



From top left to bottom left clockwise: allied health freshman **Madeleine Jenkyn**, kinesiology junior **Mckenna Hares**, nursing student **Kristin Smith** and engineering freshman **Thomas Achee** climb the rockwall at the Student Rec Center.

## Club scales new heights

Craggies look to climb to the top in the Collegiate Climbing Series

By Spencer Davis

Those who walk into the Student Recreation Center are immediately faced with the monumental sight of a 44-foot vertical rock-climbing wall. Pockmarked with hand holds and strung with climbing rope, the wall is crisscrossed every day by student climbers.

Some of those climbers are a part of Craggies, Texas A&M's competitive climbing club. The team was founded in 2004 and has since grown, winning more and more competitions across Texas. Darren Jones, nutritional sciences senior and Craggies social chair, said the organization has focused on growth in the past, and is now looking to secure competition titles.

"Our goal at the end of last year really was to grow," Jones said. "We have almost doubled since then. Now we are pushing climbers to get them into our Collegiate Climbing Series."

Most major Texas universities compete nationally at the Collegiate Climbing Series. The lineup typically includes Texas Tech, Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas.

The Craggies have doubled their numbers in the last year with an open-arms policy, said president and anthropology senior Renee Costello.

"It's a really good way for beginners to get to know one another," Costello said. "We have two groups — the beginners and then the advanced climbers who want to compete — so we try to provide an environment for both. So a new person who has never gone to the wall before can learn the ropes and meet other climbers and become part of the community."

This open-arms approach has developed Texas A&M's climbing community and drawn in newcomers who otherwise would not have known where to start. The team wants to continue this policy, but it also wants to excel in the national competitions.

One of the advanced climbers who joined the Craggies is Ryan Schmidt, a management information systems junior who began

climbing at 11 years old. Schmidt placed first this year at a University of Houston meet and hopes to make nationals this year in San Diego.

"Being a part of this club is really important to me because it's the community that I feel like I belong in," Schmidt said. "It felt really natural to me to join an organization about climbing. It felt right to make it grow as much as it can."

The team hopes to extend this growth by obtaining official status from the university. The Craggies raise their own funds, but as a university-sanctioned club would have the resources available to make the team more competitive nationally.

"Our goal is, so now that we have the people, how can we make the club official and provide the climbers with the resources they want?" Costello said.

The Craggies will head to Baylor this weekend to compete in the next Collegiate Climbing Series event. They hope the competition will be a strong lead-in to the rest of the season, especially for regionals at the end of March against a strong UT team.



Shelby Knowles—THE BATTALION

Nutritional sciences senior **Sarah Bermudez** attempts to connect to the Wi-Fi around Blocker, which should soon be upgraded.

## Wi-Fi revamp in the works around campus

A&M spreads Internet access to busier outdoor areas

By Connor Paetzold

Texas A&M is trying to make life easier for students on the go by improving Wi-Fi access around campus. The A&M Information Technology department has started adding outdoor Wi-Fi access to highly trafficked areas around campus and popular bus stops.

Lacey Baze, assistant director of product strategy and communication for the A&M IT department, said outdoor Wi-Fi has already been added to the Rudder Fountain area, the MSC bus stops and the Fish Pond area. The IT department also upgraded the wireless Internet infrastructure in the Blocker building.

Baze said the IT department plans to make more outdoor wireless access points available soon, and will continue upgrading the Wi-Fi capabilities of some older buildings.

"With the explosion of mobile devices, students need Internet access in places they haven't needed it before," Baze said.

Baze said the IT department has already started working on creating wireless access points at the Sbis bus stop, the West Campus green space between Kleberg and the Horticulture building and the Trigon bus stop. Baze said the Sbis bus stop Wi-Fi should be completed in the next few weeks, while the West Campus green space Wi-Fi should be completed by the end of the summer semester.

Willis Marti, director of networking and information security for the IT department, said although the IT department has planned to add outdoor Wi-Fi around buildings for a few years, the idea to add Wi-Fi to bus stops is fairly recent.

By sharing the power and data infrastructure already running to the automated gate-arms that block the streets at the large bus stops, the IT department can install new Wi-Fi access points fairly simply, Marti said.

Although it may take months to install a Wi-Fi access point on the outside of a building, Marti said Wi-Fi can be added to the bus gates in only a day.

Marti said the locations for the new Wi-Fi points were chosen and prioritized based on a survey conducted by student government about where students would like to see more internet access.

Marti said the A&M IT department's recent improvement of Blocker's Wi-Fi was more of an update than an installation. Blocker was one of the earliest buildings on campus to get wireless Internet access, so its capabilities were outdated and needed to be upgraded.

"We expect each student to have three devices with them, so to keep up with that demand we needed to upgrade," Baze said.

Peter Jarboe, meteorology sophomore, regularly attends classes in Blocker. Jarboe said he could only get Wi-Fi in Blocker's main front hallway before the building was upgraded, but now he can get online both in the big lecture halls and in the smaller classrooms.

"It's nice to have Wi-Fi I can use and actually count on being there," Jarboe said.

Baze said the IT department constantly upgrades older buildings on a cycle. Baze said student input plays a role in which buildings are scheduled for the next round of improvements.



## Q&A: Dancing on 'Sacred Earth'

The Battalion Life & Arts reporter *Cassidy Hudson* spoke with *Aparna Ramaswamy*, member of the *Ragamala Dance Company*, which will be performing "Sacred Earth" at 7 p.m. Thursday in Rudder Theatre.

**THE BATTALION: What can be expected from the performance?**

RAMASWAMY: We will be performing "Sacred Earth," which underscores the relationship between man and the environments that surround them. The works that our company does are based on an Indian classic dance form. We use that form as a language to create new works that explore themes that are relevant and universal to audiences and to all of us today.

**THE BATTALION: Can you describe the style of dance?**

RAMASWAMY: The dance form is rhythmically complex. We always interpret the music. There are intricate movements of

the entire body. There are hand gestures and expressiveness where the dancer becomes an actor playing different characters on stage. It is at once dynamic, poetic, rhythmically complex and joyful. There is so much spontaneity that happens on the stage of live performances and so much freedom for the dancers to interact with the musicians.

**THE BATTALION: Where do you draw your inspiration?**

RAMASWAMY: I've dedicated my whole life to working in this dance form. My mother and I have a teacher in India who is world famous. We are totally inspired by her and our relationship with her, and the depth of the study. When you study a great art form — be it literature, music, dance — the wonderful thing to realize is we are all just a small part of that form. The form is bigger than us. The universe is much bigger than us. The fact that we have the privilege of being part of a tradition or a form with so much

greatness and potential is very inspiring and very moving. There is so much more to learn and create. The joy that one feels internally, the joy of nice, the joy of relationships, the joy of surrender, all of those things can manifest in your art. On top of that, I work with my family.

**THE BATTALION: What is it like working with your family?**

RAMASWAMY: It works for us. It is very exciting because we have the same experiences that we can draw from in certain ways. But, we are our own people so we each bring who we are and our own experiences in the world to our creativity. You trust their feedback. You always have someone to bounce your ideas off of. It is very important in the world to have people who support you and can be honest with you. Of course you are going to argue and you're going to fight, but it all comes from a really good place where you all know you are bonded together.

## MUSTER CONTINUED

as the speaker because of his dedication to Texas A&M.

"He was really involved when he was a student here — he was the president of the student body during the Bonfire collapse, and everybody I talked to that was here while that happened said he was under a lot of pressure during that time and all eyes were kind

of on him and he just really stepped up to the plate and was a really good face for A&M and a really good student body president during this really difficult time," Potter said.

Potter said Hurd's participation in this year's Muster will bring something different to the table than in years past.

"I think that Will is really unique because he's a little bit on the younger side — he brings a different vibe to Muster this year," Potter said. "I think a lot of the time it's older,

'Old Ag' guys that were in the Corps, Old Army, and I think that Will is kind of the opposite of that. He's younger, he's involved in politics, he wasn't in the Corps. So I think that his kind of new and different side of it — it is going to be awesome."

Cromer said it is an honor to have Hurd as this year's speaker.

"We're all super excited to have such a dynamic individual speaking, an individual who is making a big impact, on not just the

Texas A&M community or even the state of Texas, but the entire nation," Cromer said. "We know he's super busy and it's such an honor. I think it speaks to the power of the Muster ceremony and the closeness of the Aggie family that he's willing to take the time out of his extremely busy schedule to take time to write the speech [and] to come down for the speaker dinner on [April] 20 and the ceremony on [April] 21. We're so honored to have him come speak."