Makin' their rounds all over town tting out of flames

Area firefighters share first-hand accounts of fighting fires, and saving lives

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r said.

It is 3 a.m., and sirens blare as firefighters race get dressed in one minute and jump into emercy vehicles. Lights illuminate the sky as the for all we to frefighters near their destination, unsure of what

bey will find.
"When that siren goes off, we don't know only what we're going to be doing, and have only few minutes to prepare," said Chad Phillips, censed paramedic and firefighter.

Pete Moreno, a firefighter and EMT, said within five minutes they arrive at the ne to render aid.

"Sometimes, all we can see is black cause the smoke gets so thick," Moreno d. "The most emotional calls are when e get there and people beg for you to ive their loved ones, but it's too late. was the first We hear people spouting off their last really see it all words, and it's hard."
er," she said Running on half-eaten meals, scram-

ile has slippe ding out of bed in the early hours of the ming and hustling from one scene to anothare everyday occurrences at the fire station. Lt. Greg Rodgers said that it hurts him to see

e can do this go people in need,
we have." "We want to do everything we can to help,"
October, Bowe Rodgers said. "And if that's an inconvenience to
stimated \$1.5- my of us, so be it."

Certified firefighters, most of them also serve paramedics and some work 24-hour shifts. "It took me a while to get into the routine," gers said. "I relish sleep now."

The fire station is their home where they ok, clean and sleep. Their mornings consist of paring the trucks and making sure the station perating smoothly. Dealing with the trauma pressures they face can be extremely diffi-

"There is a lot of stress on the job because we watertain amount of power over someone's

life." Phillips said. "Sometimes, we're breathing for them, and we watch the heart on the monitor each time we give them air. When it calms down after a fatality, the scene runs through our heads. The critical incident stress management team

Phillips said they received their most shocking to keep things in perspective. call after the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

I've never seen a sight as unbelievable as the

fallen Bonfire," he said.

Rodgers said that after an emergency they try

"I have a family, and I love them very much," Moreno said. "Each morning, I leave my house and realize that there's a chance I may never

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have affected fire stations with several anthrax scares and have changed people's behavior.

"For a while, we were getting 10 anthrax calls a day," Moreno said. "The tragedy brought a change among people's behavior concerning emergencies. If we run around with a hose, people will crawl on their hands and knees to get away instead of staying to see what happened. In that aspect it has changed a great deal.

Firefighters constantly put their lives on the line for others and perform selfless acts everyday.

"One time, the entire ceiling came down on my head," Rodgers said. "That's why we wear helmets. Each piece of clothing we wear and equipment we arry serves a specific purpose

Moreno is fulfilling a childhood dream by erving as a firefighter. He said the brotherhood among the firefighters is priceless

"It's a family event," he said. "Any fireman could walk in from around the world and we would treat them like one of our own. We are willing to put our lives in each other's hands. The camaraderie we share is incredible. Phillips said the most rewarding moments are

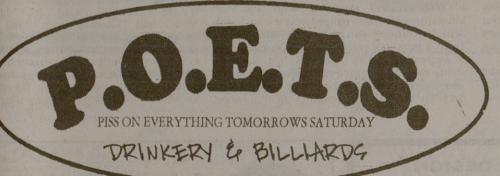
when they realize they have made a difference. "I wouldn't want to do anything else," Phillips said. "Especially after Sept. 11, when I see flags waving, it makes me proud."

Moreno said that he and his friends would trade their life for someone else.

There's not a lot of people who wake up and think that today someone's son or daughter might live because I was there," Moreno said.



College Station firefighters (from left to right) Robert Mumford, Kevin Stobbs, Lt. Greg Rodgers, Chad Phillips Pete Moreno, Leon Moore and Chief Goehl (not pictured) take a break from a busy day's work. PHOTO BY HEATHER CAMPBELL, ILLUSTRATION BY CODY WAGES AND GUY ROGERS



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