

# Olley, olley, SKATIN' free

A&M skateboarders endure hardships in pursuit of hobby

BY AMY DAUGHERTY  
The Battalion

**A**s darkness descends upon the quiet town, the elusive creatures make their way through the moonlight and what follows is a frenzy unlike any other.

If a glimpse can be managed, then the viewers can count themselves among the lucky few to see them in all their crowning glory.

The skaters can be seen on campus riding their boards as they make their way to class, but their activities on campus in the evening provide more entertainment.

At the Grove, where some skaters gather at



ERIC NEWMAN/THE BATTALION

**Jeremy Scott**, a freshman electrical engineering major, rides his long board. Long boards are typically used for transportation purposes.

night, easy access to a variety of ramps has recently been taken away.

People make assumptions about them as a whole, and brand them as troublemakers.

Ryan Taylor, a freshman ocean engineering major, said he has been skateboarding for five years now and said he has been stopped and questioned by police officers.

"A couple of times me and my roommate and some guys from down the hall were in front of the MSC," he said. "A cop shined his lights and asked our names."

Jeremy Scott, a freshman electrical engineering major, said he also has been stopped by police while carrying his skateboard.

Adreon Henry, buyer for The Factory, which primarily sells skateboard paraphernalia, said skateboarding can keep kids out of trouble because it offers them an alternative to negative peer pressure.

"We have a skate team that pretty much all skates, and every so often we go to Austin and go to skate parks," he said. "We're trying to do something positive."

"Some kids aren't going to play basketball or football," he said. "They're really talented and can ride a skateboard, which is hard. They just want something to do."

Henry said the residents of College Station need realize not all skateboarders cause problems in the community.

"It's about time this town started changing their views, and I hate to say it, but be more like Austin," he said. "It's just disgusting the way they [skateboarders] are treated."

"People need to realize it's not just a punk thing. Cops bother you for carrying a skateboard and in-line skaters don't get even half as much heat as skateboarders."

Skateboarders say that despite it all, they

continue to practice their hobby, due, at least in part, to the adrenaline rush they experience when a trick is landed.

Taylor said some of the tricks he performs include heel flips, tail grinds and olley hand grabs.

"For me, it's kind of like, you get a rush after you land a trick or something," Taylor said. "When someone sees you and you've landed something, well, it's just pretty cool."

Taylor said he usually skates on campus, even though the cobblestones walkways throughout campus sometimes prove to be a problem.

He said he skates about five hours a week and he enjoys skating and the versatility of the sport.

"I grew up in Hawaii and it was either surfing or skateboarding," he said. "It's fun, recreational and it doesn't cost money, except for buying the board. You can do it wherever you want, as long as you don't get kicked out and whenever you want."

"It's just fun, you get kind of a workout too, especially your knees, legs and back."

Scott said he started skating last year and skateboards on campus throughout the week.

"I skateboard to and from every class because I'm usually late, and every other night I skate around also," he said. "There's not one day I'm not on my board going somewhere."

Henry said The Grove was an ideal location to skate, but the people who kept items, such as ramps, there were told their equipment would be confiscated if it was found there again.

"We're looking for another place to put the stuff," he said. "It's ridiculous to think they can make us stop doing something we love."



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**Ryan Taylor**, a freshman ocean engineering major, skates on a rail on the A&M campus.

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