

# THE BATTALION

106 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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## Bonfire investigators construct questions

Inquiries to be used as starting point

BY STUART HUTSON  
The Battalion

After pacing the site where 18 days ago an Aggie tradition tragically turned to disaster, the Bonfire investigation commission returned to the Board of Regents' annex, Friday to ask the questions which may lead to the answer of why the stack fell.

Leo Linbeck, chair of the Bonfire commission, said the meeting's purpose was to orient the commission to its task of discovering the cause of the collapse.

"We wanted to get organized, and I think we accomplished that," Linbeck said. "It's premature to say that we have our arms around this issue, but we have a sense of direction established and a protocol that we wish to follow to go forward. So it's a beginning"

Linbeck said the commission began its meeting with a visit to the site to have a sense of reality of the collapse to sink into the minds of commission members.

"In all candor, it's kind of overpowering," Linbeck said. "You have a heavy heart when you go on to a site where as many young people were killed or injured. It reinforced the sense of responsibility we feel to bring this matter to a conclusion to bring the truth to the surface, whatever that is."

The majority of Friday's four-hour meeting was spent constructing a set of preliminary questions which Linbeck said would serve as a starting point for the investigation. The set comprised more than 20 questions which included: "What level of outside advice

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**BONFIRE INVESTIGATION**

Questions the commission wants answered by March 31st.

- "What level of outside advice was on site?"
- "What requirements did supervisors have to fill before they became supervisors?"
- "What equipment was in use during construction?"
- "What revisions were made to construction specifications in past years?"

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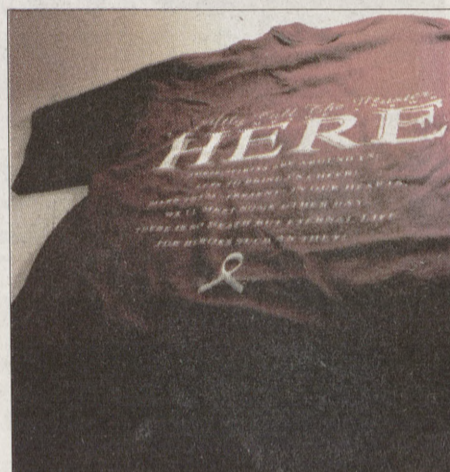
## A&M denies licenses to retailers selling memorial T-shirts

BY BRADY CREEL  
The Battalion

The Department of Collegiate licensing for Texas A&M University has now prohibited retailers from selling merchandise memorializing Bonfire.

A&M clothing retailer Inspirations, the first to produce and sell the memorial Bonfire "Muster" T-shirts, was ordered by Collegiate licensing to donate its proceeds and shirts to Traditions Council.

Toby Boenig, manager of A&M collegiate licensing, said his office will not approve any licenses for Bonfire items intended for retail sales.



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

"The policy we adopted says only student groups directly affiliated with Texas A&M are permitted to use A&M trademarks to sell products memorializing Bonfire," he said.

Boenig said the University requires all proceeds from sales of Bonfire-related items be donated to the Bonfire memorial fund.

Matt Timmons, a Traditions Council member and a senior community health major, said Inspirations donated 1500 "Muster" T-shirts left in their store and at the printer to the Traditions Council after the University mandated only student organizations could sell Bonfire merchandise.

Timmons said students lined the main hallway of the MSC last week, waiting for to get a tangible memory of Bonfire.

He said the, the only available

Local clothing retailer Inspirations has been ordered to donate proceeds from its Bonfire "Muster" T-shirts to the A&M Traditions Council.

"Muster" T-shirts are size small all other sizes sold out in two hours. The Traditions Council will not reorder.

Fadi Kalaouze, Inspirations owner and Class of '90, said his store donated approximately \$17,000 in money and retail merchandise to the Traditions Council and the memorial fund.

SEE T-SHIRTS ON PAGE 2.

## Engineers council recognized at national meeting

BY DIANE XAVIER  
The Battalion

The Texas A&M University Student Engineers Council (SEC), noted for its excellence in all aspects of activity, recently was named the world's most exemplary council at the 1999 National Association of Engineering Student Councils (NAESC) conference.

According to the NAESC, the exemplary council award goes to the council demonstrating excellence in fund-raising, school spirit, community service, campus recognition and programs offered to students.

Thirteen members of the A&M council attended the conference, hosted by the University of South Florida in Tampa. More than 400 delegates, representing 40 universities from the United States and Canada were in attendance.

Laurinda Lin, SEC president and a senior biomedical engineering major, said the council submitted a three page essay highlighting the programs and opportunities their SEC offered and describing why the council deserved the award.

"We are really honored to show validation for all things we do and are happy to share what we do with our council at Texas A&M and other councils in the nation," she said.

"Our council has been very successful with all the activities we have had, and we hope to continue that."

Each year, the SEC hosts two career fairs, which bring in more than 200 companies for recruitment; Engineers Week, a week of activities promoting the different aspects of engineering and Leaders of Freshman Engineering, a organization providing leadership opportunities for freshman engineering majors.

"We were limited to three pages to show off and elaborate on details on all the organizations we offered and describe how it benefited the students and the community," Lin said.

Bobby Tulsiani, vice president of the SEC

SEE SEC ON PAGE 2.

## A holiday tradition



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Members of the Moscow City Ballet Natalya Chtchelokova and Mikhail Ronikov, portray the roles of Clara and the Nutcracker Prince from *The Nutcracker* Friday night at Rudder Auditorium.

## Department offers aid with healing process

BY MATT LOFTIS  
The Battalion

Students and community members having trouble dealing with the Bonfire collapse are being advised by the Texas A&M Department of Psychology to seek their help in talking through the ordeal and begin a healthy healing process.

The A&M Psychology Clinic staff is extending its hours to accommodate anyone needing help from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

The Department of Psychology has released a list of symptoms to watch for that could indicate the beginning of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In a press release from the Department the disorder is common among war veterans and sufferers of other scarring events, but is increasingly recognized after cases of assault, rape, natural disasters and community disasters.

A press release, authored by Tara L. Williams M.S., and Dr. David H. Gleaves of the Psychology Department, states symptoms of the disorder are residual effects of the Bonfire collapse that stay with students or community members a month or more following the accident. Symptoms include vividly re-experiencing the collapse through dreams, waking thoughts,

total avoidance of any reference to the issue or extreme emotional responses.

The Psychology department urges any student with these problems to visit the staff. People interested in these services can call 845-8017 for directions to the clinic. The extended hours will be in effect Dec. 6 to Dec. 9 and Dec. 13 to Dec. 15.

Dr. Rob Heffer, director of the A&M Psychology Clinic and clinical assistant professor, said the extended hours will be an informal atmosphere for people share their feelings and concerns. No fees will be accepted for the services.

"If someone just needs to talk and they are all right; then we're glad we could provide the service," Heffer said. "If something more is needed during these sessions, we can help extend services."

Services will be provided by advanced doctoral students and will be overseen by licensed psychologist faculty. Those who do not attend the help sessions at the clinic are encouraged to contact Student Counseling Services at 845-4427, Student Help Line at 845-2700 or the TAMU Counseling and Assessment Clinic at 825-8021.

"These next two weeks could be important for those who are having the pressures of normal life set back in with finals," Heffer said.

## Documentary, book aim to capture moments, debates over tragedy

• Graduate student solicited input from Aggies to make film on aftermath of event

BY ROLANDO GARCIA  
The Battalion

Upon hearing the Bonfire stack collapsed in the early morning of Nov. 18, Jeremy Collette reached for his video camera and trekked to the Polo Fields.

"I just got my camera and went to the site, but I wasn't sure what I was going to do with the videotape," Collette, Class of '94 and an organic chemistry graduate student, said.

Collette is producing a short documentary of the Bonfire collapse and its aftermath he hopes will capture the "Spirit of Aggieland" in a way mere words cannot.

Collette recorded more than five hours of footage, beginning with the rescue efforts at the stack site immediately following the collapse and ending with the yell practice at Kyle Field a week later.

Included are footage of press conferences, the Nov. 18 memorial service at Reed Arena and the candlelight vigil seven days later, and people gathering at the site to leave flowers, candles and other makeshift memorials.

"When I witnessed how the students and the whole campus community came together

CAPTURING THE "Spirit of AGGIELAND"

- The Bonfire collapse and the aftermath
- Full length film of the collapsed stack, vigil, yell practice, and the site with memorials

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

er to help cope with what happened, I wanted to capture that on film," Collette said.

He said he is in the process of editing the video into a 45 to 60 minute film.

Matthew Roberts, a senior computer engineering major, is assisting Collette in making the documentary and said the film is an opportunity to capture the importance of the Bonfire aftermath for future Aggies.

"When I was out there at the stack site, so many people expressed a desire to preserve this—the writings, the flowers, the emotions," Roberts said.

SEE DOCUMENTARY ON PAGE 2.

• Author to explore history, future of University tradition; seeks writings, interviews with 'Aggieland perspective'

BY JEANETTE SIMPSON  
The Battalion

Irwin Tang, Class of '92, watched has witnessed many Bonfires and is publishing a book about its need to continue, its history and the stories behind the investigations of the cause.

A College Station native and graduate of Texas A&M, Tang said he understands all Bonfire symbolizes to the Aggie family. Tang, a publisher in the Bryan-College Station area, has decided to produce a book in which everyone touched by the Bonfire accident can express their opinions.

Tang said the controversy over Bonfire and its future at A&M is a sentimental subject for those involved.

"When debates are emotional, they tend to be simplified," he said. "This debate is not simple. Many points must be carefully examined before a decision can be made."

Tang said the book will provide students information needed to make an intelligent, thoughtful and philosophical argument.

"I was deeply affected by this tragedy," Tang said. "I went from shocked to sad to angry. In my anger, I wanted to ask tough questions. My hope is that this book will encourage everyone to ask tough questions."

**Aggieland Perspectives on Bonfire's history, tragedy, and future**

Delves into the circumstances surrounding the investigation

Needs writings and interviews from students, faculty, or staff closely related to Bonfire

Contact: bonfirebook@hotmail.com  
Deadline: January 1, 2000

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

The book, tentatively titled *The Texas A&M Bonfire Tradition: Aggieland Perspectives on Its History, Its Tragedy, and Its Future*, will not only cover the debate about the future of the event, Tang said. The book also will include two sections about Bonfire's history, meaning and what the investigation concludes.

"I have challenged both sides to come forward with their arguments, their personal experiences and their reactions," Tang said. "The question I wish to pose is, 'Is Bonfire worth it?'"

Students, faculty, staff, alumni, community residents and anyone else associated with Aggieland are invited to submit their work.

Tang said he especially is seeking writing

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- Batt Radio Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for details on community news.