

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Friday, October 17, 2003

Whoopin' western style

Aggie Wranglers boot, scoot n' boogie their way around A&M, the globe

By Jessica Lenchner
THE BATTALION

Aggie Wrangler President John Riggs is busy this week unpacking his Texas-size cowboy hat, black Wrangler jeans and boots made for scooting.

Riggs, an agricultural education graduate student, was one of six Aggie Wranglers who two-stepped all the way to Doha, Qatar, to perform at Texas A&M's newest campus in the Middle East. The Wranglers showed off their dance moves and gave the 29 Qatari students a taste of the Aggie spirit at a Texas-style barbecue.

Traveling around Texas, the United States and the world has become the norm for the Aggie Wranglers. The organization has gone from a group of students who shared a love of dancing when it first formed in 1984 to a group of ambassadors today.

Riggs said it has been a great experience for the Wranglers to work closely with the University and to represent A&M.

"We're not just a group that likes to go out to Harry's and dance," he said. "We spread love for A&M through what we do best — dance."

And, dance the Wranglers have. Their high-speed polka and freestyle jitterbug routines have been seen all around the globe. From Japan to Germany to Costa Rica, people everywhere are getting a glimpse of the Aggie version of country and western dance.

The Wranglers are up to dancing just about anywhere. Public Relations chair Kristen Mobley said she had fun performing last summer on a Caribbean cruise the Wranglers took to Montego Bay and the Cayman Islands.

"It was amazing how everyone was standing and clapping for us in the huge auditorium," said Mobley, a junior bioenvironmental science major. "It definitely adds a level of difficulty dancing on a rocking ship."

The Wranglers made new fans on their trip, but also ran into an old fan when the ship stopped in the Cayman Islands, Riggs said. They visited the Lone Star Bar and Grill, where they'd heard the owner

was an Aggie. Riggs said the owner was thrilled to see fellow Aggies and asked them to perform.

In Qatar, the Wranglers had the chance to interact with the Qatari students. They performed five times and helped teach them about A&M traditions like Howdy, Gig 'Em and whooping.

"It was like going to Fish Camp for them after being in school for a month," Riggs said. "We really bonded in the short time we had."

Former President George Bush is also fond of the Wranglers and has invited the Wranglers to the White House in the past, Mobley said.

"He gets a kick out of seeing us perform every time," Mobley said. "We love performing for him."

The Wranglers look forward to performing for Bush again next month when a Chinese delegation is scheduled to visit the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Riggs said.

After one show, Bush gave the Wranglers an autographed photograph of himself skydiving that read, "Here I am — sky high. This is how I felt when the Wranglers performed at the Bush Library."

Along with working closely with the University, an Aggie Wrangler must also find a partner whom they can work closely with.

Riggs said he was fortunate to find his partner, senior Wendy Covert.

"We really clicked in our dancing abilities and fed off each other's strengths," Riggs said. "She had experience with tap and ballet and was good at remembering sequences, and I had experience in music and knew about rhythms, beats and tempos."

As well as the weekly group practice on Tuesday nights, Wrangler couples spend countless hours practicing together. Mobley said practice is definitely year-round for the physically demanding and vigorous routines.

Aggie Wrangler tryouts consist of two parts and are held each April so the focus of the summer can be for everyone to learn the routines, Riggs said.

First is dance ability, in which potential Wranglers demonstrate their dance skills by doing the two-step, polka and jitterbug. The second part is teachability where those trying out must repeat a dance taught to them only minutes earlier. An interview process is also involved, Riggs said, to make sure members will



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION

The Aggie Wranglers perform onstage at Reed Arena in September 2001.

have the right morals to be a Wrangler.

Aggie Wrangler adviser Kim Novak said some memorable moments working with the Wranglers include seeing Wrangler alumni and current members come together to select the best new members.

"To see the former students come back to support and choose who will be part of their team was inspirational and reminded me just how phenomenal an experience being a Wrangler is intended to be," Novak said.

The most intensive practice is done months before making the team, Riggs said. He recommends that anyone interested in trying out should

take the lessons offered by the Wranglers twice a semester and take advantage of the dance partner database at aggiewranglers.com.

"The style we teach is the style we look for in tryouts," Riggs said. "I guarantee, if you're dedicated, then we can teach you how to dance."

To the Wranglers, each performance is as important as any other, no matter who they are performing for, Novak said.

"They are highly trained professionals who spend hours improving their performance," Novak said, "because they truly love their school and the art of Aggie Wrangler dance."

MSC Arts Awareness Week



October 20-24, 2003

Monday:

12pm Noon Time Concert @ Langford Atrium
12pm Lunchbox Concert @ Rudder Fountain
7pm "Carpe Diem" - Rudy @ MSC 292A

Tuesday:

12pm Hip-Hop Freestyle Contest @ Rudder Fountain
8:30pm Open Mic Night @ MSC Visual Art Gallery

Wednesday:

1:30pm "Saxomophones" @ Sul Ross Plaza
7pm Ron Clark Art Opening @ MSC Visual Art Gallery
7:30pm The Pianist @ MSC Forsyth Center Galleries

Thursday:

12pm Slam Poetry @ MSC Flag Room
12pm Lunchbox Concert @ Rudder Fountain
2:30pm Poetry Performance Workshop @ Rudder 401
7:45pm CineStudent: Kill Bill @ Cinemark
8pm Coffeehouse - Poetry Night @ Rumours

Friday:

8pm MSC Aggie Nights @ MSC
8pm The Debut @ MSC 201

All Week Long:

11-2pm Creation Table @ Rudder
11-2pm Big Banners @ Rudder/Wehner

Brought To You By: MSC ACE, MSC ALOT, MSC Film Society, MSC LAC, MSC OPAS, MSC Town Hall, MSC VAC and PhiSA
For More Information Visit www.msc.tamu.edu

THE ROAD TO RETIREMENT MAY SEEM SMOOTH, BUT IT'S LITTERED WITH TOLLS.

Fees. Charges. Hidden costs. Over time these things can erode the retirement savings you're working so hard to build. Contact us, a company known for keeping costs low. It ain't a free ride, but it's close.

TIAA-CREF.org or call 800.842.2776



Managing money for people with other things to think about.™

RETIREMENT | INSURANCE | MUTUAL FUNDS | COLLEGE SAVINGS | TRUSTS | INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

TIAA-CREF Individual and Institutional Services, Inc. and Teachers Personal Investors Services, Inc. distribute securities products. For information and prospectuses, call (877) 518-9161. Read them carefully before investing. © 2003 Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), 730 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

LATE NIGHT EVERY NIGHT LARGE 1-TOPPING FOR \$6.99 + TAX AFTER 10 PM

FRIDAY'S ADD A CINNAPLE FOR ONLY \$1.99

PIZZA PAPA JOHN'S

Better Ingredients • Better Pizza®

Friday Special

Pick Your Size **\$12.78**

LARGE 2-Topping & 1 side

SIDES: Breadsticks • Cheesesticks • Chicken Strips • Cinnaple

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 LARGE 1-TOPPING	2 LARGE 1-TOPPING	1 EX-LARGE 2-TOPPING	1 LARGE 2-TOPPING & 2 liter drink	PICK YOUR SIDE LARGE 2-TOPPING AND 1 SIDE	FAMILY SPECIAL 1 LARGE SPECIALTY	ANY LARGE SPECIALTY
\$5.99 pu/only	\$12.99 pu/delivery	\$10.50 pu/delivery	\$11.99 pu/delivery	\$12.78 pu/delivery	\$16.99	\$11.99

Northgate 601 University Dr. 979-846-3600

Post Oak Square Center 100 Harvey Rd., Suite D 979-764-7272

Rock Prairie 1700 Rock Prairie 979-680-0508

Sunday: 11 a.m. - midnight
Monday - Wednesday: 11 a.m. - 1 a.m.
Thursday: 11 a.m. - 2 a.m.
Friday & Saturday: 11 a.m. - 3 a.m.

OPEN LATE