

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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Summer School, Break or Burden?

Students struggle to balance work and school, while others enjoy their time off

By Kelcey Rieger
THE BATTALION

Lazy days of summer are gone for college students. Attending class, working and volunteering are signs of an Aggie's summer. For many students at Texas A&M, what once was considered a summer break has become a summer burden.

Tiffany Bradfield, a junior agriculture major, had her dream summer all planned out, but unfortunately, not all dreams become a reality.

"I would love to spend all summer at the beach, any beach," Bradfield said. "Just hanging out and having fun with no job or school to worry about. It would be about having a good time. But staying at the beach doesn't get you college credit and I know getting a tan does not equal making money. So, I'm working a part-time job to earn a little extra money, while taking some summer courses to get some of my classes out of the way."

Bradfield considers herself to be an active person and when summer rolled around she knew she wanted to keep her summer eventful with activities, such as playing for a co-ed softball team in College Station.

In an effort to have a productive summer, students attempt the infamous summer job search and will find employment is at times, anything but pleasant.

"One of the worst summer job experiences I have ever had was when I worked at the fiscal office for the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation," Bradfield said. "First, the building I worked in was a remodeled giraffe pen, which was strange in itself. The lighting was terrible, the work was boring, and it was close to 50 degrees inside, so I was always freezing. It was depressing having to be stuck inside while everyone was outside having fun at the zoo."

Aggies do not have to be at A&M to be burdened with a full summer. Students who head back to their hometowns might find work there or take classes at a local community college.

Chris Simpson, a sophomore business administration major,

opts to spend the beginning of summer at home in Dallas and the rest in Aggieland.

"I think it's nice going back home for awhile," Simpson said. "It is a change of pace and it really feels good to live where you grew up before heading back to A&M. When I am at home I get to see more friends from high school, which is always great. But I

"I am taking a mini-mester and Summer Session I in Dallas," Simpson said. "Then I plan on heading back to A&M for Summer Session II where I am going to live in a residence hall on campus. I'll be taking six hours of classes plus I plan on being involved in OPAS and the Aggie Orientation Leader Program."

Aggies often look for opportunities during the summer to volunteer or get involved with organizations to pass the time during the long days of summer.

Carolina Balderas, a junior chemical engineering major, figured she would donate her time to something that she thought would be interesting and worthwhile.

"I volunteered at the Dallas Museum of Art a couple summers ago," Balderas said. "I thought I would be either helping guide tours, recruiting other volunteers or something along those lines. I was dead wrong. I had to sweep the floors and clean restrooms because the museum didn't have enough money in the budget for a janitor. Needless to say, I didn't stay too long."

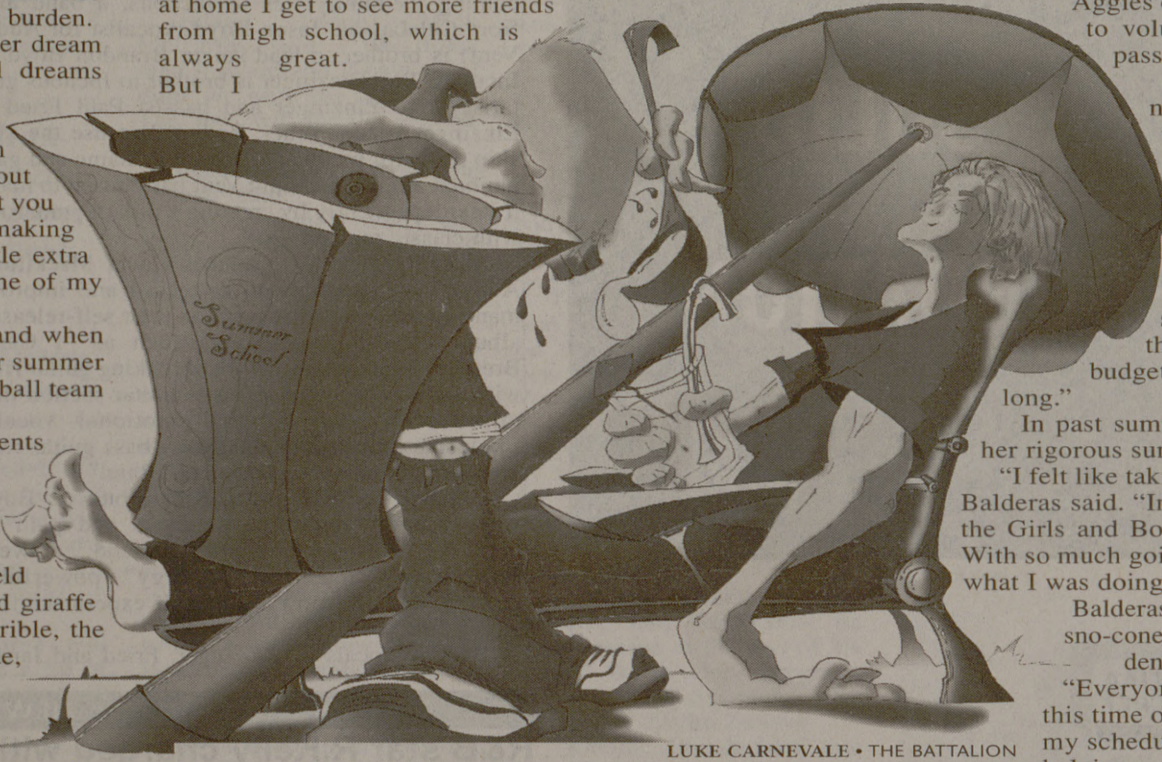
In past summers Balderas found herself burned out from her rigorous summer activities and wanted to enjoy this one.

"I felt like taking a break from school, activities, and adults," Balderas said. "In past years I volunteered at organizations like the Girls and Boys Club of Dallas, worked, and took classes. With so much going on, I got short fused and ended up disliking what I was doing."

Balderas says summers are a time of playing outdoors, sno-cones, and utter joy, not to be overrun with the burdens a college student's summer entails.

"Everyone seems to be lighthearted and nice around this time of year," Balderas said. "Past summers I packed my schedule too tightly with things to do and I ended up helping no one and annoying everyone," Balderas said. "This summer I'm not going to school, so that relieves

one stress, but I will be working with children, which hopefully will turn out okay. Definitely an ideal summer for me and hopefully a happy one."



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know when I get back up to College Station it is going to get crazy."

Simpson says this summer is anything but a break for him.

Star-light, Star-bright

Local residents look to Starlight Music Series as their summer escape

By Melissa Stephenson
THE BATTALION

College Station has found its own response to summer tours with the Starlight Music Series, held at Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater, and all of College Station, especially A&M students, are showing their appreciation.

From the B.Y.O.B (bring your own blanket) concept, to the freedom that goes with outdoor venues, Aggies have discovered that aspects of an open-air concert can be just as enjoyable as an indoor show, if not better.

Among the numerous fans to attend the Starlight Music Series kickoff was Ashlee Davis, a junior animal science major, who said being outside added to the mood of Jerry Jeff Walker's performance. For her, lounging under the stars in the cool grass is what country music is all about.

"Wolf Pen is great because you can bring blankets to sit on and hang out with friends," Davis said. "It's like having a concert in your back yard."

For Davis and other College Station residents, Wolf Pen Creek is their back yard, literally. Davis is one of the fortunate people who can enjoy the music of Wolf Pen from the balcony of her nearby apartment. She said although the music resonates throughout the

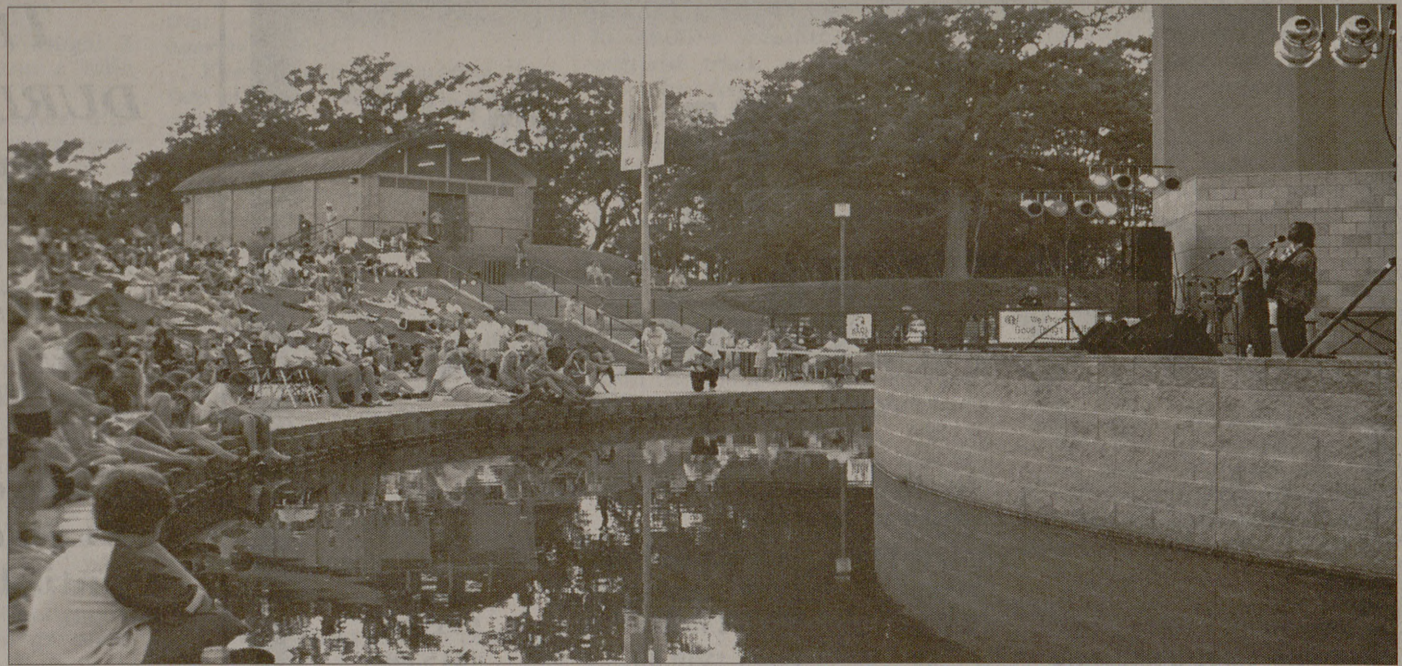
area on concert nights, she still likes to be on the theater grounds to get the full effect.

Unlike an indoor concert, Davis said the picnic aspect provides a much more social and relaxed atmosphere. During summer months, many students need a break from the structured and organized events of daily life, and outdoor theaters often serve as a therapeutic escape.

"Being outside at Wolf Pen, everyone at the concert was much more care-free than it would have been in Reed Arena," Davis said.

Unfortunately, with a care-free atmosphere, there's a possibility things may get out of hand. Davis said that the highlight of the evening at the Starlight Music Series kickoff, aside from the music, was when one of the concert goers fell into the moat that surrounds the stage of the amphitheater. She said she could only assume that it was just a crazed fan of Jerry Jeff Walker.

Willie Bennet, coordinator of the Starlight Music Series, estimated there have been 24,000 people to attend the first five shows of the series, averaging about 4,800 people per show. He added the crowd has been a combination of students, local residents, and families. The College Station commu-



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Concert goers enjoy the sounds of Ruthie Foster at the Starlight Music Series at Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater.

nity is taking advantage of the free concerts provided by the Starlight Music Series. Upcoming shows for the Starlight Music Series are:

June 8-Vince Vance and The Valiants.
June 11-Trout Fishing in America with Ruthie Foster
June 15-KORA's Back Porch 2nd Anniversary.

June 22-Ian Moore with Hadden Sayers
June 29-Big Otis
July 29-Killer Bees with Bobby Hall

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