

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Wednesday, September 8, 2004

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Everybody's whooping for the weekend

Created to replace Bonfire camaraderie, First Yell activities kick off Friday

By Kirk Ehlig
THE BATTALION

Kamran Hamid, a Plano native and graduate of Texas A&M Class of '03, is not new to the First Yell stage. He first opened for Martin Short in 2002 and was the headlining act in 2003.

Hamid officially started stand-up comedy in the summer of 2001 after seeing the comedian Bill Cosby perform at 2000's First Yell.

Now Hamid is opening for his mentor, Bill Cosby, on Friday during the activities for the weekend of First Yell.

"Even outside of comedy, it is a privilege to work with someone who has done so much for the betterment of society. Long after people have forgotten his shows and stand-up, they will remember Dr. Cosby's altruism," Hamid said. "I don't really care if the world remembers who I am, but I hope that I may also leave this planet a better place than I found it."

Hamid, who has another show at Rudder on Nov. 5, is also a second-year medical student at A&M as well as a comedian. Hamid said that being in medical school is difficult but rewarding.

"It's kind of like being a PTTS officer, except with less Krispy Kremes and we're not useless," Hamid said.

This Saturday, the events begin with the Cook-off Class BBQ, which is cooked by nine barbeque teams of former students who arrive on Friday afternoon and cook brisket and Slovacsek sausage all night. This meal, which will be \$8 per person, will be served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Rudder Fountain Plaza and is part of the Weekend Warm-Up activities.

The First Yell activities will conclude with the football game against Wyoming at 2:30 p.m. at Kyle Field.

This is the sixth annual First Yell, an event that the yell leaders started in 1999 as a way to kickoff the new school year.

"This is always on the occasion of the first home football game, providing a welcome to new, returning and former students," Rusty Thompson, assistant director of the Memorial Student Center, said.

After the Weekend Warm-Up, comedian and

actor Bill Cosby, who performed at First Yell in 2000, is returning to A&M to perform at this year's First Yell.

"I don't think Bill Cosby is ever going to let anybody down. His expressions on his face are enough," Bishop said.

Ryan Bishop, a senior yell leader and finance major, said the yell leaders started the entertainment for the Athletic Department and they bring in an entertainer along with student groups.

"Our emphasis is on the students, and we get a big name out there to bring people in," Bishop said.

Bishop said he has ever since the last Bonfire in 1999, Aggie Spirit has been lacking. He said that no matter the different organization all the students worked together, and since Bonfire is gone, the Aggie family is fading.

"It's not the Bonfire burning," Bishop said. "It's (students) working together as a team. It really does hurt camaraderie on campus. There is nothing that has replaced it."

Bishop said he hopes First Yell will help bring back that spirit.

"We want to make sure that people are excited about being back on campus, give them something to do when they're here and hopefully attract people to football games and other sporting events," Bishop said.

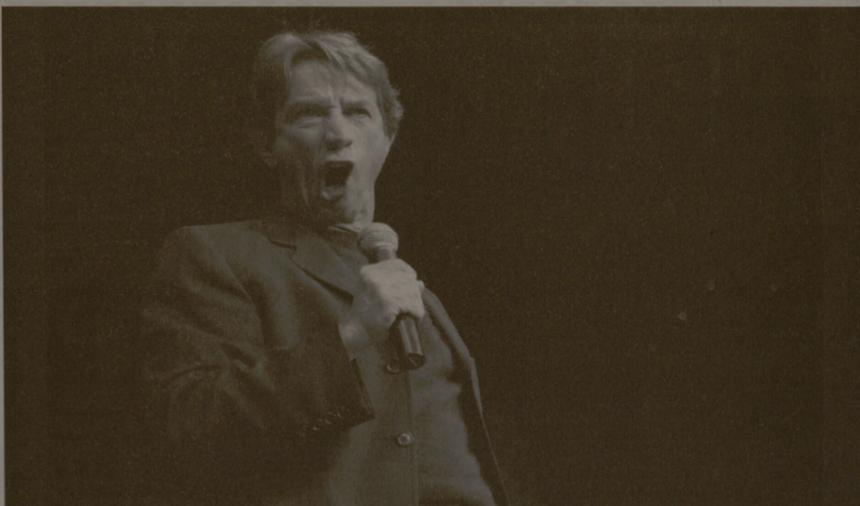
First Yell, which used to be primarily run by yell leaders, now has an eight-member committee of students that helps with everything from the Weekend Warm-Up to the barbeque.

"We put out applications in the spring because for five yell leaders to do it all alone, with all the traveling we do in the summer, is kind of a daunting task at times. They've really helped us out a lot," Bishop said.

Bishop said Bill Cosby was chosen to perform again because of his appeal to all ages.

Thompson, who is also a former yell leader and Class of '85, said the First Yell coordinators felt that enough time had passed since Cosby was last here. Although Cosby was not available for an interview, Thompson said he and the yell leaders are honored that he chose to return.

"The student body has turned over for the most part, so most of the students did not have a chance to see him last time," Thompson said.



Actor/comedian **Martin Short** greets the audience at First Yell 2002. Actor/comedian **Bill Cosby** will return for his second visit to Aggieland as the headlining performer for First Yell 2004, which will begin at 8 p.m. Friday in Reed Arena.

Thompson said the concept for the show always includes a big-name entertainer, but that some of the best entertainment is found nearby.

"But we also want to open the show with the best of student entertainment from Texas A&M University," Thompson said. "We have wanted to showcase these students to our former and current students, again as part of the 'welcome back to Aggieland' concept."

Opening acts for Cosby are The Singing Cadets, The Aggie Wranglers, comedian Kamran Hamid, Apotheosis, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and musical group Mountain Aire.

Aside from First Yell activities, another way to spend Saturday afternoon is by learning about one of the most significant changes in Aggie history. The 30th Anniversary Reunion of Women in the Corps exhibit at the Sam Houston Sanders Corps Center beginning at 11 a.m. will accom-

pany various weekend activities for reuniting former cadets.

"The goal of the exhibit is to show that women have been in the Corps for a while now," said Lisa Kalmus, curator of the Corps Center. "Just like the men, they are being prepared for service to the state and nation."

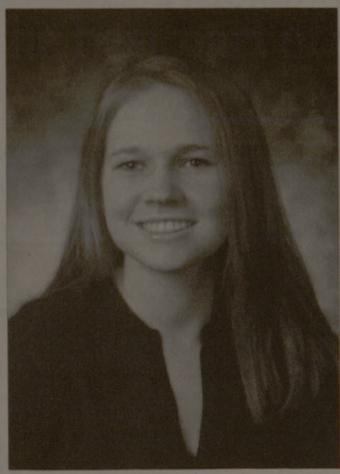
Betsy Kelley, a sophomore theater arts major in the Corps, predicts that the exhibit will be a "good thing" for the Corps.

"I think it will bring a lot of awareness that yeah, we are in the Corps, but we're still girls, and it's OK."

Kelley said women in the Corps are now more respected than their counterparts of 30 years ago.

"It's better now that we are integrated... They're doing a lot to bring our image up to standard, that we are equal to the men," she said.

"Whoever got her heart
got the best part of her."

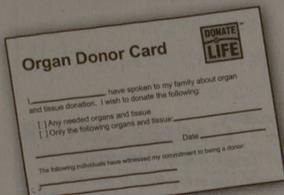


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-- Jim '73 and Marilyn Snell
College of Veterinary Medicine
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