

# ENTERTAINMENT

THE BATTALION

Page 7A • Thursday, April 22, 2004

## Desperately seeking Steinbeck

Aggie Players to use the stage to act out frustrations in "The Grapes of Wrath"

By Christina Tiechman  
THE BATTALION

This year marks the 58th season of stage productions by the Aggie Players. "The Grapes of Wrath," the acclaimed literary work by John Steinbeck with screenplay adapted by Frank Galati, is the second main stage event this semester and will open today.

"The Grapes of Wrath" is an epic story that outlines the importance of how family, faith in God and hope are important tools in the battle against misery. The Joad family, along with many others, are fighting the troubles of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl of the 1930s. With work, money and food becoming scarce, all able bodies of the east are traveling west to "Californie" in search of rumored relief. The trip itself is not an easy one, and there are many adventures along the way. Yet the heartache does not end at the "Californie" border.

The Aggie Players and Texas A&M Department of Performance Studies Theatre Arts Program are bringing this classic to campus with the support of The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts. The Aggie Players, Brazos Valley's oldest active theater group, was formed in 1893, although its first full theater performance of "You Can't Take It With You" was not presented until 1946.

Sunni Smoot, a senior theater arts major, said that although Steinbeck's original novel is normally considered depressing and dark, there are hidden messages of faith and beauty that can be brought out to become brought into the forefront.

"We tried to find the humor in a very serious play," said Sunni, who is also the stage manager for the Aggie Players' production and has been with the project from the beginning.

Michael Greenwald, associate head of performance studies and coordinator of theater arts said many months of preparation and molding have gone into the construction of this performance. Greenwald said he chose to direct this interpretation of the play in a Brechtian manner.

"Bertolt Brecht was a director and researcher in the early 20th century and developed this unique form of theater," Greenwald said. "Brechtian form intends for the audience to remember that they are just watching actors and the audience should not feel they are viewing the real thing. Brecht intended theater to revolve around the art of storytelling."

Greenwald said a distinctive technique in this style of theater is the art of a narrator using song to describe events and move the plot along. He said a large portion of the music used in this production is Woody Guthrie songs.

"I wanted to put Guthrie in the middle of the action because he is another main chronicler of the Dust Bowl era," Greenwald said. "We know more about what the common man was thinking by listening to his music."

Greenwald said the production has a versatile cast, many of whom play multiple characters. He said one highlight of the performance will be the special appearance by "Coach" Robert A. Wenck, Class of 1958, professor emeritus with the theater arts program.

Brett Dworaczky, a senior theatre arts major, said he is curious to see how the Aggie Players

### PLAYS

who:

The Aggie Players

where:

The Rudder Forum

how much:

\$7 for students, \$10 regular admission

doors open:

April 22 at 7 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AGGIE PLAYERS

The cast of the Aggie Players' "Grapes of Wrath" rehearse for the production. The play will have its first showing tonight at the Rudder Forum.

make out their version of Steinbeck's influential literary piece.

"I am looking forward to seeing how the actors handle the roles," Dworaczky said.

Greenwald said that since the theater production budget took a major cut at the beginning of this year, it only seems fit that a survival story be used to end out this season. Greenwald said Steinbeck's words from the book perfectly describe the situation:

"We are the people that live. They ain't gonna wipe us out. Why, we're the people - we go on. Ain't nothin' depressin' in those words - for

Oakies or theatre folk."

"The Grapes of Wrath" will be performed in the Rudder Forum. Performances are April 22 and 23 and April 28 - May 1 at 8 p.m. and April 25 and May 2 at 2 p.m. Tickets are available at the MSC Box Office. Prices are \$10, or \$7 for students and senior citizens.

**BATT LINKS**  
more links @:  
[www.thebatt.com](http://www.thebatt.com)

## Aggie Ring Day



### CONGRATULATIONS!

Join the Celebration at the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center

### APRIL 22ND RING DELIVERY

Tickets distributed throughout the day, beginning at 7:15 a.m.  
You must have a numbered ticket to get your Ring.

FESTIVITIES BEGIN AT 2:30 P.M.

RING DISTRIBUTION STARTS AT 3 P.M. AND ENDS AT 6 P.M.

We encourage you to take the Bonfire or Replant bus routes that stop in front of the building.

Prints of The Aggie Senior Ring by Benjamin Knox '90 available for purchase.

You must bring your receipt and driver's license to pick up your Aggie Ring. If you do not have your receipt, please bring your student ID and driver's license.

SPONSORED  
BY



## Uni Diversity Week



11:30am-1pm

### The Fairer Sex

Movie and Moderated Discussion  
Evans Library 204E

A man and a woman trying to do the same things... want to see how they are treated?

5-6:30pm

Race:

### the Power of an Illusion

Movie and Moderated Discussion

Evans Library 204E

How race has been constructed and used/misused throughout the history

7pm

### The Holocaust Through the Soldier's Eye: A Tale of A Survivor

Holocaust Remembrance Week program  
Rudder 301

<http://www.tamu.edu/university>

IGSA

MSC Diversity Presents

## "An Evening with Maya Angelou"

**RESCHEDULED**

Friday, April 23rd

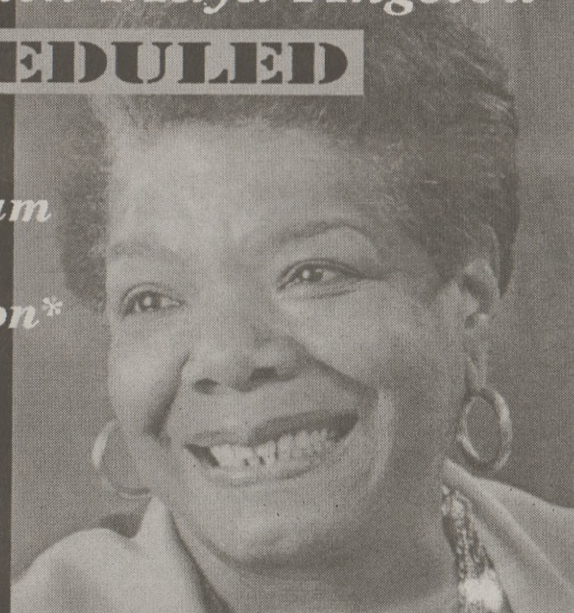
Rudder Auditorium

4:30 p.m.

Free Admission\*

\*Please note: seating is on a first come, first serve basis.

Doors open at 4:00 p.m.



Memorial Student Center \* Texas A&M University

For more information, or information regarding ADA accessibility, please contact MSC Diversity at 845-1515