

NEW STUDENTS' GUIDE TO AGGIELAND MAROON LIFE



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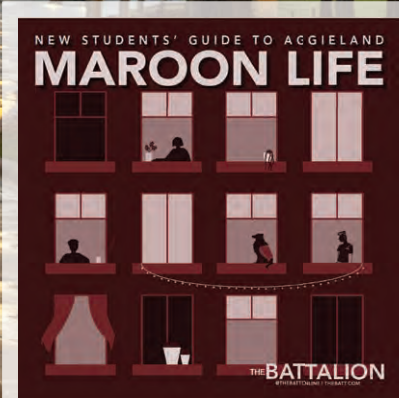
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Cover art by Gabrielle Shreve



via engineering.tamu.edu

Texas A&M University is home to 71,109 students as of the fall 2020 semester.

Special sections editor Amina Butt welcomes incoming freshmen, transfer students to Aggieland

After a year full of unprecedented events, Aggies have come together to make the most out of their college experience. As the university and students prepare for a return to normalcy this upcoming fall, it's important to encourage and uplift the new students who will begin their freshman year in Aggieland.

Now more than ever, starting a new chapter in life can feel overwhelming. After spending a year with social distancing and isolation, as life returns to normal it's so important to value your time here at A&M and make the most of your Aggie experience. Even though college is a big commitment, I still want to encourage you to make the most of it. In this magazine are stories to give a valuable headstart to your freshman year.

A simple refresher of some A&M traditions can save you from yelling the wrong wildcat or missing the first Midnight Yell. You may even have the opportunity to impress upperclassmen by sharing some of the lesser-known history behind A&M's most famous traditions.

A successful college career begins with good advising. Students can feel more prepared knowing about the online and in-person advising resources. The classes you take and the major you choose are vital to your experience. Many Aggies change majors during their time at A&M, so don't be afraid to make big changes. It is important to ask questions and get assistance from the advisors who

are there to help you.

Not only can students find helpful insight from their advisors to begin a successful college career, services such as the Academic Success Center and other resources help students maintain their good grades as well as preparing them for life after graduation.

Learn about the Aggies who represent the student body while you are here. Every year the student body president runs their campaign on initiatives to benefit students. That means the changes they enact can influence your experience at Aggieland. The Student Government Association works to pass campus initiatives and represent students in the best ways possible. These and other leadership opportunities exist for students hoping to change Aggieland for the better during their time in college.

After a quick skim through the countless organizations available at A&M, it's easy for freshman to feel a little overwhelmed. Organizations can be academic, career or social focused. Students are not limited by the number of organizations they can join, so it is important to not try to do too much. It's often best to invest in a few organizations that you are passionate about so you can have an unforgettable college experience by making long-lasting friendships and memories.

If you are a first generation student, A&M has recognized the need for more resources available for students like you. First Generation Aggies is a new student

organization that offers first generation students valuable networking opportunities. Signing up for classes, applying for scholarships and paying tuition pose big obstacles for students who may be the only one in their family to attend college. A&M First Generation Networks within the university's colleges offer workshops and advising sessions for students with any questions.

I know freshman year may seem daunting, but simply ask any upperclassmen who has made it through. As soon as you make some valuable connections and begin to build your community, A&M quickly feels more and more like home.

This magazine is to provide helpful insight toward being successful at A&M, but (as you will soon discover) there is something more here that makes the experience unlike any other. After doing your college search, there are many reasons you may have chosen to come to A&M. Maybe it's the best school for your major, it's close to home or other family members and friends came here before you ... These are all great reasons to come to Aggieland, but Aggies stay here and complete their studies because of the high level of education offered, networking opportunities and the unexplainable Aggie Spirit they experience during their time in Aggieland.

As my graduation approaches and I reflect on my time here at A&M, I have gained so much from my professors,

classmates, coworkers and friends. As I celebrate my own graduation and look forward to the next step, I encourage you to invest in the people and the numerous opportunities around you to make the most meaningful experience possible. Now you are an Aggie, and the Aggie family is here for you.

Welcome to the family!

Amina Butt is a telecommunication media studies senior and special sections editor for The Battalion.

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PARKS FORGES NEW PATH

Parks to honor inclusivity, student initiatives as sixth female student body president

By Julia Potts
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William Nye — THE BATTALION

After being elected on Feb. 26, Natalie Parks will serve as Texas A&M's student body president for the 74th session of the Student Government Association, or SGA, and is the sixth woman to fill the role.

Parks has been involved in university and student life since she first stepped foot in College Station. From class councils and Greek Life responsibilities, to numerous roles in student government, Parks said she has learned valuable skills that will guide her in her new position.

After serving as the youngest member of former Student Body President Mikey Jaillet's cabinet as vice president of communication and junior class president for the Class of 2022, Parks said she has a better understanding of the inner workings of student government, as well as the ability to articulate her initiatives in person and on social media.

"I think all of those different experiences and the people that I met and the connections that I made have very much helped me to get to where I am today," Parks said. "I will always be thankful for all of those things."

Parks's campaign was based on wellness, inclusion and tradition, with a focus on outreach and visibility. She said she wants SGA to be a resource for people to voice their concerns to help the organization better understand any issues that they are unaware of. Through this, Parks said she can help publicize and make popular issues more well-known.

"I think it's very special through this role to be able to interact very heavily with those different entities that are doing incredible things through the college councils and the Corps [of Cadets] and Greek life and the cultural councils," Parks said.

Peyton Liebler, Parks's campaign communications director, said he found her campaign platform very personal, and that her honesty never faltered in any situation. He also said Parks is one of the best people to handle the major transition of returning to in-person classes in the fall.

"I'm really excited just to see her process of how Aggieland can return back to what we originally know it and love it for," Liebler said.

Parks said she has spoken with past student body presidents about the job, including women formerly in the role such as Amy Sharp and Hannah Wimberly. Outgoing President Eric Mendoza has been a large influence, Parks said.

"I'm so thankful for his leadership and watching him grow and excel in this role," Parks said. "So many people have told me, 'You have very deep shoes to fill this year.' I'm very much looking forward to continuing to [lean] on those people."

Mendoza said he is most impressed by the energy Parks puts into every task and her willingness to listen to others, especially those

outside of student government.

"We have such a large campus with so many perspectives who [are] willing to share those perspectives," Mendoza said. "Really, the job of student body president is to be a facilitator of all of that, and Natalie gets that."

Parks said she anticipated many challenges when deciding to run for student body president, one of which was being the only woman candidate.

"I've very much taken a lot of time to self-reflect on that season and all of the hard work and preparation that went into it, and [I saw] it pay off standing at the statue that night at 7 p.m. [with] them saying my name," Parks said.

As the sixth woman to serve as student body president in the university's history, Parks said she feels honored to be in the position at this time with so many female leaders coming into office after this semester.

"The weight that [the] title holds is something that I've also been reflecting on, being the sixth woman to have worked hard to get to [the] position," Parks said. "I think it puts a lot of things into perspective. We are actually about to enter a very exciting era of having our next female university president, and sixth female SBP and [female] speaker of

the [Student] Senate as well. That is a combo that hasn't been seen."

Parks said she wants to encourage people to pursue their goals, no matter what they are, and that people should not let history discourage them.

"I think that at the end of the day, history has been made in multiple senses, and I think that's more encouraging for the overall community to see, especially people who feel like they didn't have a shot because of [an] aspect of themselves," Parks said. "I think that anything is possible, you just have to really look into yourself and realize that you can do anything, honestly."

Parks said one of her favorite quotes is by Maya Angelou, which reads, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." She said the sentiment shared in this quote was one of the main reasons behind her running for student body president.

"I very much want people to remember a student body president who cared about them, who cared about their goals and their initiatives and the things that they wanted to do to make campus better," Parks said. "A student body president who made sure that their voices were heard."

BREAKING BARRIERS

Iman Ahmed is first Sudanese American, Muslim, Black woman to serve as speaker of Texas A&M Student Senate

PROVIDED

By Kathryn Miller
@kathrynmiller0

Public health senior Iman Ahmed currently serves as the speaker of the Texas A&M Student Senate for the 74th session.

This year, A&M's Student Government Association elected and confirmed the first all-female chief student leadership team across all branches of the Student Senate. In addition to Ahmed as speaker of the Student Senate, Natalie Parks was elected student body president and Karissa McIntosh was reconfirmed as A&M Judicial Court's chief justice.

Ahmed's position as speaker is best described as presiding over the Student Senate, she said.

"The chief student officers for Student Senate are the main spokesperson and are the chief media officers for external interactions," Ahmed said. "Speaker of the Student Senate is the face of the Student Senate. They are also the key student leader that connects with high levels of administration and former students."

Being involved in student government was always her dream, Ahmed said, but she never had the opportunity to in high school because she moved several times.

"I already knew in the back of my mind when I came to A&M that I wanted to be

involved somehow in student government," Ahmed said. "But it wasn't until I got a better understanding of A&M that I really felt inspired to run. I met a lot of students who looked like me. They were underrepresented, marginalized and excluded. I felt it was necessary to run because these students can't continue to feel underrepresented and left out of these narratives."

Getting involved and finding a community when she first came to A&M is what Ahmed said got her acclimated to the university and what inspired her to run for a position in the Student Senate.

"Knowing I had that support system was extremely monumental for me as I ran and eventually joined the Student Senate," Ahmed said. "At the time, I was still a freshman and had no clue what to expect. It was through that community I was able to find mentors as well as other people like me. They had run for Student Senate and were involved in student government, so they were able to give me advice, mentor me and push me through that difficult process."

Her experiences as a Sudanese American, Muslim and Black woman are what Ahmed said made her realize the importance of

diversity and inclusion in communities.

"No matter what space I was in growing up, I always stood out," Ahmed said. "But when people actively included me and made me feel that my background was respected and my perspective was desired, that's what made me feel most comfortable. That's when I realized diversity [and] inclusion was so important, to make students feel included, accepted and that their opinions are valid and their perspectives are valued."

In a greater, university context, Ahmed said it is essential that when students come to A&M they feel comfortable and included so they can love this university.

"Diversity is so important for innovation, for growth and for getting new perspectives and new innovations," Ahmed said. "With that, inclusion is so important because if you let people be excluded automatically, right then and there, there's great perspectives that are out the window."

Ahmed said it is an honor to serve as one of the few women speakers of A&M's Student Senate.

"The last female student speaker, Jasmine Wang, was the first Asian American speaker of the Student Senate. She shattered many ceilings when she got into that role," Ahmed said. "By stepping into that role, she broke those

barriers and paved the path for me."

As a woman Student Senate Speaker, Ahmed said her goal is to continue breaking barriers. Ahmed said she aims to continue paving the way for the next generation and to inspire more women to step into this role of Student Senate speaker.

Being surrounded by other strong, like-minded student leaders that also want to push A&M forward is what Ahmed said inspires her to be the best speaker of the Student Senate she can be.

"I love the opportunity to serve the student body," Ahmed said. "Texas A&M has done so much for me, my growth and my development. I want to make sure to give back to this university, to serve the students and make sure that they are getting the same experiences from Texas A&M. I want them to walk out knowing these monumental four years of their life have helped them grow and change as people."

Hearing people's needs, doing everything she can to serve the students and being surrounded by others who have the same mission as her is what Ahmed said are her favorite parts of being such a prominent leader on campus.

"I want to challenge and inspire students to make them realize, if they want something, go get it," Ahmed said. "Don't be afraid to step into these bigger roles. I want to break down [any] intimidation and lack of competence in students and instill confidence in the next generation of Aggies."

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Staff writer, PGA Tour.com



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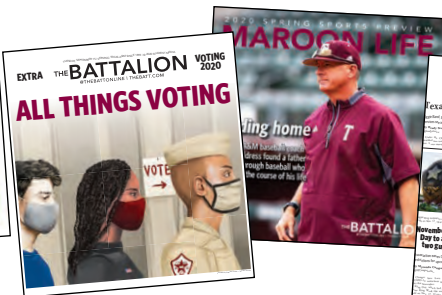
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"Working at The Battalion gave me a career trajectory, taught me the value of deadlines and accurate communication and truly changed my life. Plus I made lifelong friends. That alone is worth it."

Stacy Bertinelli, '93, English & History
Marketing Director,
Translational Genomic Research Institute



"My entire professional career has been shaped by my time spent working at @TheBattOnline as a student reporter and editor. I'm no longer in the J-biz, but make no mistake: I use elements of what I learned there every hour of every day. Can't imagine my life without it!"

True Brown, '04, Agricultural Journalism
Director of Development, A&M Foundation

"Learned so much during my time there and definitely made lifelong friends. Wouldn't be who I am today without my time at The Batt."

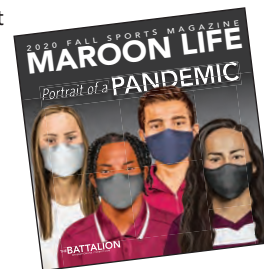
Doug Fuentes, '01, Journalism
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"The Batt is where I learned my craft and caught the journalism bug. Hopefully many more generations will get the same opportunity."

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Managing Editor for News and Politics, Texas Tribune

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Chevall Pryce, '17, University Studies/Journalism
Reporter, Houston Community Newspapers



"It truly helped me figure out the direction I wanted to go in career-wise!"

Bethany Irvine, '18, Communication
Government Affairs Coordinator, AALU, Washington, D.C.

"I wouldn't be anywhere without The Battalion!"
C. Morgan Engel, '18, Telecommunication Media Studies
Photographer, Clarkson Creative formerly with
Minnesota Vikings/San Diego Chargers

"As a reporter and editor at The Batt, I learned real-time lessons: how to live the ethics of journalism; skills that made success as an entrepreneur publisher possible; and the conviction that journalism matters."

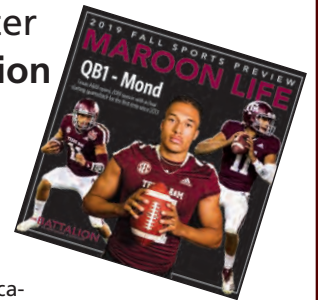
Angelique Gammon, '81,
Journalism Professor, Texas A&M,
former owner & publisher
of Insite Magazine

"My experience as a sports editor/writer was so much more valuable than most of my classes."

Carter Karels, '18, University Studies/Journalism
Sports reporter, South Bend Tribune

"What I learned at The Battalion helped land internships with the Philadelphia Inquirer and The Dallas Morning News. It gave me skills to seamlessly integrate into a professional newsroom."

Angel Franco, '19, Telecommunication Media Studies
Communications specialist, Texas A&M Libraries



Why Texas A&M?



The fountain in front of Sbis Dining Hall is known as Fish Pond. According to tradition, after an A&M football home win, the five Yell Leaders are carried by freshmen cadets from Kyle Field and thrown into the fountain.

Meredith Seaver — THE BATTALION

Many things draw students to A&M, including unique Aggie culture, network

By Hollis Mills
@sillohslim

The decision to attend a university potentially hundreds of miles away from home never comes easy.

Surely, a good education can be earned wherever there are willing educators, but students make the leap to attend Texas A&M for another reason. Perhaps it's the opportunity to meet one of the nation's most adorable mascots or take some pride in buying oneself their first pair of ropers. There is a connection students make at A&M that keeps Aggie lore so fascinating.

For Lucas Mendoza, Class of 2020, his choice to attending A&M was solidified the day he stepped foot in a Chicago elevator and stood across from an Aggie with a bit of gold on their finger. A conversation struck up, and so did two students' appreciation for their

school.

"Despite the age gap, our mutual experience as A&M Aggies made us feel a real bond that day," Mendoza said. "It was then that I realized just how special the Aggie community will always be to me."

Mendoza, who began his education at A&M through the Blinn TEAM program, said he was initially worried he would not have the full Aggie experience if he were attending another school for credits. In due time, Mendoza would transfer in, but he discovered he did not need to be on A&M grounds to fall in love with the A&M lifestyle.

"I was pleasantly surprised that I was able to fully participate in A&M traditions, football games, living on campus," Mendoza said. "A&M's traditions do a really great job creating a cohesive Aggie community, of course between students, but also with alumni as well."

Attending school in Aggieland can be viewed as a rite of passage for some, Carlos Canchola, Class of 2021, who threw out every other application when he found he was

accepted into the maroon and white.

"I knew that Texas A&M was where I wanted to go, even if I had gotten several acceptance letters," Canchola said. "I knew that I could not live with myself without having experienced Aggieland for myself."

When he was a freshman in the Corps of Cadets, the initial transition still worried Canchola. He participated in all squadron activities, but this did not disguise that for the first time in his life he was on his own.

During this stretch of learning how to navigate the university he wanted to call home, Canchola said he turned to an Aggie who had been in his shoes before, an Aggie who had spent his fair share of restless nights reminding himself — coming from a town of high school graduates who went straight into the workforce — he deserved to be at A&M too.

"[My brother] showed me how your background was irrelevant once you came to Texas A&M," Canchola said. "The blank canvas you were given was not a tragedy, but a privilege, because it mattered not what you were given before, but what you were going to do

with what you had now."

No matter the difficulty it may take to adjust to a new setting, Canchola said the greatest connection someone can find at A&M, whether it be between siblings or cadets, is the shared experience of having been here.

"Although every person has a different experience while at Aggieland, we have the same love for Texas A&M," Canchola said. "It's a uniquely overwhelming thought that although we may not know every person at Texas A&M, we love each other like family."

This appreciation between Aggies assured political science early-graduate Stephanie Munson that she too would find herself in College Station.

"I knew coming into Aggieland that the people here were different from the people at any other university, [but] what surprised me was just how correct this statement was," Munson said. "I never expected to meet so many different types of people that all somehow shared my interests and had a similar mindset as me."

Academic support at A&M



The Academic Success Center is located on the ninth floor of Rudder Tower.

FILE

Free campus resources allow students to ask questions, prepare for exams, improve their grade point averages

By Michaela Rush
@Michaela4Batt

At Texas A&M, making the shift to new academic expectations can be difficult, which is why students are provided with a wealth of resources. The Academic Success Center, University Writing Center and Math Learning Center all help students without an additional cost.

At the Academic Success Center, or ASC, staff offer coaching, tutoring and supplemental instruction as well as handouts and presentations for a variety of classes. Undergraduate Studies communication manager Anna Transue said ASC's goal is to promote student achievement.

"We are a huge proponent of encouraging students to define and find their own version of success, whether that means they set a goal to do better on their next quiz or in their next class," Transue said. "We want to be there to support them, whatever their success is, how-

ever they define it."

According to ASC's 2019-2020 annual report, students who attended 10 or more instruction sessions saw a GPA increase of 0.32. Transue said she encourages students of all abilities to reach out to the Academic Success Center, which is located on the ninth floor of Rudder Tower.

"I don't think any student comes to college and expects to do poorly," Transue said. "We do see a lot of students that struggle with the transition from high school to college for a number of reasons. It's okay to ask for help early, and it's okay to ask for help often."

The University Writing Center, or UWC, is located in Sterling C. Evans Library and specifically helps students with language arts work. With their full-time and student staff, the UWC offers individual appointments and written feedback. Nancy Vazquez, current director of the UWC, said the center can help with content outside of academic assignments.

"We'll help you with whatever writing or speaking you're working on," Vazquez said. "If you're not sure if you should bring something to the writing center, [ask yourself], does it have words in it? Then you can bring it to the Writing Center."

The UWC also has consultants trained to work with English language learners on both speaking and writing in an academic setting. Vazquez said the UWC has been adapting to digital formats since before the COVID-19

pandemic and wants to provide a range of options for students seeking feedback.

"We want to continue to provide high quality service in ways that students are comfortable with and in ways that ensure their continued health and success," Vazquez said. "If they're not able to come in person, they still have options available."

The UWC also hires students each spring and looks for students with a desire to help others, not just student-workers with a particular type of major. Vazquez said this variety is important to help provide for all types of writing needs.

"We really encourage people from different disciplines to apply, because we help people with all different kinds of writing," Vazquez said. "They tend to be people with helping personalities who like that feeling of being able to work with somebody and see that spark of recognition. They're people who have that mental flexibility and that compassion for their fellow Aggies."

The newest academic resource on campus is the Math Learning Center, or MLC, located on the second floor of the Blocker Building. This center is targeted toward assisting students with any math or statistics course at A&M. This resource was founded in part by Paulo Lima-Filho, Ph.D., who is the current executive director of the MLC and a math professor at A&M.

Lima-Filho saw a need for a math specific

resource on campus, given the math department serves students from multiple disciplines. With the help of former Provost Carol Fierke and a task force, the MLC was created in spring of 2020 and has quickly become a one-stop shop for quantitative sciences.

MLC program coordinator Anna Williams said they are currently working on a new digital resource for students in conjunction with the math department.

"We are about to release a Virtual Math Learning Center ... It will be available to any Texas A&M student," Williams said. "It will be a full collection of videos, modules or chapters to follow the class, very similar to Khan Academy."

The MLC offers group and individual tutoring, weekly review sessions and online videos and handouts organized by course. For students new to A&M, Williams said the MLC is only one of many student help resources on campus.

"When students are in their math courses and struggling, we would like them to remember that they have their professor, their TA and the Math Learning Center," Williams said. "As far as first year students, we advise taking your math courses early in your degree. The earlier you take your math, the better, because the math you took in high school is fresh on your mind."

HUNTING FOR HOUSING?

AggieSearch is Texas A&M University's **only** official off-campus housing search website.

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AGGIESEARCH.TAMU.EDU

Academic advisors are available for students to help with creating class schedules, declaring minors, working on career planning and much more.

FILE

Advisors' tips for new students

Texas A&M advisors encourage incoming students to utilize resources, plan ahead

By Julia Potts
@juliaapotts

Between the stress of choosing classes, finding new friends and figuring out how to balance all your new activities, being a new student can be quite intimidating. Luckily, there are some people to help you along the way.

Texas A&M has undergraduate advisors for every college on campus, as well as regional advisors both in Texas and out-of-state. These advisors can help inform students on their personal careers at A&M and assist them in planning ahead.

Edwin Aguilar, academic advisor for the College of Engineering, said he recommends students visit their advisors multiple times throughout the semester to ensure they are well prepared.

"At the very minimum, at least twice a year," Aguilar said. "Once at the beginning of the year just to figure things out, making sure everything is okay, and one toward the end of

the semester to help you figure out your next semester's classes."

Aguilar said students should not be afraid to go to their advisors if they have any questions, even if they are not specifically about classes. Advisors can offer valuable advice for students looking for a place to start, he said.

"We're here to help you figure out scheduling and stuff like that, but we also know a lot about Texas A&M," Aguilar said. "A&M is a huge campus. If you're ever lost, come visit an advisor. We often know people in different departments."

Director of advising for the College of Liberal Arts Allison Rivera said advisors may also suggest organizations for students based on career and academic interests.

"Academic advisors are available for advice on course selection, degree planning, co-curricular opportunities like study abroad and honors, internship options, connections to resources on campus, campus clubs and involvement, and so much more," Rivera said.

There are multiple ways for students to make appointments and get in contact with their advisors, Rivera said. For the most part, a student can call their advisor, make appoint-

ments through their Howdy Portal and occasionally do a walk-in appointments. Advisors most commonly use the Navigate program in Howdy to schedule appointments.

"It is very easy to access, either through the My Record tab in Howdy or via a mobile app called Navigate Student," Rivera said. "The system will send you a reminder about your appointment, and you can save it to your calendar. Check your department's website for more information, as most advising offices will also offer walk-in advising."

Academic advisor for the College of Architecture Alondra Rojas said many students' questions regard registration dates. She said advisors are just one of the resources students can use to answer these questions.

"The most frequently asked questions are things like 'When is the deadline for XYZ?' 'Why can't I get into this class?'" Rojas said. "Honestly, the best answer is always, 'Are you reading the whole course description? Are you checking your registration? Do you have any holds that may be restricting you from registering?'"

Rojas said students should pay attention to their A&M emails, which provides a lot of

information about registration times. She said she understands students receive a plethora of emails every day, but it is important to keep a lookout for important emails.

"Read your email and plan ahead," Rojas said. "It sounds kind of funny to tell students constantly to read their emails, but we know that they get a lot of emails from a lot of promotional events and stuff like that. If you can just make sure that you read every email you get from your advisors, that would limit a lot of the problems that they run into."

Rivera said advisors are there to help. While some students may be hesitant about going to them for help, whether it has to do with school or personal achievement, there are many resources on campus waiting to answer questions.

"Your academic advisor wants to get to know you and assist you with resources to help you be a successful student," Rivera said. "Open up to your advisor, tell them your goals and dreams. We will be excited for you. This university has a multitude of resources just for you, please utilize them."

Finding support in new environments



Kaylee Cogbill — THE BATTALION

Resources like the LGBTQ+ Pride Center offer unique tools to help Aggies acclimate to college life.

Texas A&M student services assist students throughout their educational journeys



Bec Morris

@BecWrote

With over 70,000 students enrolled, Texas A&M offers a variety of social support services so no student gets lost in the crowd. From mental health resources to minority-focused spaces, these offices keep students engaged and well during their time in Aggieland.

Personally, I have utilized or seen the benefits of a number of these resources. Included on this list are the LGBTQ+ Pride Center, Counseling and Psychological Services and the Veterans Resource and Support Center.

LGBTQ+ Pride Center

My first interaction with the LGBTQ+ Pride Center came at a tumultuous time in my life. I was interviewing Francis Jackson, the Pride Center coordinator, for a class project. At the time, I was very much in the closet about being bisexual and confused about my gender identity. Talking with Jackson about the issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community opened my eyes to how supportive the school could be toward those in minority groups.

Since then, I've accessed a variety of resources within the Pride Center. Participating

in the Pride Pen Pals program over the summer of 2020 during the onset of COVID-19 allowed me to connect with a fellow queer person forced to live with their parents during the partial lockdown. We leaned on each other in the beginning months, finding support in our similar experiences and sharing the positive things that occurred in our lives.

The Pride Center is also full of LGBTQ+ educational literature, fiction and memoirs that help LGBTQ+ individuals feel understood and validated. I enjoyed picking up pride stickers to add to my laptop as soon as I got brave enough to display my identity. Right before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I was planning to join one of the many LGBTQ+ support groups that help queer individuals process their trauma, their relationship with their identity and other mental health concerns that accompany being part of a minority.

Without the Pride Center, I would definitely feel a lot less comfortable being out on campus. I recommend incoming students who have any sexuality or gender questions or just want a supportive environment to visit the center and start networking with the amazing individuals found therein.

For more information about the LGBTQ+ Pride Center, visit studentlife.tamu.edu/lgbtq
Counseling & Psychological Services

Counseling and Psychological Services, or CAPS, provides a much needed service to many students in Aggieland. Mental health is a prominent issue among today's youth, especially among those in college. CAPS offers individual counseling, workshops, group therapy and more to help young adults through this difficult stage in life.

Spring 2020 introduced me to CAPS as I struggled in a difficult relationship and with discovering my true self. Fourteen hours of coursework, a one-way relationship and family stress weighed on my shoulders that semester, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. After hearing CAPS offered free counseling, I scheduled my first appointment. I was nervous while sitting in the waiting room, but when my name was called and I sat down in my therapist's office, I started to relax as she gently asked about the issues affecting my life.

For the next few weeks, she helped me manage my anxiety and depression, talking me through the potential reasons for my specific coping mechanisms and stress responses. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, my workload was surprisingly reduced and my mental health improved, allowing me to conclude my therapy. My counselor reminded me that CAPS will always be there if I ever

need it.

Coming into college, students are never alone. CAPS accepts all students with open arms, working together to bring a sense of normalcy and peace to any concerned individual. In crisis situations, they offer emergency counseling, as well as general therapy to assist before things get too bad. When you need help, reach out to CAPS and they will help pull you to safety.

For more information about CAPS, visit caps.tamu.edu

Veterans Resource and Support Center

The Veterans Resource and Support Center, or VRSC, has never affected me directly, but through my second job at the Texas A&M Foundation, I have seen the influence this service has on student veterans.

Due to their military service prior to higher education, student veterans often feel disconnected from the younger student population. Along with the potential trauma they may have faced during their military service, these individuals have very unique experiences that can be difficult for others to understand. That is why a veterans network is so essential at a university known for its military connections.

At the VRSC, veterans can find mentoring services where other student veterans share their experiences and provide support for the transition back to civilian life. For an assignment with the Foundation, I had the chance to speak with a veteran who worked as a mentor, telling his story to veterans who have just gotten out of the service. According to this individual, it can be difficult for student veterans to keep up motivation to complete their degrees as they struggle with their military memories. He said he hopes to use his success story to counsel other veterans and even younger individuals considering military service before college, even after he graduates, thanks to the positive support he received while here at A&M.

Soon, a brand new office in the MSC will open its doors to welcome student veterans. The office hosts a quiet study space while offering transition services helping veterans be successful at college and then in their future careers outside the military. Additionally, they provide scholarships and financial aid to make obtaining an education possible for these individuals. Servicing this unique subset of the A&M population, the VRSC allows those who served our country to feel supported and understood throughout their time in college and onward.

For more information about the VRSC, visit aggieveterans.tamu.edu

Bec Morris is a journalism sophomore and news editor for The Battalion.

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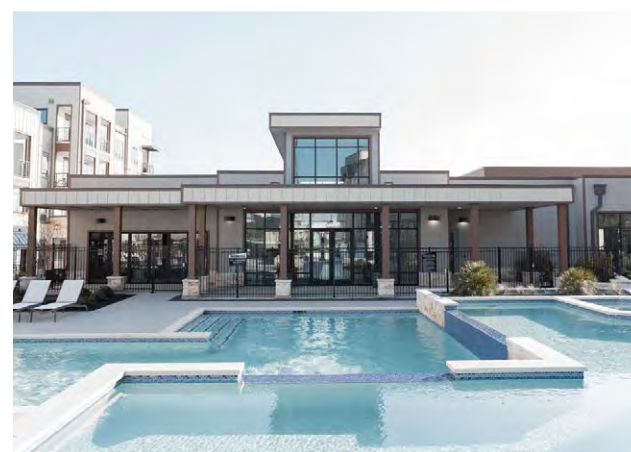


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Dear freshmen,

News reporter Aubrey Vogel says A&M students should cherish every moment while in Aggieland



Aubrey Vogel
@aubrey_vogel

To the Class of 2025,
Welcome to what I truly believe is the best place on earth: Aggieland. There is so much in store for you during your time at Texas A&M, and I hope you will use your time in college to truly find yourself and live to the fullest potential.

After being here in College Station for two years now, I hope to be able to share some wisdom with you about transitioning to college life.

No. 1, call your family. Although you may be glad to be out of the house, know that your family is also transitioning to this new era of daily life without you. Even if it's just every once in a

while, your family will enjoy getting to hear your voice and hear about your new life at A&M.

With being away from home, you also gain the responsibility of taking care of yourself, which means there may be more to do now than you have before. Remember to do the simple things such as washing the laundry and doing the dishes — you really don't want it to pile up during a busy week.

Ask for help. Although you may think you can figure it out yourself, there are many people on this campus that are willing to help you in any way they can. There are multiple on-campus resources available, such as Counseling and Psychological Services as well as academic support and student organizations, many of which are laid out in this Guide to Aggieland.

Make sure to take time for yourself.

This is something you should not learn the hard way because it can mean that you overworked yourself. Studying is important, but remember to take breaks and do things that will make you happy and keep you healthy. This can include being with friends or even going to work out in one of the on-campus student recreational facilities.

Find your home away from home. It is super important to find a local support system that you can rely on in addition to your family back home. Know there are people out there for you; you just need to find them. This can be done through joining organizations and finding people in your classes.

Which brings me to another point; talk to people. With a simple "Howdy," you would be surprised at how many people that you meet from just striking up a conversation while sitting in the

Memorial Student Center or talking to people while walking around campus.

Take part in the traditions. A&M is a special place because of the traditions that are carried on year after year. Things such as the 12th Man and Saturdays in Kyle Field are moments that should be treasured. Traditions like Silver Taps and Muster also allow you to see the Aggie Family in action. You will truly appreciate the little things when you see a sight like this.

Finally, know that your time in Aggieland is going to be a wild ride, but cherish every moment of it because it truly goes by faster than you think. Texas A&M welcomes you with a full heart, and we are all excited to see what you become.

Aubrey Vogel is a journalism junior and a news reporter for The Battalion.

FILE



XX — THE BATTALION

FINDING YOUR FIT

The Memorial Student Center hosts an open house at the beginning of the fall and spring semester where students can find organizations to join.

Student organizations serve variety of interests, create connections

By **Lauren Discher**
@lauren_discher

Texas A&M student organizations are an easy way for new students to find their fit on campus.

Aggies can enjoy a variety of student organizations focused on service, leadership, academics, politics and religion. These organizations offer the opportunity for students to get involved, make connections, form friendships and develop themselves. For many, involvement begins at the open house fair held in the Memorial Student Center at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, where many student organizations and clubs share their missions and reach out to those who are searching for a home away from home.

International Student Mentors Association, or ISMA, helps international students feel welcome both in the United States and at A&M.

For current, prospective and former international students, the organization presents the opportunity for friendship and cultural inclusion, ISMA President and psychology junior Shahrazad Al-Dossari said.

“It’s just a great way to foster relationships between students from different cultures,” Al-Dossari said. “We help international stu-

dents adjust and transition because we know it’s scary coming to a new place, so it’s nice having someone that they can rely on.”

Al-Dossari said he originally joined ISMA to make friends, but now the organization means so much more to him.

“It’s just a great opportunity to help people and to create these long-lasting friendships,” Al-Dossari said. “We offer grocery rides for international students that don’t have cars, and then we do a lot of fun activities.”

Before COVID-19, Al-Dossari said ISMA members went on road trips and held social events that allow international students to experience the culture and customs of the U.S.

“For example, in the fall we usually have a Halloween social where we carve pumpkins, a Thanksgiving social and a Christmas social,” Al-Dossari said. “It’s fun because we’re showing traditions in the U.S. that a lot of international students haven’t experienced.”

AggieTEACH, which is based in the College of Science, is an academic-focused student organization on campus. aggieTEACH President and university studies junior Hannah Hart said aggieTEACH guides students who are interested in becoming secondary math or science educators.

“If you’re a STEM major and you want to become a teacher, you can join our organization, and we help you to get into those teaching classes and attend seminars to help you learn how to teach,” Hart said. “AggieTEACH is great because it really helps prepare you to be a teacher if you want to go

into education, but you don’t want to major in education.”

Though aggieTEACH was initially started for the College of Science, Hart said it is expanding to other colleges as well.

A&M additionally offers Freshman Leadership Organizations, or FLOs, like Freshmen in Liberal Arts for Teaching Excellence, or FLARE.

“We are a 50 percent social, 50 percent academic FLO,” said Elise Marrie, internal relations staff member and psychology junior. “We’re kind of a unique size since the College of Liberal Arts is one of the smaller colleges.”

The social side, Marrie said, includes connecting freshmen with other students in their majors, and the academic side includes providing academic support through educational guest speakers and weekly study hours.

“[Being in FLARE] doesn’t feel like you’re just a number in a huge organization,” Marrie said. “It really does become a family, and everyone knows everyone by name — that’s my favorite part.”

As a career-oriented organization, Aggie Women in Business was founded on the three pillars of networking, professionalism and sisterhood, said organization President Caileen Perez.

“[Aggie Women in Business] really provides someone with the opportunity to grow and push themselves and prepare themselves for their future career,” Perez said. “I joined my freshman year, and like most freshmen, I was very much a deer in headlights and didn’t

really know what I wanted to do career-wise.”

Although she was interested in business, Perez said she had trouble pin-pointing exactly what she wanted to do.

“Joining Aggie Women in Business really gave me that guidance that I needed from older members and then professionals [who] are already in their careers,” Perez said.

Aggie Guide-Dogs and Service-Dogs, or AGS, President and biomedical sciences senior Alexis Hobbs said the purpose of her service-focused organization is to educate about, fundraise for and promote the training and use of guide and service dogs in order to increase awareness about how these animals help individuals with disabilities.

“We focus on training and educating the public about service dogs,” Hobbs said. “I think it is a great gateway for new students because of the community that we have with our different teams, whether that’s as an officer, as a member or a trainer.”

Hobbs said AGS has been an amazing experience, as she gets to be a part of something that will help somebody down the line function in their daily life.

“I think it’s a high impact and really rewarding cause,” Hobbs said. “Obviously, we are a service-oriented organization, so we have a lot of service-oriented, loving people. I’m surrounded by some really amazing people who want to do amazing things.”

For more information about any of the 1,000+ student organizations available in Aggeland, visit studentactivities.tamu.edu.

Keepers of the spirit

Cadets play unique role in traditions, observe many specific to the Corps

By Jane Turchi
@JaneTurchi

The Corps of Cadets is famously known for keeping tradition at Texas A&M. While many of the traditions they participate in are observed by all students, there are some which are unique to cadets. From their special role in Silver Taps, to receiving their Corps Brass, cadet involvement in tradition runs deep.

Corps Brass Culmination

The Corps holds the Corps Brass Culmination ceremony at the end of November. After three hours of physical training, freshmen cadets receive the Corps Brass they will wear for the remainder of their time in the Corps.

Philosophy senior and member of C-2 Mason Loss said the event is meaningful to cadets because of the unique sense of community it creates.

“Culmination was really big for me because it’s you earning your place in the Corps,” Loss said. “Going through this awful workout that’s just so intense and so difficult but finally getting to the end of that and you’re rewarded with this thing — you feel like you earned it together with all of your closest friends.”

Final Review

Final Review is an event where the entire Corps of Cadets assembles at the Simpson Drill Field for a full military review. It is the last official requirement Corps members must complete before they are released for summer break. The tradition consists of two passes in review, in which cadets march in front of a reviewing party consisting of various dignitaries and the Corps commandant. The first re-

view of the day is for all Corps students of the school year followed by the second review, in which that year’s freshmen, sophomores and juniors pass in front of the graduating seniors.

At the end of the spring 2019 semester, Squadron 23 member Matthew Trumm, Class of 2019, attended his last final review.

“Final review is special each year for different reasons,” Trumm said. “Your freshman year, you’re no longer a freshman; you’re an upperclassman. Your sophomore year, you’re finally a whitebelt, which gives you more privileges. Your junior year, you finally get to wear your boots, and your senior year, you’re finally done.”

Final review is a symbolic time for underclassmen as they honor graduating seniors and take on new roles in the Corps as the year comes to a close, Trumm said.

“Final review is the official ‘Congratulations, zips. You’re done,’” Trumm said.

March to the Brazos

Each year, the Corps runs the largest student-led March of Dimes fundraiser in the country. March to the Brazos was originally held on April Fool’s Day to prevent cadets from playing tricks but ended in 1912. The event was restarted in 1977.

It begins with a nine-mile trek from main campus to the Brazos River, where the cadets compete in various competitions. On their return, the senior class “dies off” and rides buses while next year’s seniors lead the cadets on their return to campus.

“It’s kind of like we’re in our new roles, and we are going to act accordingly,” Trumm said.

Donations gathered as part of the march

support the March of Dimes’ work to improve the health of mothers and babies.

“You do the whole thing together as an outfit,” Loss said. “It really draws you close and brings you together because at the end of the day, you’ve walked like 18 miles together.”

Silver Taps and Echo Taps

Silver Taps was first held in 1898 to honor Lawrence Sullivan Ross. Today, it is a university-wide tradition to honor students who have passed away. It is held in Academic Plaza on the first Tuesday of the month throughout the school year.

Josh Donnell, Class of 2019, was a member of the Ross Volunteer Company. In addition to serving as the official Honor Guard of the Governor of Texas, the RVs are responsible for performing the 21-gun salute at Silver Taps and campus Muster.

“There’s nothing like Silver Taps and Muster anywhere,” Donnell said. “So I think being a direct part of that and being given the opportunity to help in any way is just an amazing part of being an Aggie.”

Class of 2020 Nathanael Duty was a member of the H-1 outfit. Duty said on the day of Silver Taps, freshmen cadets carry note cards with the names of classmates who have died.

“[Silver Taps] creates an atmosphere or culture where people value someone after their death, so they take a moment and remember the legacy that someone has created,” Duty said.

Similar to Silver Taps, when a current member of the Corps dies or there is a national tragedy, the cadets have an Echo Taps ceremony at the Quad. The ceremony begins



Corps of Cadets Final Review takes place at the conclusion of each academic year and is the last activity the Corps does before cadets are released for the summer.

Abbey Santoro — THE BATTALION

at 10:30 p.m., when cadets line the length of the Quad at attention. A bugler plays taps at one end of the Quad followed by another bugler at the opposite end who echoes the call.

Annual Echo Taps ceremonies are held in remembrance of tragedies including the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the collapse of Aggie Bonfire on Nov. 18, 1999.

“I think it’s important that we maintain these traditions because that’s who we are,” Donnell said. “It’s a joke that if something happens twice it’s a tradition, but I think that there’s a greater meaning behind traditions that people don’t realize.”

The First Lady of Aggieland

As the story goes, a group of cadets hit a small black and white dog when they were traveling back from Navasota in January 1931. They took the dog back to their dorm and hid her since pets weren’t allowed on campus. When the “Reveille” wake-up call was played the next morning, the dog barked, so the cadets named her after the song. The following football season, Reveille led the band onto the field as the official mascot.

The current mascot, Reveille X, assumed her role in April 2021. Reveille is the highest ranking member of the Corps of Cadets, boasting five silver diamonds.

Miss Rev is accompanied by a mascot corporal, who is a sophomore cadet selected from Company E-2. During the 2021-2022 school year, engineering junior Lucas Scroggins will serve in the role as Reveille’s caretaker and handler. Reveille attends classes with the mascot corporal and tradition states that if she barks, the class is canceled.

Bryan Legend #12

The Kyle House was originally the residence of Edwin Kyle, the namesake of Texas A&M's football stadium. The newest tenant of this legendary Bryan home, **Polite Coffee Roasters**, serves real friendly coffee to real friendly people.

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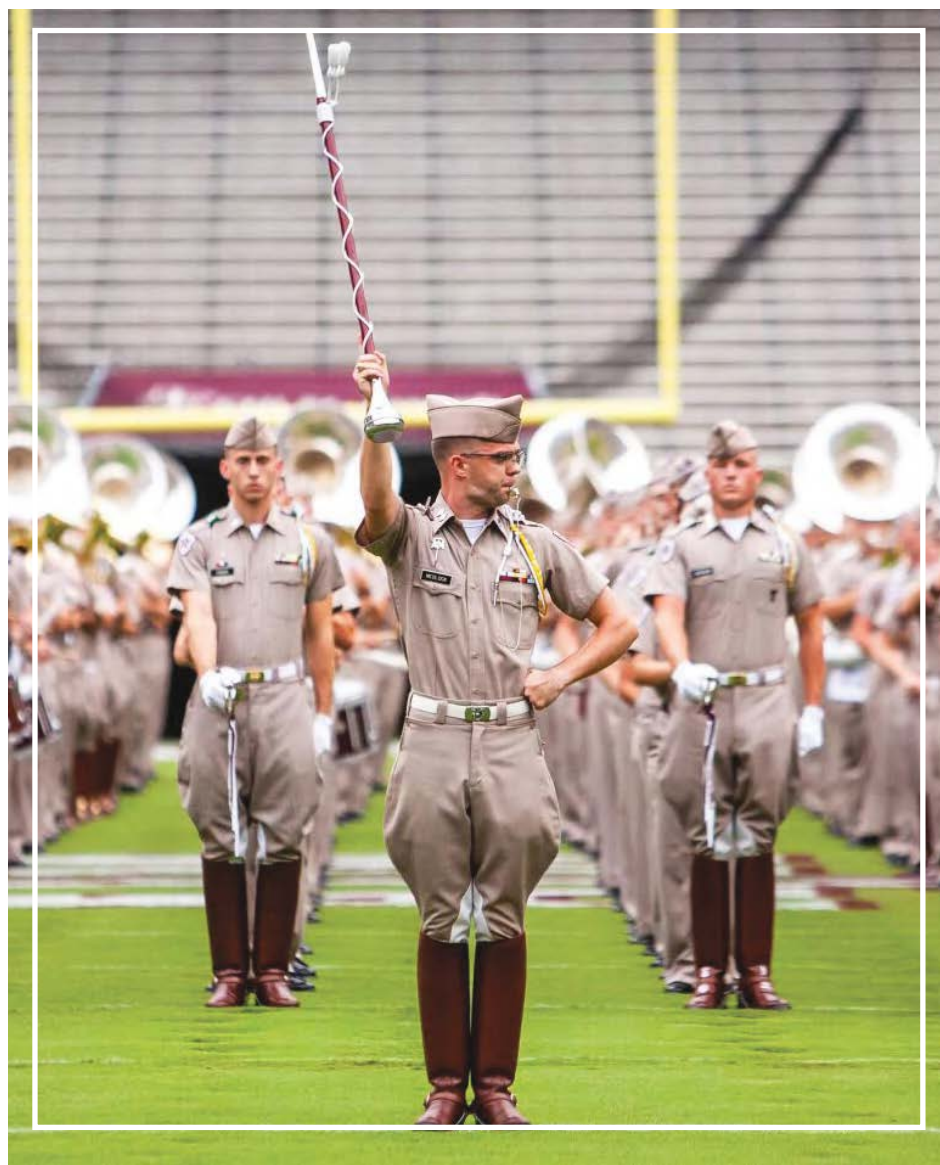


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'NATIONALLY FAMOUS'



Photos by Abbey Santora and Meredith Seaver — THE BATTALION

America's largest military marching band started with just 13 volunteers

By **Samantha Mahler**
@mahlersamantha

One iconic phrase has long been associated with the precision-style marching only found in Aggieland: “Ladies and gentlemen, now forming at the north end of Kyle Field, the nationally famous Fightin’ Texas Aggie Band.”

With around 400 band members, the Aggie Band is the largest military band in the nation. As a distinct part of the Corps of Cadets, the band members live in close community with one another, making it a marching band unlike any other.

Around 1894, Joseph Holick traveled by train to College Station looking for work. A skilled leatherworker, Holick wound up repairing and making boots for cadets, eventually creating Holick Manufacturing Company, which makes boots for senior members of the

Corps.

As the story goes, Holick also shared his musical talents with the Cadets. Word of this eventually got to then-A&M president Lawrence Sullivan Ross, who asked Holick if he would be interested in forming a band. Holick found 13 volunteers, borrowed militia uniforms and spent \$100 on instruments, thus creating the Aggie Band.

Other collegiate marching bands went away from military marching style, which ultimately made the Aggie Band unique. Col. Jay Brewer, the now-retired, former senior

associate director of the Aggie Band, said this style and the fact that the band lives together as a unit are what make the Aggie Band exceptional. Brewer serves as the familiar voice of the band during its performances.

“I think it’s popularity is pretty evident if you’ve ever been to Kyle Field and you hear the student crowd and others echo my introduction to the band,” Brewer said. “They stand the whole time these young people are on the field. It’s a testament that this is something special; this is something unique. And wherever we go, we get that and then some.”

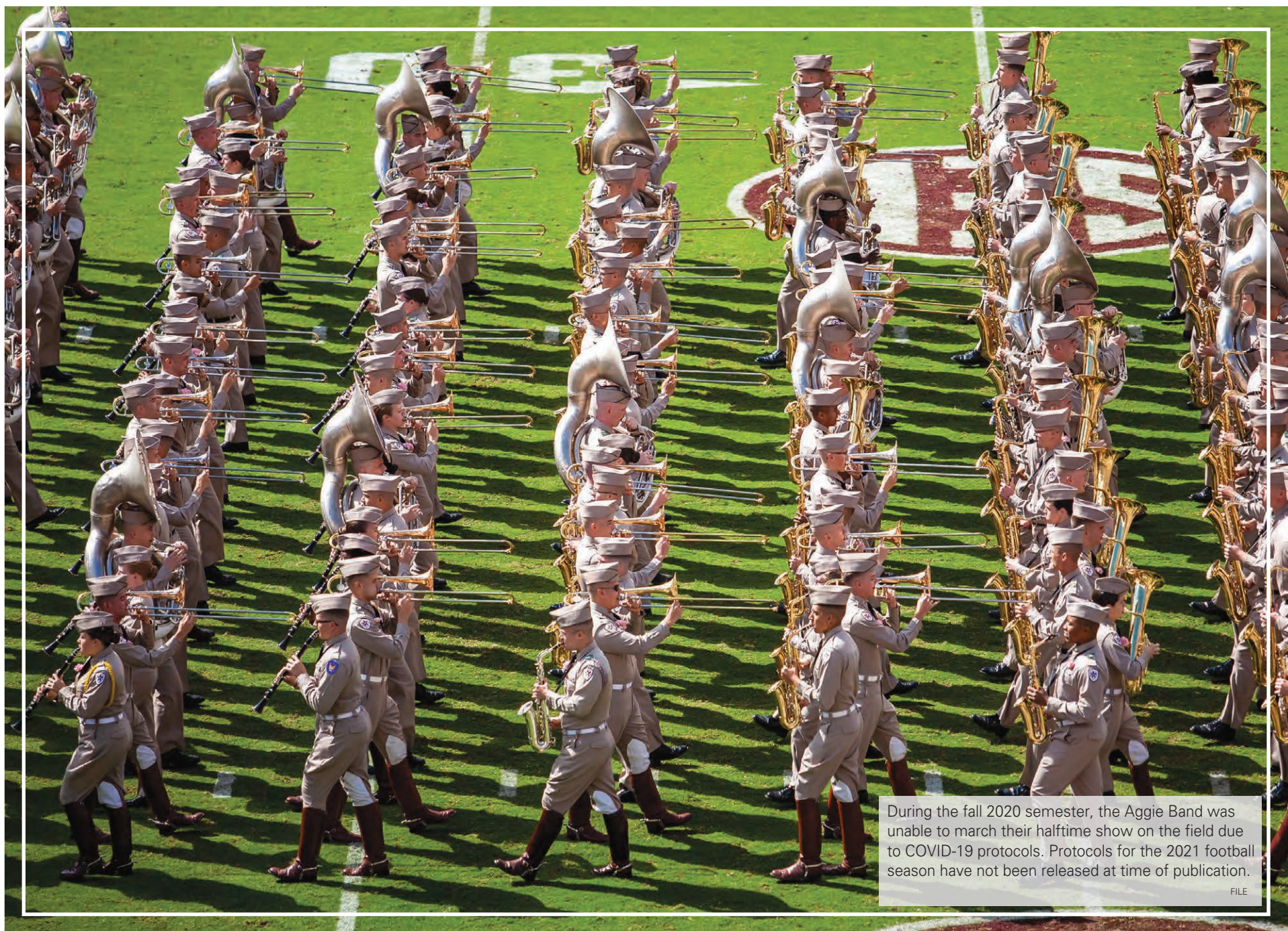
Within the Corps, there are six band-specific units to which members can be assigned. These cadets have similar schedules to non-band Corps members, but with the added obligation of band practice five days a week, Aggie Band members have a different level of responsibility.

“They’re very good and very dedicated at what they do, and it takes a great deal of time and energy and sweat and some tears along the way,” Brewer said. “There’s a lot more to it to be in the Texas Aggie Band than preparing halftime drills and preparing march music.”

The Aggie Band resides in two halls on the Corps Quad. There are three floors in each building, and each of the six units is assigned its own floor.

2021-2022 Head Drum Major and wildlife and fisheries science senior Will Toronjo said he has big shoes to fill and will be training over the summer to prepare himself for his responsibilities.

“It’s definitely a bigger job than I thought it would be,” Tononjo said. “Everyone kind of sees the part where I sound recall, step off



During the fall 2020 semester, the Aggie Band was unable to march their halftime show on the field due to COVID-19 protocols. Protocols for the 2021 football season have not been released at time of publication.

FILE

on Hullabaloo and we go into the drill, but there's a lot more that goes on behind the scenes that I didn't really know about. It's been kind of cool getting to learn all about it. To boil it down, it's just an honor to be able to serve the band in this position going forward into next year."

Ross Beazley, Class of 2021 and alto saxophone, said the relationships within the Corps are unparalleled, but a little more so within the Aggie Band.

"Not every major unit outside the band gets the opportunity to intermingle nearly as often as we do," Beazley said. "I think that's super, super cool because I get to go see other

people from five other outfits that I don't get to see on a regular basis and make connections and make relationships with them."

Toronjo said he is confident the friendships he's made within the Aggie Band will be relationships he'll have for life.

"When [we] do meet again and we do have reunions, it's almost like you never skip a beat," Toronjo said. "This is how I've seen it happen especially with Old Ags is that these connections, yeah you might not talk every day, but when you do see each other, something clicks and you're right back in it just like you never left the Quad, just like you're still in the Corps still talking about freshman year

and all the fun stuff you did."

In 2001, the Aggie Band received the Sudler Trophy, which is awarded to a collegiate-level marching band that demonstrates the highest level of excellence. However, for many members of the band, the honor of playing while former President George H.W. Bush's casket was carried off the train before his burial in College Station was the highest award they will ever receive.

"The fact that he wanted specifically us to be there — that I think trumps any award that we could possibly be a part of," Beazley said. "Just being part of something so special and characteristic and important to our country."

Cadets in the Aggie Band earn a one-hour kinesiology credit each semester they are active. Brewer, who has been announcing the band at halftime since 1981, said he believes members should earn at least a six-hour credit because of their dedication to each other and the band.

"It's about who you are and what you're made of, but more importantly, what you're passionate about," Brewer said. "More importantly than that, this is about not so much what we do, but whom we do it with."



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At each Midnight Yell, the Yell Leaders tell fables involving Ol' Rock the Good Ag.

Meredith Seaver — THE BATTALION

'GOT A LITTLE STORY FOR YA, AGS'

Midnight Yell remains one of A&M's most beloved pre-game traditions

By **Samantha Mahler**

@mahlersamantha

Before the Texas A&M football team rushes onto the field on game day and the 12th Man stands ready to take action, a tradition unlike any other takes place.

Held at Kyle Field the night before a home football game, Midnight Yell gives Aggies the opportunity to perfect their yells before facing the opposing team the next day. Midnight Yell features singing, storytelling and, of course, plenty of yelling. More than 25,000 people attend Midnight Yell before each home game.

The tradition began in 1913 when a group

of freshmen cadets were gathered in T.D. "Peanut" Owens' dorm. The cadets wanted to have a pep rally for the upcoming football game, and they wanted to make it unlike any they had seen before. Cadets decided to practice their yells for precision on the steps of the YMCA building at midnight.

When the group approached their senior commanders for permission, they were told the yell practice couldn't be made into an official event, but there was a possibility the Yell Leaders would show up. Sure enough, they did, along with the majority of the Corps of Cadets. The crowd practiced the yells for the next day's game and sang the Aggie War Hymn and the Spirit of Aggieland.

"[Before] the next game, it happened again," said John Maldonado, former Traditions Council public relations chair and Class of 2021. "They picked up the tradition

of it, and before every home football game they would gather on the steps of the YMCA Building and have yell practice."

A few years down the line, Owens became a Yell Leader. Legend has it his feet were so big, they couldn't fit on the steps of the YMCA Building. To keep his balance, Owens would pace back and forth on the steps, and soon enough, the other Yell Leaders followed suit.

Over the years, various activities have been added to the schedule of Midnight Yell. To get the crowd in good spirits, the Yell Leaders started taking turns telling fables about how the Aggies will beat their opponent.

"They tell the story of Ol' Rock either outsmarting or bettering his opponent in any capacity," Maldonado said. "It's a really fun way to get everyone laughing at yell practice and to relax into the yells."

Maldonado said another tradition began to

unfold when cadets started inviting students from Texas Woman's University to football games and women began attending Midnight Yell as well. This began the practice of kissing one's date once the lights dimmed, commonly referred to as "mugging down." Today, students without a date will either use a lighter or turn on the flashlight on their phone — which makes it easier to find another dateless student in the dark — in hopes of finding someone to "mug down" with.

Even when the football team is on the road, Aggies still have time to practice their yells. On the Thursday night before an away game, Aggies gather at the 12th Man Memorial statue next to Kyle Field for yell practice. A smaller Midnight Yell is also held on Friday at a designated location in the town where the game is being played.



► 5 TIPS ◀

TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE
IN COLLEGE STATION



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1. NO MORE THAN FOUR

Living off campus? Since at least 1972, the city does not allow for more than four unrelated individuals to occupy a dwelling unit. As an example, four friends living together in a home are complying with the ordinance. Four siblings living together are also complying with the ordinance, but if an unrelated friend moved in, it would be a code violation.

2. MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Introduce yourself and exchange contact information in case of emergencies or other problems. If an issue arises, would you rather they call you or the police?

3. KEEP THE NOISE DOWN

That includes barking dogs. It's unlawful for anyone to willfully make or allow continued loud noise, especially from 10 p.m.-6 a.m. If you can hear the noise at the end of your property line, then it's too loud and everyone on your lease risks receiving a citation.

4. AVOID CODE VIOLATIONS

Many people don't think about city codes until they receive an unwelcome citation. Familiarize yourself with our city codes by visiting cstx.gov/CodeEnforcement.

5. STAY INFORMED

Keep up with city events, programs, emergencies, notices and more by following us on social media. We'd love to hear from you too!

 @CityofCS  /CityOfCollegeStation

Find more resources:

► cstx.gov/NewResident

Traditions in Aggieland



A Muster ceremony is held each year on campus and attendees light candles to honor Aggies who have died.

Abbey Santoro — THE BATTALION

By **Aubrey Vogel**
@aubrey_vogel

Since 1876, Texas A&M has served as a unique university due to the special traditions and Aggie Spirit that have carried on year after year.

Midnight Yell

Yell Practice originated in 1913 as an after-dinner ritual, though the modern version of the tradition of Midnight Yell did not originate until 1931 when a group of freshmen Corps of Cadets members invited two senior Yell Leaders to come to the steps of the YMCA Building to lead them in practicing yells.

Midnight Yell looks a little different now, with an average of over 25,000 people attending the event at Kyle Field the evening before a home football game. The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band leads fans into the stadium, and the Yell Leaders lead the audience in a practice of century-old yells while also telling fables about the opposing team.

Midnight Yell is also held for away games, though not in Kyle Field. For road games, The Association of Former Students helps to

set up a place at the away-game location for Aggies to gather to prepare for the game the following day.

“Howdy!”

“Howdy” is the official greeting of Aggieland — a sign of camaraderie and respect. Though it may seem odd initially, you will get used to saying it everywhere, both on and off campus, when greeting fellow Aggies.

Even beyond their time in Aggieland, many Aggies still greet one another with a “Howdy!”

Wildcats

Wildcats come from a decades-old fable which tells the story of a time when there were an abundance of wildcats roaming around campus. Supposedly, some members of the Corps, a freshman, a sophomore, a junior and a senior, were sent to hunt them, and each student yelled a different response after their attempt to shoot the cats. Today, the wildcat is a symbol of class pride and changes annually as students progress through their years at A&M.

Freshmen raise their hands above their head and yell “AAAAAA” while sophomores make their hands into a pistol and point at the

ground as they yell “A-A-A-A-A.”

Juniors and seniors both have the privilege to “whoop” during their wildcats, which is gained at the annual end-of-spring-semester Pull Out Day event where sophomores officially transition to upperclassmen. Juniors make a hand pistol and point at the ground, yelling, “A-A-A-Whoop,” while seniors make a hand pistol, point at the ground and raise their arms up as they yell, “A-Whoop.”

These wildcats are usually yelled during sports games and Yell Practice, though many Aggies will yell their wildcats when their respective class years are heard.

12th Man

The 12th Man tradition began in 1922 when the Aggies were playing football in Dallas at the Dixie Classic. The game was not going as well as they planned, and the Aggies were facing injury after injury. Eventually, enough players were hurt that the Aggies had just enough people to take the field.

Lucky for the Aggies, a squad member, E. King Gill, was in the press box and was called down to suit up if any of the remaining 11 players were injured. Gill, today known as the “12th Man,” remained on the sideline where he stood for the rest of the game in case he

was needed to fill in.

It was here where the standing of the 12th Man began. Today, Aggies stand in the student section for the entirety of athletic events to honor the 12th Man and show their willingness to step in as needed.

Silver Taps

Silver Taps is a solemn tradition where students hold tributes, typically in Academic Plaza, at the beginning of each month for Aggies who have died recently. It began as a tradition in 1898 in honor of the loss of former A&M President Lawrence Sullivan “Sully” Ross. At 10:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month, Aggies line Academic Plaza to stand for current students who have died since the previous ceremony.

All of the lights on campus are turned out, and the Ross Volunteer Company of the Corps of Cadets fire a three-volley salute followed by the playing of “Silver Taps” by buglers in the dome of the Academic Building. “Silver Taps” is played three times: once to the north, once to the south and once to the west, though it is not played in the east because the sun will never rise for the fallen Aggie again.

Students are also given the opportunity to write letters to the families of students who are honored at Silver Taps to provide encouragement and show the bond of the Aggie family.

Muster

Muster is another solemn tradition for Aggies in which all current and former students are honored who have died. On April 21, Aggies gather to remember those who were lost during the previous year.

During Muster, a Roll Call for the Absent is read, and other Aggies answer “Here” on their behalf. Muster is representative of the union of Aggies both past, present and future. It is said that as long as there are two Aggies, Muster will remain to honor all Aggies.

Aggie Musters are held all over the world, with one taking place in College Station every year.

Spirit of Aggieland

Aggieland surely is a special place, which is why they say “there’s a spirit can ne’er be told.” This Aggie Spirit is something that is hard to put into words but rather a feeling you get experiencing it all.

We hope that you will experience this feeling during your time in Aggieland and understand why this spirit is so near and dear to the hearts of Aggies.

NEVER FORGOTTEN

Aggies reflect on A&M's ability to come together after Bonfire tragedy and preserve the memories of the twelve who lost their lives

By **Hollis Mills and Jane Turchi**
@sillohslim & @JaneTurchi

The morning of Nov. 18, 1999, Jason Hannam arrived at a quiet and solemn campus. Hannam, Class of 2001, soon heard rumors about the collapse of Bonfire, an incident that would ensure the day lived on in the consciousness of Aggies.

In the wake of the tragedy, Hannam joined fellow Aggies in searching for friends who were among the list of students wounded and killed by the collapse the night before. Hannam recognized the name of one fellow student, Timothy Kerlee. Hannam was able to visit Kerlee in the hospital before he passed away later that day.

“It was very somber,” Hannam said. “It was kind of like the whole campus was mourning, I guess you could say. Everything else is overshadowed by what happened. No one’s thinking about other things.”

As the debris was cleared and the victims were recovered, the effects of the collapse remained on campus and in the hearts of Aggies.

Twenty years after the incident, Bonfire symbolizes selfless sacrifice for students like recreation, Connor Lloyd, Class of 2021. He recalls the first time he attended a Student Bonfire burn — an independent continuation of the tradition held off campus each year.

“I definitely felt really, really close with all my buddies,” Lloyd said. “We’d just gotten out of Brass Culmination for the Corps, and so we earned our right to be called cadets. We went to a Bonfire burn and it was just a big, symbolic way to understand that I’m a part of this university, I’m part of the Corps of Cadets, I’m with my outfit right here. It’s a coming together moment and I don’t think I’d trade it for anything.”

Like many cadets, Garrett Hilliard, Class of 2021, first learned about Bonfire at his outfit’s traditions night. After visiting various historical landmarks throughout campus, the night ended with a visit to the Bonfire Memorial.

“That was kind of my first exposure to not only just Bonfire but also the fact that my outfit has a very vivid history with Bonfire,” Hilliard said. “Being exposed to that the first time intrigued me greatly, and that kind of inspired me to pursue it further and keep up with my outfit and make sure that my outfit is continually going to Bonfire and honoring that tradition.”

Bonfire is particularly important for Hilliard as

Kerlee was a member of his outfit, Squadron 16. After the fall of Bonfire, Kerlee would not let rescue workers help him out of the rubble, famously saying “help my buddies first.”

Kerlee’s quote lives on within Squadron 16 and is shared with new cadets as they join the outfit. After hearing Kerlee’s story, Hilliard said he found motivation to stay involved in his outfit.

“Traditions night for me was a moment where I found real motivation and real purpose in why I’m here and why this outfit was the right choice,” Hilliard said. “I knew I made the right choice whenever we learned about Kerlee just because I can’t find any other outfit that has history like that — a history of sacrifice that Tim’s given us in this outfit.”

A permanent tribute

Today, Michael Rey is senior principal and vice president of operations at Overland Partners, an architecture firm based in San Antonio. But at the time of the collapse, Rey was just another Aggie dealing with the tragedy. He graduated later that semester and began working as a designer with the company, where he and a fellow Aggie were given the opportunity to propose the concept design for the Bonfire Memorial that stands today.

“Ultimately, we came up with the first initial boards through that process,” Rey said. “It was really beautiful because it was holistic and everyone was filling out ideas, and only the best ones stuck.”

Built on the site of the collapse and dedicated in 2004, the memorial stands where past ruins laid, embodying the spirit of the fallen through three distinct design elements.

The high granite wall of the Tradition Plaza is designed to put visitors in the right mindset from the moment they park, Rey said, and the History Walk serves as a timeline, telling the story of Aggie Bonfire throughout the years. The path culminates at the Spirit Ring, which features 12 “portals” with written tributes and engraved portraits of those who lost their lives in the 1999 collapse.

“Through these individuals, you’re seeing the Aggie spirit,” Rey said. “You know them by their face, you know them by their name and you know them by their thoughts. Each portal gravitates toward having a unique perspective on that.”

The Bonfire Memorial’s Spirit Ring arrangement was created to uplift the Aggie Spirit, both figuratively and literally, Rey said.

“The gateways lifting up those circles still make

a continuous ring, but we’re lifting them up and we’re actually seeing the underbelly of the ring,” Rey said. “It’s that glow at nighttime that really shines from the spirit of the Aggies.”

The Spirit Ring itself was built around the site of the 1999 Bonfire stack. Rey said every aspect of the memorial possesses individualized meaning, from engravings on the black basalt stone at the base of each portal to the placement of the portals themselves.

“They’re actually oriented toward their hometown,” Rey said. “If you’re standing at the centerpole looking through their gateways, each gateway is oriented toward where they were coming from before they came here to A&M, to their final resting place. That’s a powerful thing for me, to be able to connect through the inner circle of A&M and see that through the eyes of the individual who has perished.”

Rey said it is only when a person steps through a fallen student’s portal that they can understand them — like Michael Ebanks, who Rey met in an advanced mathematics course the semester of the collapse.

“It’s not like I knew him deeply, but I knew him enough to know that he was really nice and certainly someone I’d love to get to know more,” Rey said. “Unfortunately, I didn’t get that chance.”

Having the opportunity to learn about more than just the names, but about the lives and stories of each of the fallen students is an honor Rey said he will always carry with him.

“It’s hard to put into words actually, a project like that,” Rey said. “I don’t know if I’ll go the rest of my life, or this career, ever being able to do something as significant as the Bonfire memorial.”

Political science senior Brianna Mason, who was not born until a year after the tragedy, first heard of the collapse when she was a junior in high school. Though a horrific moment in A&M history, Mason said the Bonfire collapse is memorable not just because of the tragedy itself, but because of how the Aggie community banded together in its aftermath.

“I wasn’t raised in an Aggie family, so I knew nothing about A&M,” Mason said. “I guess for me, when I think about the Bonfire collapse it shows how much the university could come together after the tragedy. I think it just showed how strong the university was and the strength of the Aggie family. They could overcome any huge impact.”



The Bonfire Memorial was built on the site of the 1999 Bonfire Collapse and is dedicated to those killed and injured in the tragedy.

Will Nye — THE BATTALION



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It may seem sprawling and unfamiliar now, but just wait; Aggieland will feel like home in no time. Texas A&M University was built on memories as much as it was on concrete. You have a story to tell, people to meet and a legacy to leave behind in this special place, and the Texas A&M Foundation wants to help support you every step of the way.

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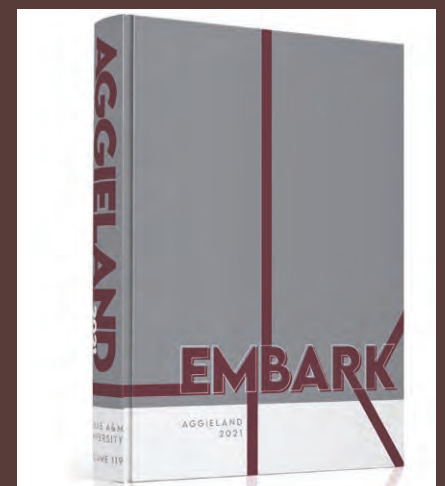
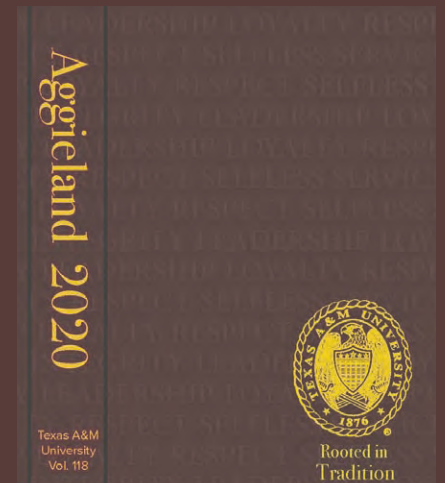
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that started in 1895.**



A little piece of Aggieland

Aggie Ring symbolizes A&M's storied history, treasured experiences in B-CS

By Sanna Bhai
@BhaiSanna

One hundred and thirty-two years ago, a tradition began that would become one of the most prominent symbols of Texas A&M — the Aggie Ring.

The first Aggie Ring was created in 1889. In A&M's early years, each class would design their own ring, leading to drastic, or sometimes minor, changes. It was not until the 1930s that the look of the Aggie Ring began to resemble what it is today.

Although the design has changed over the years, the message behind the ring remains unchanged, according to Kathryn Greenwade, vice president of The Association of Former Students and Class of 1988.

"It's a visible representation of our connection to Texas A&M, and it is something that we all wear proudly because we are all proud to be connected to the university," Greenwade said. "I think the cadets in 1889 felt that same passion and loyalty to Texas A&M that students today feel."

Today, the design consists of a five point star, a rifle, a canon, a saber and an eagle. Because the design of the ring from 1889 to the early 1900s wasn't consistent, it would be unrecognizable to Aggies today. Rings from the turn of the 20th century have a square black face engraved with the letters "TAMC," along with the class year split up on the both sides.

In 1930, the overall design changed drastically, placing a red stone in the middle of the ring. The controversy prompted then-university president Thomas Walton to standardize the ring design in 1933.

Since the standardization, very few changes have occurred. In 1967, the manner in which the name of the university appeared changed, reading "Texas A&M University" to reflect the official university name change. In 1998 the ring began to be manufactured in one piece. The changes in the ring's design, while maintaining the tradition of the school, are similar to the school's overall history, according to Greenwade.

"I often tell people that the Aggie Ring is like Texas A&M itself," Greenwade said. "Whereas the physical presence may have had changes over the years, but the heart and the meaning of what truly matter has stayed the same."

Aggie Rings can have an antique or natural finish, but white gold and polara rings have to be antiqued. Regardless of the finish, the Aggie Ring has the same meaning in every form, according to Greenwade.

"It is a symbol of our unity," Greenwade said. "It is a symbol of our values and it's something we can all share. It's a very visible reminder that we wear daily, to Texas A&M and the Aggie Network."



After completing total 90 hours of undergraduate or professional school coursework, students are eligible to order their Aggie Rings. Students typically attend the "Ring Day" ceremony and have their ring placed on their finger by a loved one.

FILE



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Aggies helping Aggies

FILE

After graduation, students can use The Association of Former Students' website, AggieNetwork.com, to make communicating with fellow Aggies as simple as possible.

Aggie Network provides critical connections with former students

Camryn Lang
@CamrynLang

As new students step onto campus, they join an enormous family: the Aggie Network.

This international web of people provides students with opportunities to connect with generations of Aggies who are eager to share their knowledge and help students find their way into a career. Students can connect with other Aggies to learn more about their careers and pursue internships or jobs. Whether it's the gold shield on their finger, a 12th man shirt or even a simple "Howdy!" it's never difficult to spot a fellow Aggie who is willing to help.

Students need to take advantage of the moments when former students visit campus

for special events or lectures, said Kathryn Greenwade, Class of 1988 and vice president for communications and human resources at The Association of Former Students.

"A lot happens organically," Greenwade said. "Students and former students have a chance to interact at different events throughout the year. ... A lot of times when former students come back to campus and they're asked to speak to a class or a student organization, a lot of things can happen there. Students will learn about job opportunities or internship opportunities."

Paul Pausky, Class of 1978 and associate director of former student career services, said current students have multiple tools that will help them get in the room with an Aggie of interest.

Pausky advises students to use the Find An Aggie directory on The Association's website to find people who have specific occupations or live in certain locations. Creating an account with the website also allows students

to message Aggies through an Aggie Network email address so the recipient will immediately recognize where the email is from. Unlike the tamu.edu email, this account is available to students after graduation.

Pausky also suggests using websites like Careershift or LinkedIn to analyze the career paths of other Aggies in a certain field. But above all, he recommends that students take the time to understand what their purpose is and to reach out to Aggies to see how they found theirs.

"Your passion is emotion," Pausky said. "It's influenced by not only emotion, but by external factors. I say focus on your purpose. The difference is your purpose is passion with a goal."

Jordan Baucum, Class of 2006, used to be a student assistant at The Association. One of his first assignments was to pick up a board member from the airport. During the short ride he spoke to Shariq Yosufzai, president of global marketing at Chevron, about his

experience as a marketing major. This conversation led to an internship the following summer and a 12-year career in public relations at Chevron. Baucum said while his experience was unique, students shouldn't be afraid of reaching out.

"I think every alumni feels an obligation — I know I certainly do — that if a current student reaches out to me, the least I could do is be timely in my response and be available," Baucum said.

Greenwade said the Aggie Network is about taking the time to build those relationships rather than simply asking for favors.

"We find that the Aggie Network works best when you've invested in it," Greenwade said. "You need to spend some time getting to know people within the network before you need help so you've established that network. You will find that most people are willing to help you."

BEST OF AGGIELAND WINNERS

Every year, The Battalion sends a survey out to students asking them to vote on their favorite places to shop, eat and visit in Bryan-College Station.

Results are published in the Best of Aggieland edition of Maroon Life Magazine. Take a look at this year's winners, and keep an eye out for our survey this fall so you can cast your vote for the next magazine.



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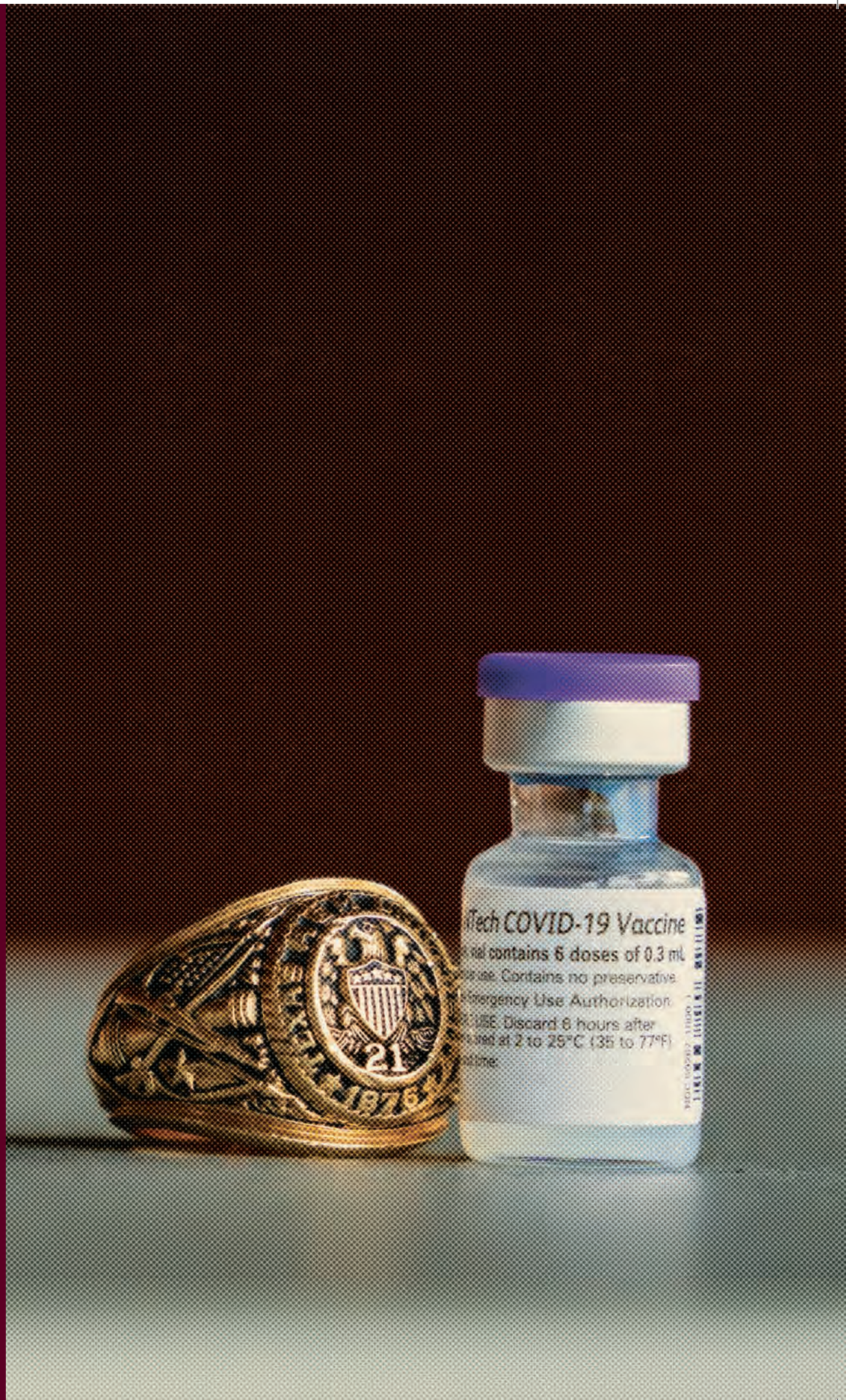
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