

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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Searching for the Aggie spirit

Students debate the condition of school pride on campus

By Erica York
THE BATTALION

"When (Bonfire) fell it made us question our Aggie spirit and why we believed in the Aggie traditions," said Lindsay Liepman, a senior journalism major. "Now people are more individualistic and interested in being different as opposed to being united."

Liepman said Bonfire boosted school spirit because students worked together to build a tradition.

"Bonfire was the single most important thing for Aggies during the fall semester. It was the focal point," Liepman said. "In the past, everything led up to Bonfire, and now that it's not there, we don't really have anything to look forward to in the same way."

Many seniors say the Aggie spirit has faded since their freshman year and believe Bonfire is to blame.

"When Bonfire was going up you could drive by campus everyday and see people working on it," said Richard Robbins, a Class of 2001 agricultural systems management major. "Bonfire brought a different atmosphere to campus than the other traditions. Bonfire was a good way of constantly reminding people of the Aggie spirit, and I think its presence is definitely missed."

Brody Stacy, a senior recreation parks and tourism science major agrees. "If you take a big portion of something away there is going to be a void, and Bonfire was a big portion of our Aggie tradition and spirit," Stacy said. "Though we don't have Bonfire anymore, I think the spirit is still going strong when it comes to our other traditions."

Michael Freeman, a junior civil engineering major and resident of FHK, said his dorm once had a tradition of being one of the closest-knit residence halls on campus.

"I've heard things used to be much better—much more close knit," Freeman said. "We're still close, but we don't do that much stuff together anymore. There's not a constant crowd of people outside at all times. I think more of the students in FHK could come down and hang out."

Yet Freeman said he has seen more unity among residents this fall than he did last spring and thinks FHK is capable of regaining its original Aggie spirit.

"When you get older, the meaning of being an Aggie becomes deeper as opposed to when you're a freshman."

— Jennifer Denman
senior psychology major

Stacy said age has played a factor in his personal enthusiasm for the University.

"As a freshman, I was on campus more and I was always around other freshmen who were just really excited to be Aggies," Stacy said. "Now that I'm older, I'm just not as enthusiastic about it was I was when I was a freshman. But the spirit is still there."

While some students think Aggie spirit is dwindling, others say it is stronger than ever.

Jennifer Denman, a senior psychology major, agreed that a student's perspective changes from freshman to senior year.

"As a senior, you've already found your niche," Denman said. "When you're a freshman you want to do everything and there are so many new things directed toward you. You're just excited about being in college and experiencing something so new and different. When you get older, the meaning of being an Aggie becomes deeper as opposed to when you're a freshman."

Katy Peterson, a junior industrial distribution major, said the Aggie spirit is just as strong as it used to be, but has changed since she has been enrolled.

"I think as the University keeps growing and growing there's bound to be less school spirit and more criticism, but change is inevitable as the University grows," Peterson said. "I think Aggies have a certain spirit though that will never die."



JOSH DARWIN • THE BATTALION

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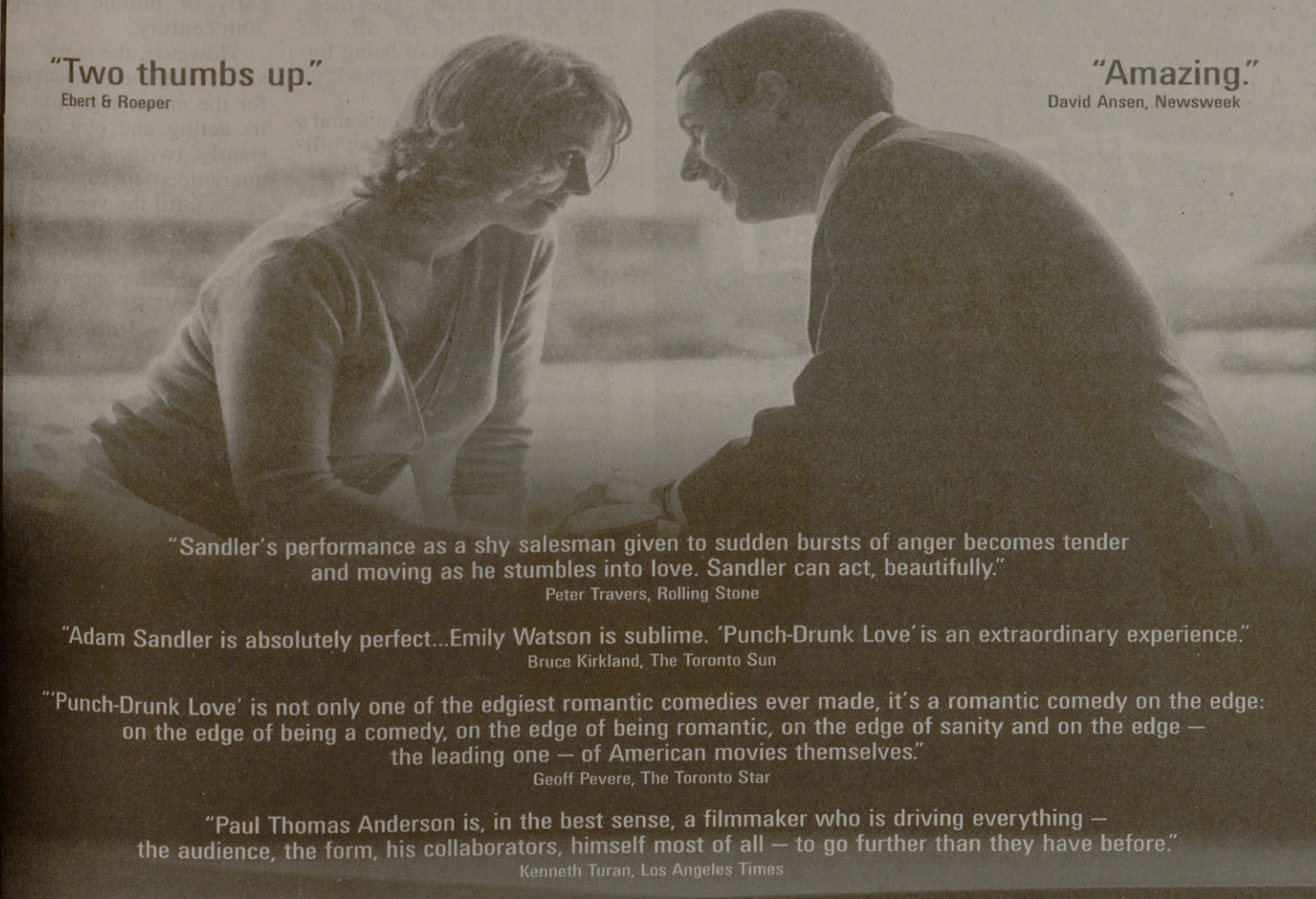
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