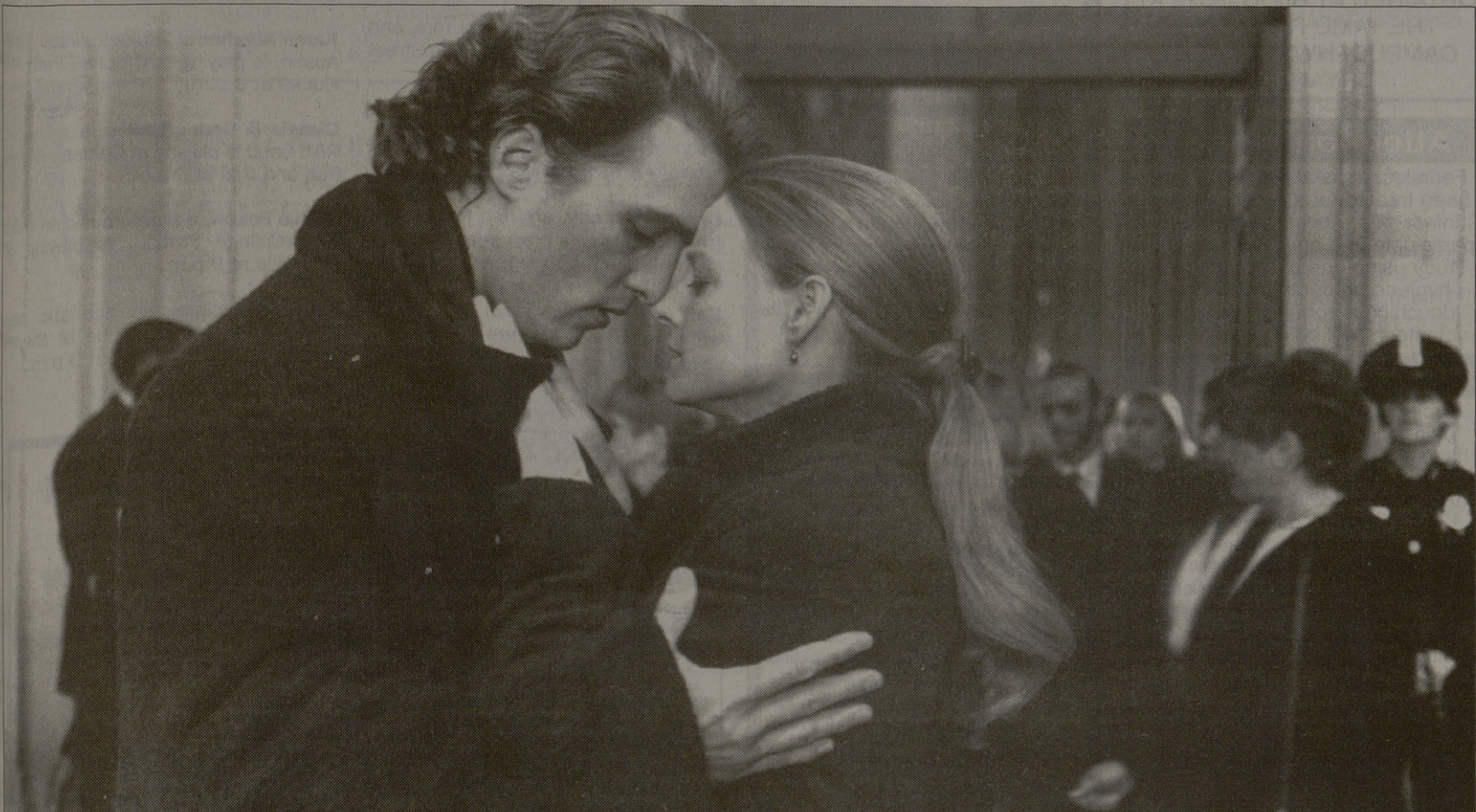
This would be the greatest achievement in science and technology ever documented. So you stretch out on the roof of your parents' house, sleeping bag secure around

Contact
Starring Jodie Foster and Matthew McConaughey
Directed by Robert Zemeckis
Rated PG-13
Playing at Hollywood 16
★★★★ 1/2 (out of five)

your body and eyes staring up into the nighttime sky. You focus on constellations and dream about life beyond the black-shadow atmosphere. Then you close your eyes and count: three ... two ... one ... Contact.

Summer always is the season of science fiction and special-effect films. Rarely do we see a film as intelligent and thought-provoking as *Contact*. In the film, Jodie Foster portrays Ellie Arroway, an astronomer whose love for the stars and galaxies beyond leads her to the discovery of a radio message sent from the star Vega. After her groundbreaking discovery, *Contact* takes a truthful look at the battle between science and technology and religion. The message received contains instructions on building a transport. But the question remains: Where will the machine take the individual lucky enough to embark on the historical journey?

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Matthew McConaughey and Jodie Foster star in Robert Zemeckis' Warner Brothers film *Contact*, based on the book by Carl Sagan.

Anderson movie sets offer Hope for Humanity

By WESLEY BROWN
THE BATTALION

Residents of Anderson may still be feeling the impact of *Hope*, the made-for-TV movie that Goldie Hawn recently filmed there.

Though the makers of *Hope* were only in Anderson for eight days, they left quite an impression, according to Grimes County Judge Bud Haney.

"They brought a lot of visitors, who just came to watch, and they brought a real spirit to the community," he said. "We were quite excited that they were going to film here."

Of course, there were more practical advantages to having a film crew around. There were about 175 people working on the movie and spending money in Grimes County.

The film production includes some big names. Hawn is at a career apex after her performances *The First Wives Club* and *Everyone Says I Love You*. Also starring was J.T. Walsh of *Breakdown* and Nixon. Hawn's live-in companion Kurt Russell was not a cast member, but was nevertheless a constant present on the set.

The film may have already established its legacy in the Brazos Valley. Paradise Pictures, that is producing the film, has donated all the lumber used in set construction to the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Donations such as these are extremely helpful, especially for training efforts, according to Habitat organizer Jim Davis.

"There are city ordinances in Bryan-College Station preventing us from building homes with used lumber, but we can use this lumber as part of our training program," Davis said. "It will save us a lot of money and translate directly into more housing in this area."

Most of the donated lumber

comes from a large theater that, in the script, is burned by arsonists. In reality, Davis said most of the structure was left intact.

"They used jets of propane gas, and they had a tin roof on it that they cut all up," he said. "Flames were shooting up into the sky, no doubt about that. It appears in the movie that the place was destroyed, but in reality, 95 percent of it was untouched by the flames. It's surprising what they do to create an illusion like that."

The theater was torn down with help from inmates at the Navasota PAC One prison, and the lumber will be used to build forms and small, portable buildings on which Habitat volunteers can practice.

Hope is the story of a southern teen-age girl in 1962 who watches as racism tears her town apart. The name is taken from Hope, Mo., the town in which the movie is set. The film is Hawn's directorial debut; she now becomes the third prominent feature film actor to make such a debut on TNT. The first two were Arnold Schwarzenegger (*Christmas in Connecticut*) and Tommy Lee Jones (*The Good Ole Boys*).

Bryan-College Station got a closer look at the stars involved with *Hope* when the entire production stopped off at Bullwinkle's Bar and Grill for a wrap party. Owner Charlie Cain managed to accommodate his guests while keeping his business open.

Filming will go on for several more weeks in other locations, Haney said, but a great deal of footage was shot in Anderson. "They had an entire courtroom scene to film here, and they did a lot of shooting on the streets. And, of course, they burned down the movie theater. That sort of thing attracts some attention, and we were happy to have had this experience."