

Let the cameras roll

MSC Film Society to host 10th annual Texas Film Festival this week

By Nishat Fatima
THE BATTALION

During its 125 years of existence, Texas A&M has become known for its many unique qualities including rich traditions, having one of the largest campuses in the nation, and maintaining a fierce sense of school spirit. One of Aggieland's newer achievements is that it is the host of the largest student-run film festival in the nation, the MSC Film Society's Annual Texas Film Festival. This week, the event will be celebrating its 10th year of successful operation.

Dan Steele, director of guest relations for the festival, said MSC Film Society members started the Texas Film Festival in response to "the very limited selection of quality movies at the local cinema."

"(Film Society members) were aware of the vast talent independent movies had, but they didn't know how to bring them into the spotlight," said Steele, a junior English major. "They decided that College Station needed an outlet for all of those unconventional and unique films out there."

Steele said the event started out as a minor idea, but has evolved during the years.

"(The Texas Film Festival) began as an artsy film festival," he said. "Over the years, it gradually gained momentum and as the participants and volunteers grew, we have become the biggest student-run movie event in the entire country."

Steele said the guest list for the festival features talent from across the nation.

"Every year we try to bring in directors and actors from all over the country," he said. "This year, we have invited 11 directors and several actors for the event, and many of them are from Hollywood."

Steele said he owes most of the Texas Film Festival's success to its 50-plus volunteers.

"The entire event is able to run smoothly because we have volunteers who really care

about the festival," he said. "We have also become known for our hospitality which is why we can attract so many filmmakers, directors and actors to the event. All of the volunteers go out of their way and do a great job to make sure that everybody is comfortable and taken care of."

Steele said the ultimate purpose of the festival is to reveal the hidden talent lying in independent films.

"It is a completely volunteer and donation-run, non-profit event," he said. "The sole purpose of the festival is to create a showcase for all of the amazing yet lesser-known independent filmmakers out there to expose their talent. It is also an outlet for Aggies to experience different types of movies other than the regular Hollywood-type outfits."

Hallie Gardiner, co-chair for the Texas Film Festival, said the festival has a history of being a star-studded event.

"The first year that the event was put together, we actually had Spike Lee attend, and at the time he was promoting his movie 'Malcolm X,'" said Gardiner, a senior political science major. "Other famous directors that have attended are John Landis, who is the brain behind many of Michael Jackson's groundbreaking videos such as 'Thriller' and 'Black or White,' and Robert Rodriguez, who directed both of the 'Spy Kids' movies."

Gardiner said the movie selection process for this year's festival was a strenuous one.

"This year we had over 400 movie submissions, and all of the Film Society had to watch them and decide which ones would be included in the festival," she said. "After we decided on the movies, we sent out invitations to the producers and directors to come and join the festival."

Gardiner said Robbie Henson, who directed "The Badge" (which starred Patricia Arquette and Billy Bob Thornton), will appear at this year's festival.

In addition to the high-profile attendance, special recognition is awarded to many of the movies.

"There are several awards that are presented to the participants," Gardiner said. "The Judges

Award, which is chosen by a board including faculty members and alumni, is given to the best short film, best narrative feature and best documentary. We also have the jury awards, director's choice, and audience choice awards."

Casey Pinkston, president of SWAMP Club (Screenwriters, Acting and Movie Production Club), has been a regular participant of the event for the past two years. This year, the organization has submitted three new entries in the Aggie Short Section of the festival, he said.

"(SWAMP) does a lot of short films, and we are always trying to improve them," said Pinkston, a senior environmental design major. "I think that our movies have progressed since last year, and the festival is a great way for us to display our improved efforts."

Last year, Pinkston and fellow SWAMP member Julian Londonio were the recipients of the special achievement award for their short film "The Eagle has Landed." Pinkston said he was surprised yet very pleased when he received the award.

"We were up against a lot of really great movies from professional and very talented filmmakers," he said. "On the judges' grading scale, we scored enough points to make the top five, so we received the award as a form of recognition for the movie."

For Pinkston, the Texas Film Festival is a break from Hollywood mainstream.

"I think that the festival is a great idea because it gives indie filmmakers a medium of coverage, and moviegoers a chance to see different types of movies," he said.

The Texas Film Festival will open Monday night with a showing of the Oscar-nominated documentary "Spellbound" in Rudder Auditorium at 7 p.m. All events will take place in Rudder Auditorium on Monday, Feb. 17, to Saturday, Feb. 22. Tickets for individual events can be purchased at the MSC box office for \$3 each, and event passes can be purchased for \$15. For more information, visit <http://txfilmfest.tamu.edu>.

TxFF Schedule

Monday, Feb. 17

- 5 p.m. Striking Back Shorts Program
- 6 p.m. Prom Night in Kansas City
- 7 p.m. Spellbound
- 9 p.m. One World

Tuesday, Feb. 18

- 5 p.m. International Culture Shorts Program
- 7 p.m. Animation Shorts Program
- 8 p.m. Virgins (with Le Mime and Burning Passion)

Wednesday, Feb. 19

- 5 p.m. Look Again Shorts Program
- 6:30 p.m. Unprecedented (with Ostrich Egg)
- 7:30 p.m. The Utopian Society
- 9:30 p.m. Killers 2

Thursday, Feb. 20

- 5 p.m. Aggie Shorts Program
- 6 p.m. Mind Blowing Shorts Program
- 7:30 p.m. R.S.V.P.
- 9:30 p.m. The Backyard

Friday, Feb. 21

- 5 p.m. I'm With Romance Shorts Program
- 6:30 p.m. I'm With Lucy
- 8 p.m. Special TxFF 2003 Event TBA

Saturday, Feb. 22

- 2 p.m. I Download a Ghost (with Jungle Putt and Lenny The Leaf)
- 4 p.m. Light Hearted Shorts Program
- 5:30 p.m. Welcome to the Neighborhood
- 7 p.m. Production War Stories Panel
- 8 p.m. The Badge
- 10 p.m. Awards & Closing Night Reception

SOURCE: TXFILMFEST.TAMU.EDU

RUBEN DELUNA

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VOTE! REC SPORTS FEE REFERENDUM GET GOING WITH TAMU OUTDOORS RAMP ROMP WITH INTRAMURALS

February 26-27 The Department of Recreational Sports will be going to the A&M student body asking for a referendum to increase the Recreational Sports Fee from \$78 to \$88. This \$10 increase per student, per semester is critical to the Department's ability to cover the cost of inflation in its budget. But more importantly, it will allow the Department to create some exciting opportunities for the students of Texas A&M:

- Expand the Weight & Fitness Room
- Expand Penberthy Intramural Sports Center
- Increase Rec Sports student worker wages
- Hire a second Sport Club Coordinator (after hiring freeze is lifted)

Referendum information is available at <http://recsports.tamu.edu>. A detailed FAQ is available to answer all your questions. Voting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on February 26th and will end at 5:00 p.m. on February 27th. Students may vote on-line at vote.tamu.edu or at select sites on campus, including the Rec Center.

LIVE THE EXCITEMENT WITH SPORTS CLUBS

- M. Lacrosse, Feb. 14-17, all day @ Penberthy
- W. Lacrosse, Feb. 22, League game, 2:00 p.m. @ Penberthy
- W. Volleyball, Feb. 22, 12th Man Classic @ Rec & Read cts.
- Judo, Feb. 28-March 1, TX State, all day @ RC 7, Rm 272
- Archery, Feb. 28-March 2, Nationals, all day @ Archery Rm.

Upcoming Events

Event	Registration	Event Date
Lead Climbing Clinic	Jan. 21-Feb. 17	Feb. 18
Women's Rock 101	Jan. 21-Feb. 18	Feb. 23
BACKPACKING TRIP	Jan. 21-Feb. 18	Feb. 22-23
Rock Climbing Day Trip	Jan. 21-Feb. 25	March 1
Horseback/Hiking Day	Jan. 21-Feb. 25	March 2

TAMU Outdoors is located behind the Rec Center, facing Olsen Field. Call 845-4511 for information.

SPRING BREAK TRIPS

- **CLIMB HUECO TANKS**—Join TAMU Outdoors on a climbing adventure in one of the top US bouldering sites. Registration ends Feb. 27. \$265*/\$318**
- **CANOE BIG BEND'S RIO GRANDE**—Canoe the scenic wilderness of the Rio Grande River, hike through side canyons, explore the desert and sleep under the stars. Registration ends Feb. 27. \$364*/\$419**
- **HORSEPACK THE TEXAS FRONTIER**—Join TAMU Outdoors on this horseback adventure as we explore the Big Bend area. Registration ends Feb. 27. \$471*/\$542**

SUMMER BREAK TRIPS

- **SEA KAYAK ALASKA**—Explore a portion of the northern wilderness—Alaska's Prince William Sound and Harriman Fjord. Registration ends April 1. \$1,765*/\$1,950**
- **SAIL & SCUBA the Bahamas**—Sail on Blackbeard's cruise and trace the historic route of pirate ships and treasure galleons. Registration ends June 9. \$819

Sports CLOSING:

Sport	Registration ends	Cost
Badminton	Feb. 18	FREE
Sports Trivia Bowl	Feb. 18	FREE
Sand Volleyball	Feb. 18	\$20/team

Sports OPENING:

Program	Registration	Cost
4-on-4 Flag Football	Feb. 17-Feb. 25	\$20/team
Ramp Romp XII	February 22 @ 10:00 a.m.	

A 5k run through the A&M campus that finishes with a run up and down the ramps of Kyle Field. Early registration ends Feb. 18. (Cost \$10/\$12) Late registration Feb. 19-21 (Cost \$13/\$15) Race day registration (Cost \$20) Registration forms available at the Rec Center or on-line at recsports.tamu.edu.

GET FIT-FITNESS & CLASSES

- **FREE FITNESS PROFILES** by certified Rec Sports Personal Trainers—Friday, February 21 from 2:00-4:30 p.m. in room 134 of the Student Rec Center. Profiles include: blood pressure, body composition, muscular endurance, flexibility testing and a 3 minute cardio endurance step test. Don't miss out on this FREE one-day event.
- **FREE Healthy Living Lecture: THE FOLIC ACID TRIP: NOT JUST FOR WOMEN ANYMORE.** Wednesday, February 19 at 5:30 p.m. in room 281 of the Rec Center. Learn the latest information on the importance of folic acid.
- **FITNESS INSTRUCTOR TRAINING**—Registration begins now for this 6 week program that starts March 18. Sign up at Member Services today.

recsports.tamu.edu