

# Coming together

## Students in residence halls and Corps of Cadets' outfits cope with loss of fallen friends

BY RICHARD BRAY  
The Battalion

Occupants of Texas A&M residence halls involved with the building of Bonfire during yesterday's early morning tragedy were affected with a combination of grief, anger and confusion.

Students from FHK Complex, Joses, Aston and Dunn halls were at the Bonfire site at the time of the accident.

Walking through the FHK Complex yesterday morning, students could be seen mourning together as they attempted to cope with the tragedy.

Che Wilcox, resident adviser (RA) on duty Wednesday night in Joses Hall and a junior English major, said many students in Moses turned of the accident from their parents and sought their RA's for information and advice.

"Reactions to the Bonfire accident have been very mixed," Wilcox said. "At about 5 a.m., kids get calls from their parents and come asking for information. They are really scared."

Wilcox said that since the accident, students have been comforting each other and coping with their grief in the Moses Hall office.

"It's been really confusing; a lot of stuff has happened," Wilcox said. "We're just watching the news, and we're not going to class. We're just trying to get things under control."

Tony Andenoro, hall director for Joses Hall, said the residents have come together to mourn and to help her students come to terms with the tragedy.

"We're all pulling together to help any Aggies who know someone directly involved in the situation," he said.

Andenoro said that although Joses Hall was prohibited from



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Friends console each other by embracing shortly after stack fell yesterday.

working on Bonfire as a group, individual residents did participate and were working yesterday morning when Bonfire collapsed.

"When it comes down to it, [the residents] banded together, and I wasn't about to pull ranking on them," he said.

Andenoro said many Walton Hall residents helped with the rescue.

"Bottom line is: Walton as a whole loves Bonfire," he said. "Many have been on stack all day."

Andenoro said he had not seen many of the residents all day because many of them worked through the night and did not come back to the residence hall.

Michael Ginnard, a freshman FHK resident who knew four students injured in the accident, said he was worried about his friends, but he felt that he could do little to help them recover.

Heather Michelle Thompson, an FHK resident who knew one of the students killed and believes another friend was trapped in the rubble, said the accident has taught her the value of each day.

"To hear about the deaths and not know if it is your friend or not, it really hits home," she said. "Now I have to imagine a life without [my friend]."

BY STUART HUTSON  
The Battalion

Where excitement and anticipation once filled the quadrangle, now only sadness and despair is felt as the Corps of Cadets mourn the loss of fellow members whose lives were abruptly taken in the tragic collapse of stack yesterday.

At least four of the dead and more than 15 of the hospitalized have been identified as cadets.

Along the walkway of the Quad, students could be seen distraught

and crying in one another's arms as they were attempting to deal with the fate their friends, brothers, sisters and loved ones were dealt.

Clay Peterson, a flight officer from Squadron 2 and a senior electrical engineering major, said the incident has left an air of remorse among members of the Corps.

"This entire side of campus is in mourning," Peterson said. "You probably won't see a face that does not carry a solemn look for a long time, at least not until the pain goes away."

Peterson said the death of Corps

member, Bryan McClain, a freshman agriculture major, will forever leave a link missing in the chain that made up the family of Squadron 2.

"He was a class act all the way, and he was everything the Corps wanted to see in a person," he said. "The entire outfit is in shock. What can you really say about what we are feeling right now?"

Mark Macicek, Deputy Corps Commander and a senior business major, said a pain is felt throughout the entire body of the Corps whenever one of its members is lost.

"Everyone is really feeling the pain right now because of the close camaraderie and friendships people make," he said.

Mike Antosh, 1st Sergeant in Squadron 17 and a junior engineering technology major, said he will forever miss his friend, Jerry Self, a flight Sergeant in Squadron 17 and a sophomore engineering technology major.

Antosh said he will always remember the qualities which made Self a role model for his community.

"He was a loyal, hardworking individual with a huge heart," he said. "He cared deeply about everything he did and he always stood up for what he believed he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him."

Forrest Lane, Corps of Cadets Commander and a senior political science and economics major, said the goal of the Corps now is to help the friends and families of the deceased get through this time of strife.

"I don't think we could ever do enough to even begin to correct for the horrible tragedy that happened this morning," he said. "But we must try to remember those who have gone on to a better place, and what made them model people and model Aggies."



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

A Bonfire pot sits unattended on the polo fields in the wake of tragedy.

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693-7021 http://www.ipt.com/jpi

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(409) 731-1230  
E-mail: mark-d@tamu.edu or mwm@tamu.edu

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