

# AGGIElife

THE BATTALION

## On the sly

### The Sly Letter moves on to greener pastures

By Jason Bennyhoff & Anne Hoar

**The Battalion**  
College Station hosts a veritable parade of local bands every year, but few manage to make it outside the confines of the Bryan-College Station community. Now, the Sly Letter, a band that has been performing locally for more than two years, is making a concerted effort to move beyond the local market.

Mark McDavid, mandolin player and background vocalist for the band, said one of the band's first steps in moving outside College Station was producing *These Autumn Skies*, its debut CD. The band funded the CD with its own money and used connections it made with industry professionals to get it produced.

Having a CD gave the band an easy way to send the music to different places to get more exposure. One of those places was the MTV show "Undressed."

"A friend of mine mentioned that MTV wanted music from independent artists to feature on 'Undressed,'" said Sean Smith, lead guitarist and vocalist for the band. "So we eventually sent our music out, and I came home one day from getting a job offer, and there was a message on my answering machine."

Smith said the message was from Melinda Gednen, an MTV representative. Smith said he returned her call, and the rest is history. The band's music will be played on the show intermittently for approximately the next 40 episodes.

McDavid said hearing that MTV accepted the band's music was a surprise.

"At first it (sending the MTV the CD) was kind of a joke," McDavid said. "It was so weird that MTV was calling us. We were on a high two weeks after we heard the news."

National exposure on MTV is a departure from the band's beginnings.

The band began as an acoustic duo with two singers who played acoustic and electric guitar. They added drums and bass guitar to

the band, and later mandolin and percussion.

"When we added the mandolin and percussion, that's when we found our sound," McDavid said.

McDavid said the music of the band Toad the Wet Sprocket inspired him to learn to play the mandolin.

"The guitar was my primary instrument, and I really like Toad the Wet Sprocket, and they use the mandolin a lot," McDavid said. "My friends and family chipped in and bought it (the mandolin) for me for my birthday."

McDavid said it was easy to learn to play the mandolin since he knew how to play the guitar. He said he taught himself and never took a formal lesson.

The Sly Letter has played together as a six-member band for only two years. The group met at A&M, but McDavid describes Sly Letter as a Houston-College Station band because several of the members are from Houston. Two members, drummer Chris Ginsbach and bass player Chris Edwards, played together in high school band in Houston.

The group has played in Houston venues such as Fitzgerald's, Sidecar Pub and Satellite Lounge.

Even though the band's songs will be on MTV, Smith said moving out of the local market is proving difficult.

"It seems like a simple concept," Smith said. "But it is impossible to walk into Austin and say, 'We're the Sly Letter,' and get 500 people to turn up for the show. So, we are trying to promote ourselves."

Smith said even though the band is trying to go beyond College Station, it will always return here, no matter how popular it becomes.

"We are definitely coming back," Smith



PHOTO BY STUART VILLANUEVA, ILLUSTRATION BY CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

said. "Even if we became the biggest band in the world, we would always come back here."

In the future, Smith said, the band's music may be featured on such television shows as "Felicity" and "Boston Public." The band is also attempting to cooperate with Pat McGee on a concert or series of concerts in February.

Sly Letter's next show is Saturday at Shadow Canyon. Doors open at 9 p.m. and Saving Dawn is the opening act.

## THE BATTALION

### SPRING '01 STAFF APPLICATION

If you can write, edit, design pages, draw, use a camera... Texas A&M's award-winning student newspaper is looking for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours you will take in the spring: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected graduation (semester): \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week would you be available for work at *The Battalion*? \_\_\_\_\_

**OPENINGS INCLUDE:**  
Please check the position(s) for which you are interested. If you are interested in more than one position, number them in order of preference with 1 being your top choice.

- Staff**
- News Reporter
  - Science & Technology Reporter
  - Feature Writer
  - Entertainment Writer
  - Sports Writer
  - Columnist
  - Web Designer
  - Radio Reporter
  - Photographer
  - Graphic Artist
  - Cartoonist
  - Page Designer
  - Copy Editor

#### Staff Applicants\*

- 1) Why do you want to work at *The Battalion*, and what do you hope to accomplish?
- 2) What experience do you have that relates to the position for which you are applying? (include classes, seminars, etc.)
- 3) What changes do you feel would improve the quality of *The Battalion*? (Give special attention to the section for which you're applying.)

\*Please type your responses on a separate piece of paper, and attach a resumé and samples of your work (stories you have written for publications or classes, pages you have designed, photos taken, drawings made or other creative samples) — just show us what you can do.

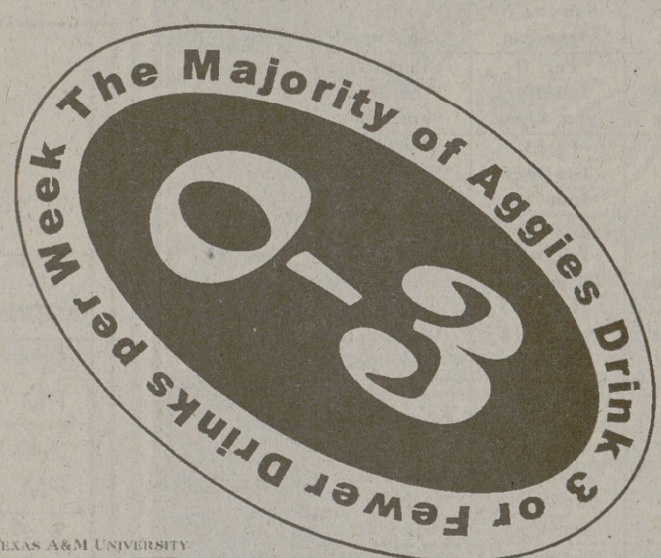
Deadline: 4:30 p.m. **Monday, Dec. 4**, for staff positions. Turn applications in at 014 (basement) Reed McDonald Building. Interviews will be scheduled immediately after the application deadline.

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The majority of Ags drink 4 or fewer drinks at a party

90% of Aggies have never been in trouble with authorities due to drinking

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