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MAIL CALL *Continued from Page 15*

I had the great privilege of attending the memorial service at A&M Thursday night and was deeply moved by the events I experienced. The A&M student body is truly one of the great treasures of our state.

As part of the UT delegation, we sat on the floor of Reed Arena, and immediately following the end of the service, I heard a rustling sound behind me.

I looked over my shoulder and saw the sight of close to 20,000 students spontaneously putting their arms on their neighbor's shoulders, forming a great circle around the arena.

The mass stood there in pin-drop silence for close to five minutes, then, from somewhere, someone began to hum quietly the hymn "Amazing Grace." Within seconds, the whole arena was singing. This event brought me to tears. It was one, if not the, defining moment of my college career.

I learned something important tonight. For all us Longhorns who discount A&M in our never-ending rivalry, we need to realize one thing, Aggieland is a special place, with special people. It is infinitely better equipped than us at dealing with a tragedy such as this for one simple reason. It is a family. It is a family that cares for its own, a family that reaches out, a family that is unified in the face of adversity and a family that moved this Longhorn to tears.

Eric Opiela
Student Government
Vice President, UT - Austin

To Aggieland ...

I have prayed more today than I have in the past month. I have prayed for the friends and families of those who have passed on. I have prayed for those injured to be healed. I pray now that they are not forgotten.

Those who were hurt were working for something they truly believed in. Those fallen Aggies believed in the tradition enough to work through the night at stack. I believe they would want it continued.

Remember those we have lost, but remember also what we should keep.

Chase Berry
Class of '00

I am so honored to be a part of A&M and Bonfire. Even though the Bonfire '99 ended so tragically I wouldn't go back and be any less part of it.

I have heard people criticizing Bonfire and saying that we shouldn't have it next year. We are horribly saddened by what has happened to our friends and classmates but to end Bonfire is to kill part of the Aggie spirit.

Bonfire must go on next year for the class of '04, for those who died, and for all of us. There is no

school I would rather go to or any tradition I want to be a part of more than Bonfire. Please support Aggie Bonfire and do not let what happened Thursday be where our tradition dies.

Lauren Schultz
Class of '03

When the phone rings at 3:30 in the morning, it can't be good. My son, Jeremy Worley, was on the Bonfire stack when it fell. His Corps buddy and roommate, Jeremy Carpenter from Squadron 3, called me to tell me that my son was hurt, but that he was okay.

It is now that I am writing to thank everyone who came to help all the students who were injured and killed.

I cry every time I think how close my son came to death, and then I cry for all those mothers and fathers who weren't so lucky. Somehow all of us have to get through this tragedy together, because the Aggie Spirit lives on.

Velva Worley
Spring, Texas

I would like to thank the Fightin' Texas Aggie Football Team for coming out to help carry logs during unstack.

The Twelfth Man is there for the team in their times of hardship, and the team was there for the Twelfth Man in theirs. This is what the Aggie family is all about — we back each other up.

Lauren E. Williams
Class of '02

I want to first say that my heart goes out to everyone affected by this horrible tragedy. None of us will ever be the same.

Over the weekend, I have seen some absolutely disgusting things on TV. Before we can even lay our brothers and sisters to rest, current and former Texas A&M professors have come out with "I told you so" mentalities.

Now is not the time for that. It sickens me that their egos drive them this far.

Marc Barringer
Class of '92

To America ...

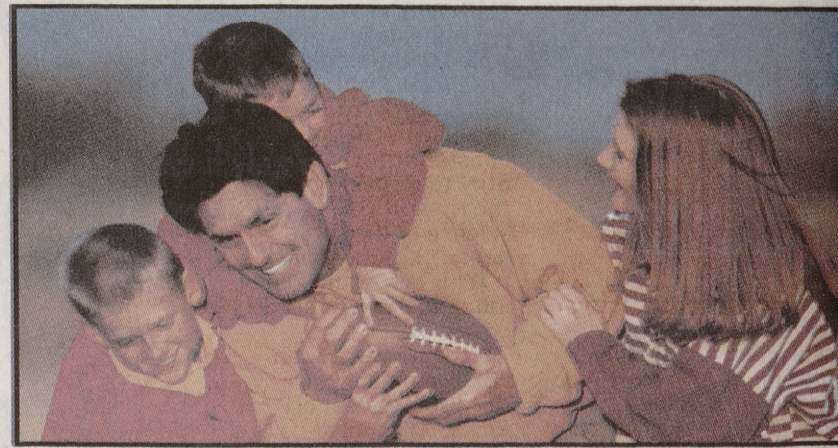
Even though I'm now nearly 500 miles away from Aggieland, I feel as though I'm right there right now. My heart goes out to all of you. If I had never really known what it was to be an Aggie, I know now. When one of us celebrates in joy, we all celebrate with joy. When one of us is in pain, we are all in pain. Today we hold each others' hands in sorrow and grief. But we are Aggies, and that's what we do.

M. Garcia
Class of '99

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I am a former student and working in NYC. Like Aggies, I am in shocked disbelief at this horrible tragedy. Unfortunately, I have not been back to Aggieland almost 15 years, but like the bond is just as strong as it was when I last walked the grounds. So when I heard the news as if someone I knew, a part of my family had died.

To the world ...

My heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families and also to the entire Aggieland community in the wake of the unfortunate accident at the bonfire. I'll keep my thoughts and prayers.

William ...

I am halfway around the world and my friends and family have been keeping me up to date on the tragedy. I have been deeply saddened by the loss of so many young Aggies. I have the face of my Aggie ring in my room ribbon in remembrance week. It's just a little something to remind me of the victims and families this week. They live in my mind and in my heart.

Stacey ...

I would just like to express my deep sorrow at hearing the news of the Bonfire accident. I can speak for all students who are foreign land that have been A&M in saying that attending is something that always stays with you and I hope that at some time the Aggie spirit prevails.

Such is the scale of the tragedy that here in England was featured as a story on the main news programs. Like I feel numb at this event and well to the families of all those affected in any way by this horrible tragedy.

I always felt Silver Taps as one of the greatest of Aggie traditions, and I am just sorry that I will be unable to attend.

Exchange ...
Lancaster University
Britain

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class year, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 1010 Donald with a valid student ID. Letters to be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Code 013
Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111
Fax: (409) 845-2847
E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com

Suns

Last Thursday night, the Aggie bonfire burned brightly. The crowd of thousands of students gathered on the field, and the sea of Aggie jerseys was a sight to behold. Joelle Warren and a senior named Monica R...

IN Sports

• A&M Women's Basketball Team wins Aggie defeat Pan Am, 10 Pa Ag

countdown Students see end of the s



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