

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Monday, September 27, 2004

PAGE BY JULIE BONE

Organization overload

Pressure to be 'Super Aggie' can lead to burnout from organization involvement

By Teresa Weaver
THE BATTALION

To be a Texas A&M student and not become involved in a single organization might seem blasphemous to some. The "Other Education" at A&M has become a defining aspect of the student body, and all around campus, students are getting involved with organizations. As the saying goes, "from the inside looking in, you don't understand it, and from the inside looking out, you can't explain it." The reason students choose to be involved at A&M seem to be rooted in the vibrant Aggie spirit on this campus.

Kristin DeLong, a senior community health major, spends more time working with her organizations than she does in class. She has been a Fish Camp counselor for two years, involved with the all-women leadership group Maggies and is the chair of MSC Hospitality, a service organization, which she joined her freshman year. "Honestly, I have a full-time job outside of class," DeLong said. "I'm in the hospital every second I'm not in class."

With the pressure of leading a student organization, DeLong arranged an easy class load this semester. She said she knows that next semester will be harder to keep up, but that she never feels like she's losing her drive.

"I haven't burned out, but I get up every morning and ask myself why I do all the things I do," DeLong said. "The answer is always the same. I love the mission and the people behind what I do. It's about being passionate about what you're doing. If that wasn't there, it wouldn't be worth it."

Scott Orr, a senior political science major in the Corps of Cadets, is the commanding officer of company E-1, and has been a member of the Ross Volunteers, and has participated in many other organizations during his three years on campus.

He joined the Muster Committee his junior year and used his experience there to explain why

students put so much emphasis on organizations. "Students help with Muster because it is one of the best examples of what it means to be an Aggie. The day of Muster, students spend time with the families and give them a chance to understand what their child did and what they were a part of here," Orr said. "It's about showing the outside world what Texas A&M is about."

Orr spent last semester with four to six hours of sleep each night because of his commitments to organizations.

"After class, there would be RV training for two hours, Muster committee for two hours, and by then it was 10:30 p.m.," Orr said.

"Then I'd do my homework for class as well as work on Muster before I got any sleep. And the next day it was the same thing over again."

Orr handles all the pressures of school and organizations with the memory of being a freshman in the Corps.

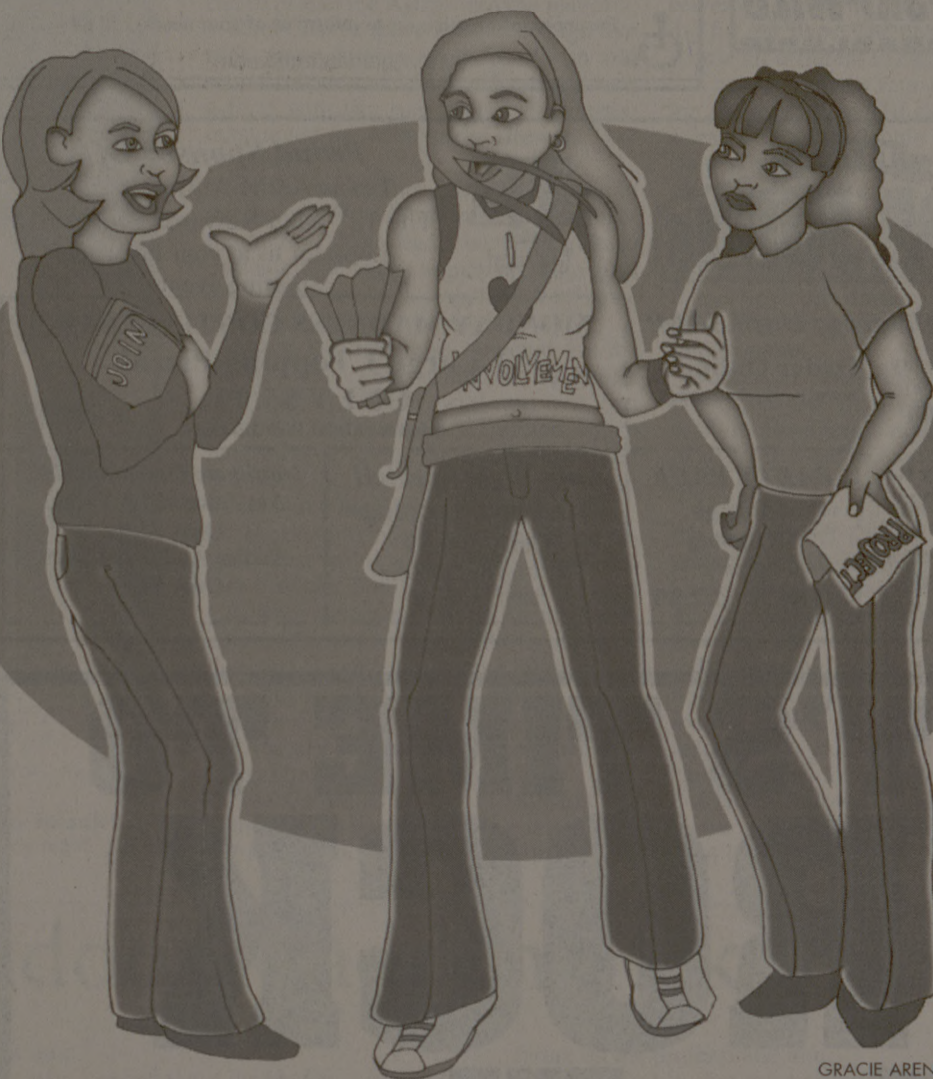
"As a fish, they put so much on your shoulders, your natural reaction at the end of the year is to go out in the community and continue that work load," Orr said. "They train you to be this 'Super Aggie.' Since then, it's been easier to handle all the stress."

Fish Camp is an easily recognizable organization on campus due to the amount of time and work student leaders put into it.

With co-chairs chosen in November and counselors selected in February, most of the spring semester and all of the summer are devoted to preparing for camp, said Laura Boren, the adviser for Fish Camp. Boren, besides advising Fish Camp, also oversees advisers for GUIDE, a freshman mentoring organization; T-Camp, a camp for transfer students; and Howdy Camp, a student-run orientation for spring semester transfers.

With the level of responsibility and intensity co-chairs must deal with, Boren said most co-chairs have no other major leadership involvements. Still, Boren said around 25 percent of co-chairs are actively involved in other organizations.

"There is always a point where a leader gets overwhelmed and feels they can't complete their



GRACIE ARENAS - THE BATTALION

"At A&M, it is all about the Aggie Spirit. Here, students are compelled to make a difference."

— Laura Boren
Fish Camp, GUIDE, T-Camp
and Howdy Camp adviser

tasks," Boren said. "That's why we have co-chairs, you have a partner to balance out the work load."

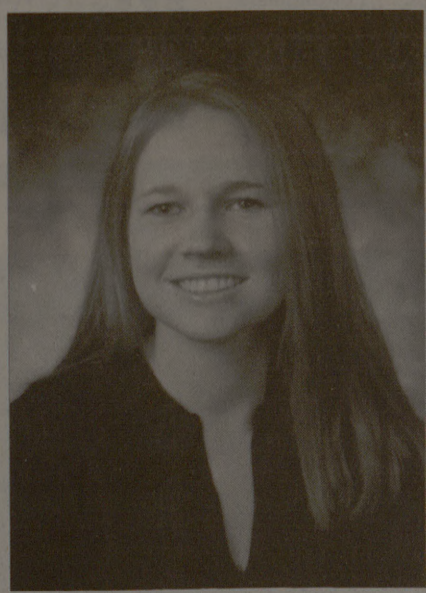
Boren said there is a different attitude about involvement at A&M than at other schools.

"At A&M it is all about the Aggie Spirit. Here stu-

dents are compelled to make a difference," Boren said. Orr's advice to freshmen is to get out there and be involved.

"Do as much as you can for as many people as you can, and then you'll really start to understand what it means to be an Aggie."

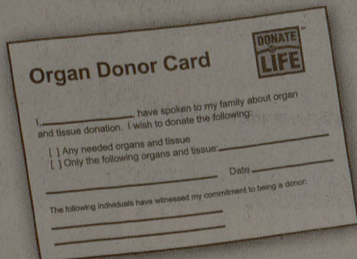
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