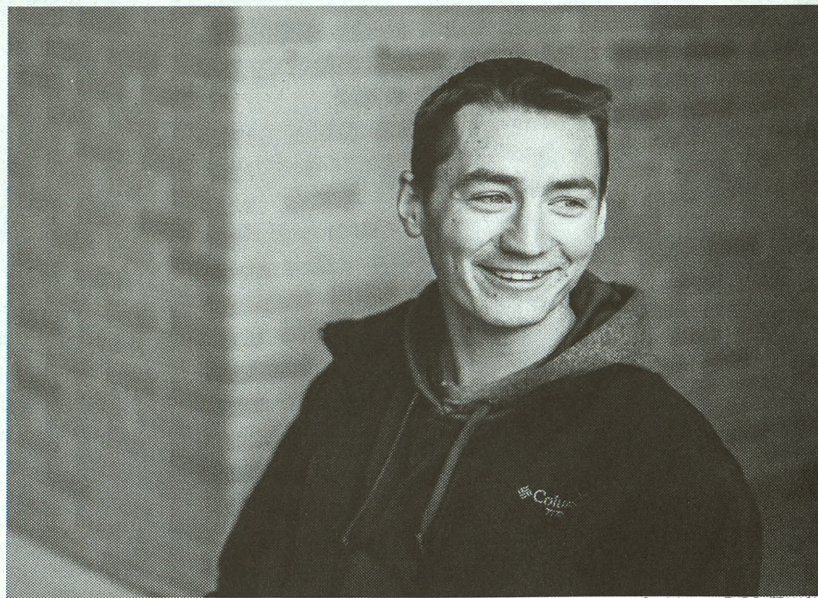


ENTERTAINMENT

'Toast with Toates': behind the scenes

Gracie Mock, Battalion news reporter, sat down with William "Jeff" Toates, university studies sophomore, who produces the YouTube series "Toast with Toates," which features Aggie athletes. The series releases a new episode every other Tuesday on Texas A&M Athletics' YouTube channel.



Sarah Lane — THE BATTALION

THE BATTALION: What got you interested in starting this series?

TOATES: The original idea was basically to do a rapid-fire Q&A-type interview that would literally just take as long as toast was cooking and actually have it real time. And so that was kind of a unique idea, both with the play on words with my last name, and then using the toaster as a timing element for an interview, but then obviously it's gotten a lot more than just that and we've integrated some sketch-type stuff along with just the interview and obviously it takes a lot longer than toast would actually cook. It's something we've had a lot of fun with and it has really kind of evolved over time. I'm a huge Aggie sports fan, so that's before anything. I was a huge fan of all these people, all the athletes and sports, and so getting the opportunity to do this was really fun, something I enjoy doing.

THE BATTALION: Do the athletes know what's coming when they agree to an interview?

TOATES: No, they don't. Most of them have no idea what they got themselves into, and so some of our best stuff has been when they think they're doing a serious interview. It's probably 50 percent scripted and then 50 percent reacting to what they say and going with that. A lot of the reactions are pretty genuine, and we put that in the episode. A lot of it is just them being weirded out. All the athletes have been really good sports. They think it's funny.

THE BATTALION: What was your favorite episode to film?

TOATES: That's tough. I really enjoyed the Connor McQueen one because he's hilarious and it was really awkward and we were at an ice rink and we filmed it in October because we had to film it during their bye-week, when he had time, but I had to explain to him that it was going to be Christmas themed because it was coming out in December, so it was just a lot of fun. And then, probably, the Drew Kaser one,

Jeff Toates, university studies sophomore, produces the YouTube series "Toast with Toates."

just because how that turned out. All that happened with that, it was a lot of fun.

THE BATTALION: Do you have a YouTube inspiration?

TOATES: A lot of people have said it's like "Between Two Ferns" obviously, so we definitely get some inspiration for just general feel of the show from that. In addition to that, I would say the Comedy Central show "Nathan For You," which a lot of people haven't heard of, but it's a very awkward, similar type of show.

THE BATTALION: Do people recognize you from the videos?

TOATES: I've had a lot of people be like, "You look familiar, like, where is it from?" And then it's conceded to be, like, "Oh, you probably watch my series," so I'm like, "I don't know, maybe we had a class together." Generally the only time people really come up and talk to me is on Northgate, that's when people are like, "Can we take a picture?" And I'm like, "You're going to regret this when you're sober and you realize I'm not famous." Random people tell me that they like it on Twitter and stuff like that and so I really enjoy that.

THE BATTALION: What can we expect in this upcoming semester?

TOATES: I think we set a pretty good precedent for this semester with the Zumba and Logan Nottebrok. We're trying to get as crazy as possible, honestly. One of the things you'll see is more cross-sport integration, like an

athlete from one sport teaching another athlete their sport, get multiple athletes involved like that. Get crazier places — like ice rinks — where we're filming, stuff like that. Just grow the show is essentially our main goal and to hit every sport we haven't yet, because this is really the final semester of the show and so by the end of this, we want to have done at least every sport once and also to get Coach Sumlin. It's the last semester and I really encourage people to check it out if they haven't seen it.

THE BATTALION: What is the craziest thing you've done on the show?

TOATES: My favorite non-interview segment we've done has been the tennis pick-up lines on campus with tennis player Jackson Withrow. We make him use tennis-related pick-up lines on random people on campus, and we filmed for like two hours, probably, and it was hilarious. We put the best minute and a half in that video and it was funny and it was a lot of fun to do and I really like the way that one turned out. So that was probably the craziest, that was pretty weird and they told us no more material like that.

THE BATTALION: If you could have toast with any athlete, from any time, who would it be and why?

TOATES: Johnny Manziel, 100 percent. But more realistically Coach Sumlin. I'd be scared to do that but I feel like he's awesome — I feel like he'd be really funny.

SHIP CONTINUED

smaller artifacts take less time."

D.L. Hamilton, anthropology professor and director of CRL, said the lab is one of the longest continuously-run conservation labs in the country, and the only lab in the United States capable of handling large artifacts like cannons.

"We had already done the Westfield and another civil war ship off the coast of Texas, and with the CSS Georgia we're the only laboratory that can handle it," Hamilton said. "Mainly it's our reputation — they know this is where you come if you want a large artifact, or if you want a large project to be undertaken."

Parker Brooks, an anthropology graduate student doing fieldwork in Savannah, said he began working at CRL as an undergraduate volunteer before becoming employed last spring.

"It was an awesome opportunity to really get my hands on history and to actually see what it's like to do something in the field of anthropology or the field of archaeology," Brooks said.

The fieldwork in Savannah is expected to last until August, including the excavation work and the following reburial of certain items, Brooks said.

"Due to limited resources, the iron for the ship was basically railway iron, like what they run trains on," Brooks said. "That was their armor plating, so we have tons and tons of these railroad iron ties laying on the bottom, so not all of these will be conserved, they'll be reburied in the back river."

After the Civil War, the U.S. Navy assumed all of the Confederacy's naval assets, including the CSS Georgia, so the artifacts conserved at CRL will eventually be displayed in a museum for the general public, and will not be available for any private buyer.

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