

# When we Dance

## Aggie Dance Team pumps up sports' crowds

By CHRIS MARTIN  
Staff writer

**T**hey are an elite team. On the court they become precision gears meshed into a dynamic sculpture of strength and discipline. Spectators come from miles to see these 28 athletes at every game in G. Rollie White Coliseum. And these athletes are not playing games.

The Aggie Dance Team is one of Texas A&M's most exciting embodiments of school spirit. The dance team performs during timeouts and halftimes of basketball, soccer and volleyball games.

Jennifer Hart, director of the dance team, said each member performs in two of the four timeouts.

"We also do a special performance during halftime. The members have to try out for a spot in that dance," Hart said.

Being on the dance team is no small commitment. Members

have to find a balance between leading a typical college life and the time-consuming routine of practice and preparation.

Hart said she expects a full commitment from the members of the dance team.

"Right now we practice for two hours, five days a week and sometimes more," Hart said. "Plus, we do weights and conditioning every other day. It is a big commitment."

MaGee Matzke, sophomore biology major and co-captain of the dance team, said being on the team requires certain sacrifices.

"It takes up a lot of time, but you know that going into it," Matzke said. "You may not have much free time, but that's what it takes to give 100 percent."

The dance team has been recognized at several competitions as one of the top squads in the country.

Matzke said the dance team placed 10th in a national competition sponsored by the National Cheerleader Association and

CBS Sports in April.

"It was an awesome, great feeling," Matzke said. "We went into the competition only expecting to do our best. Finishing in the top 10 was a great honor."

The team also took great pride in defeating the University of Texas at a summer camp, Matzke said.

"We go to camp in the summer to learn new things. Even though we don't do fight songs, we beat Texas and won first place," Matzke said.

Matzke said she is ready to return to nationals in the spring.

"We have a stronger team this year, they are really enthused and pumped. We are practicing hard, and we plan to do just as well at nationals this year," she said.

Hart said she is excited about the team for this year.

"We have the most talented group this year that we've ever had at one time," Hart said.

The dance team has been PLEASE SEE **DANCE TEAM** ON PAGE 4.

## Wranglers two-step around the world

By BRANDI BALLARD  
Staff writer

"Grab your partner, do-si-do" ... wait a second — that is not the right song.

The tune is that of the Aggie Wranglers, and they are dancing their way across the world.

Founded in 1983, the Wranglers have grown to be one of A&M's most widely recognized organizations. Twenty-three couples, comprised solely of full-time Texas A&M students, travel all across Texas, the United States and internationally.

Pam Goralski, a second year member and a graduate student studying accounting, said the organization promotes the Aggie Spirit through country and western dancing.

"One good thing about it is that we get to perform for elementary schools and nursing homes, and no one has to worry about how much they're paying us per hour," Goralski said. "The best part is seeing people's reactions that have never seen

country and western dancing before.

Laurie Gayle, a junior agricultural development major, said the Wranglers are strictly exhibition.

"We do not compete at any level," Gayle said.

The Wranglers performed at the 1996 NBA All-Star game, the State Fair of Texas, the Houston and San Antonio livestock shows and numerous Texas A&M Mother's Club meetings.

"We've performed on Nashville Network's Club Dance and Wild Horse Saloon shows, too," Goralski said.

The Wranglers have traveled to Jamaica and Cancun.

A lot of hard work and practice are put into making their performances successful.

It begins with tryouts held one Sunday each spring. The tryouts begin at 11 a.m. and last until 10 p.m.

The couples are mostly judged by former Wranglers, but present members also have input on selection.

PLEASE SEE **WRANGLERS** ON PAGE 4.

## Fade to Black uses various dance styles to promote culture

By BRANDI BALLARD  
Staff writer

**T**he members of Fade to Black, a dance ensemble at Texas A&M, say their purpose is to heighten the awareness of surrounding communities by promoting African-American culture through different styles of dance.

Chasidy Allen, a sophomore environmental design major, said their main focus is to enrich and enhance their culture through dance.

Founded in 1991, Fade to Black was put together because a lot of girls coming straight out of high school drill teams wanted to

dance, but could not afford the Aggie Dance Team. They also wanted something with lower stress level.

Fade to Black uses tap, hip-hop, modern, ballet, spiritual and African dance styles to promote the African-American culture.

"We relay the message of unity," Allen said. Yvette Cobb, director of dance and a sophomore accounting major, said even though Fade to Black promotes the African-American culture, it is not exclusive to any ethnic group.

"This year the team is more diverse," Cobb said. "There are two males, a Hispanic girl and two white girls. We're really excited about that."

Fade to Black performs for organizations throughout Bryan-College Station.

"We perform at a lot of Greek events," Cobb said. "We do a routine at Kappa Comedy Jam and the Omega Apollo Night."

LaTarah Lacey, a sophomore business major and president of Fade to Black, said they always have a good time performing.

"We do the BAC's arambe and often go to elementary schools as well as community functions," Lacey said.

Before Fade to Black performs an African dance, someone explains facts about the African culture and its roots.

"A lot of people see us dance and don't know anything about the African culture," Allen said.

Tryouts are held in both fall and spring semesters. Three different dances are taught and

must be performed with technical moves being judged carefully. All members must maintain a 2.0 GPA and attend a two-hour practice every Monday night.

Twenty-two Fade to Black members will take the stage at the Kappa Comedy Jam on Oct. 11 for their first performance of the year.

Allen said she hopes to attract a broader audience and get more performance requests from other organizations on campus.

With 13 new members, Fade to Black hopes for a good year.

"I'm looking forward to dancing with and getting to know the new members," Cobb said. "This looks to be a very exciting year."

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