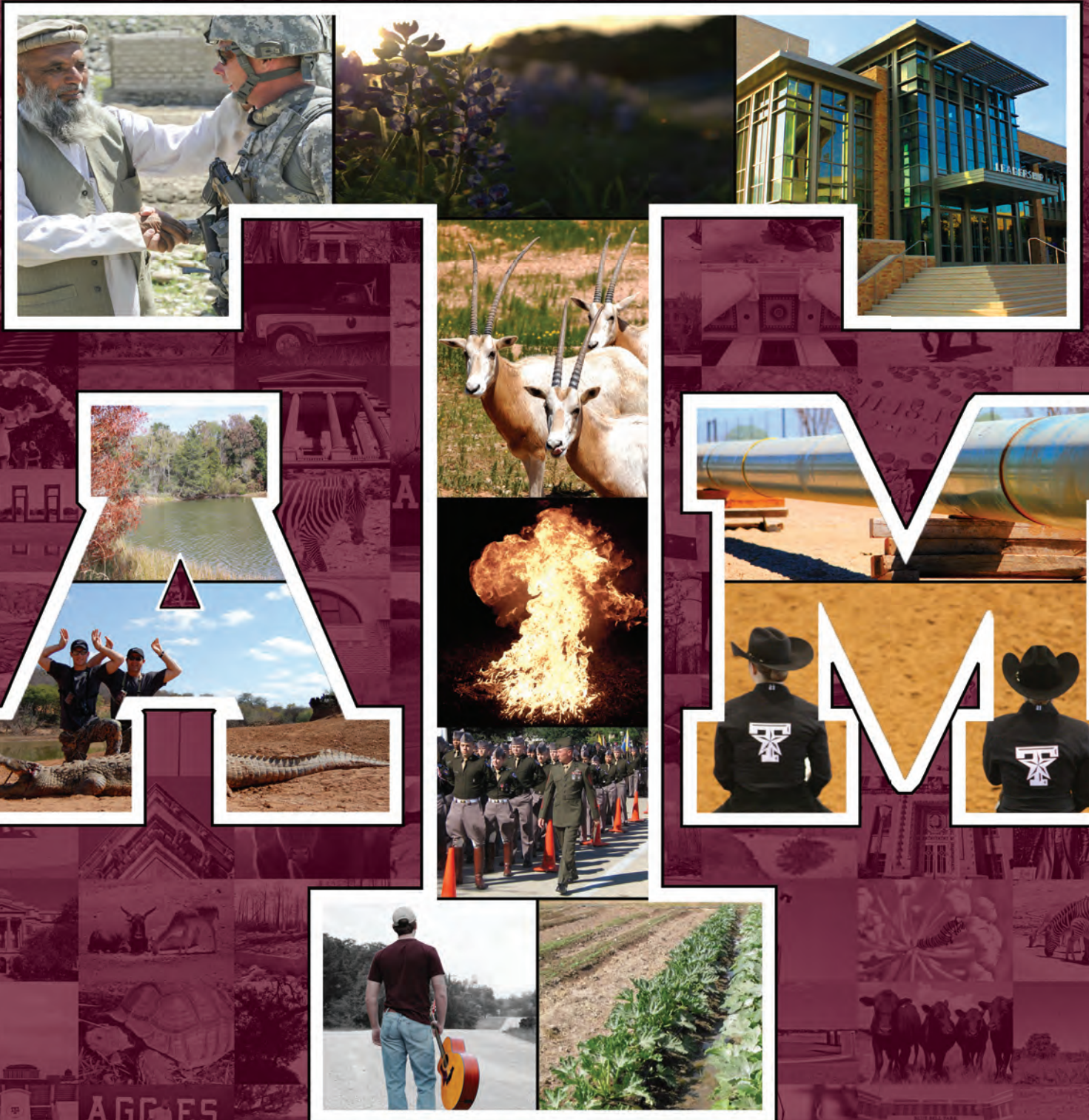


AgriLeader

Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Volume 11, Issue 1



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Top Row (Left to Right): Zach Taylor, Allison Werline, Lauren Hayes, Alana Gonzales, Taylor Sass, Elizabeth Craig, Mackenna Lange, Brittany Hicks, Renee Caldwell, Jake Johnson

Bottom Row: Margaret Ann Thurmond, Savannah Richter, Cailee Gilbreath, Cera Southerland, Alli Sherrill, Erin Tanner, Katelin Bouquet, DJ Burrus, Tray Heard, Christen Wilson, Patsy Raglin, Kaylie Mynar, Haley West, Kelsey Keene

Not Pictured: Tyler Dean

Letter from the Editor

I remember the first phone call I made after being named editor. "Dad, I got editor... and I'm scared." Looking back, there was a lot to be scared about. Anybody can flip through a magazine and critique any element on any page. It was my job to make sure there were as few errors as possible and that the magazine represented the agriculture world well, while still being fun and entertaining for our audience. I, along with my editorial team of Christen Wilson and Tray Heard, had to go through every story and make sure the layouts, ads, text, pictures and graphics were all properly placed and flowed well. Chances are we made a few mistakes and somebody probably got Tobin Redwine'd (Sorry!).

Nonetheless, I want everyone to know that this magazine could not have been printed without our amazing class and the staff of writers we had. I cannot say enough about this group of people and I truly believe this was one of the most organized and focused teams I have



DJ Burrus '12 - Editor-In-Chief

ever had the pleasure to be a part of. With the help and knowledge of Dr. Tracy Rutherford and our awesome TAs Tobin and Sam, we had an unlimited amount of resources available to us. I think it will be apparent as you flip through the following pages how much time, effort and dedication was put in to this magazine. Looking at the final product, I could not be more proud of my team and our writers. I hope you, the reader, thoroughly enjoy this issue of *AgriLeader* and find it sets a new standard for issues to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DJ Burrus '12". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Tray Heard '12 - Graphics Editor
Christen Wilson '13 - Associate Editor

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Home on the Range
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The old saying, “practice harder than you play,” rings truer now to the eleven-time national champion equestrian team at Texas A&M University. They will have to defend their championship title closer than before to clinch the National Collegiate Equestrian Association Championship the first year A&M is in the Southeastern Conference.

Taking home four consecutive Western championship title and a second place Big 12 conference championship title should steer them in the right direction. However, the team figured out firsthand that the SEC was going to be a good conference to call home when they earned the national championship the night before the competition was even over. The Aggies beat Georgia, a well-known powerhouse, 5-2 in the hunt seat competition.

“Compare us to the football team. When our football team is playing the SEC schools it will make us practice harder. When you are playing against the best it makes you want to be your best,” said Tana McKay, Texas A&M’s equestrian coach.

The equestrian team started out as a non-sponsored club sport but now is recognized as a strong contender in the world of equestrian competition. While she was getting her master’s degree in animal science, McKay

volunteered with the team because of her passion for horses. In 2000, she became head coach and has been leading the team to victory ever since.

“As a whole, the move to the SEC isn’t going to change too much for the team,” said Kori Pickett ’13, 2011-2012 fences captain and a human resource development major. “The main things changing will be the distance we travel to compete and the conference title.”

The Aggies will now be competing against their strongest championship opponents on a more regular basis following the move into the new conference. Commissioner Mike Slive announced in June that the SEC will now officially sponsor a championship for the sport of equestrian starting with the upcoming 2012 academic year.

The conference proudly hosts four schools with competing equestrian teams – Auburn, Georgia, South Carolina and now the newest member – Texas A&M. Equestrian has become the SEC’s 21st sponsored sport and is also the first championship to be added to the league since 1997.

“We will still be eligible for the national championship title. In the past few years – the overall national champion has come from the SEC. We’ve been competing with them for the national title for years, so our major opponents will not change, but the SEC is still tough,” said McKay.

Historically Western in the Big



Times



Main photo: equestrian team waits for their event against Kansas State

Photograph courtesy of DJ Burrus



Photographs courtesy of Maleigh Canon

The A&M equestrian team holds their newest trophy after winning their second overall national championship title



12 conference is the strongest discipline. The SEC, however, is better known for their strength in English events.

“The SEC is still fairly balanced in both event categories though,” said Pickett. “I think the move to the SEC will help us better prepare for the national championship. It has always been a tight competition when we ride against SEC schools.”

The team represented A&M very strongly at the championship event last April. Along with bringing home their second overall NCEAC title, Western brought home their ninth championship title for the equestrian program. These new titles mark the 2011-2012 season as their fourth consecutive winning season. A new record has also been set for the Aggies in which they are the first program to advance to the finals in both the hunter seat and western event brackets in the same year.

Two women did exceptionally well on the national level. Maggie Earl, '12, went undefeated in both the fences and flat competition. Meanwhile, Carey Nowacek, '13, was given All-American honors, the first rider to receive the award

in any riding discipline. She was also named the Big 12's Rider of the Year earning a spot on the All-Big 12 team.

Last season the team consisted of 52 women; four of them captains. The captains are voted on by the team, seeking girls that have the proper leadership qualities for each event. There is one captain per event: fences, horsemanship, reining and flat.

Hunter seat riding consists of two events: equitation over fences and equitation on the flat. Equitation on the flat is where riders are judged on their position and how well they execute a specific pattern/test. The equitation over fences is judged on the riders form as well as how well they communicate with the horse over a specific course of fences.

Western riding also has two competitions: horsemanship and reining. In the horsemanship class a rider is asked to perform a test used to judge the rider's position and her control of the horse. Reining is where the riders direct the horses through a set pattern of circles, spins and stops.



By Jake Johnson '12
Photographs courtesy of Fred Hauffe

In the classroom setting, he can easily be distinguished from his peers. In his 50s, his reading glasses and graying hair are a dead giveaway that he's not your traditional student.

You wouldn't guess it, but that older gentleman in class with you has spent more time in service to our country than most college students have been alive.

For Fred Hauffe '12, devotion to duty and service are not just words, but rather, a way of life. The agricultural leadership and development major

retired as a master gunnery sergeant from the United States Marine Corps in 2005, having served 26 years on active duty in various capacities for our nation's force in readiness.

A master gunnery sergeant is the ninth and highest enlisted rank in the Marine Corps, second only to the sergeant major of the Marine Corps in command structure.

A native of San Antonio, Hauffe originally began his career as a student back in 1976 at the University

of Texas at San Antonio, then in the first year of classes for the university. Deciding that college really wasn't for him, Hauffe pursued his life's interest — law enforcement.

After unsuccessfully seeking employment as a police officer in San Antonio, Hauffe sought to enter the law enforcement sector through the military after following advice from a family friend.

Ironically, the Marines were his final option.

After being turned away from the Air Force, then the Navy and lastly the Army, he turned to the Marines hoping to join its ranks.

"It wasn't that they were my first choice, or that I loved those dress blues, but that they were the only ones who would give me a guaranteed contract for military police," said Hauffe.

The only stipulation was that Hauffe had to serve six years on active duty, as opposed to the traditional four years of enlisted Marines.

During his time in the Marines, Hauffe had the opportunity to serve as a military policeman, a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and deploy to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in January of 2003.

After retiring from the military, he and his family began looking for a place to settle down. Upon learning of the retirement benefits for his service and a job to compensate for his twin sons' out-of-state tuition, he decided to bring his family back home to Texas and to apply for the opening as a cadet training officer (CTO) at Texas A&M University, the title he holds currently.

As a full-time employee at Texas A&M, Hauffe serves as a cadet training officer within the Corps of Cadets, directly reporting to the Office of the Commandant. As a CTO, he provides oversight to the cadets leading the Corps by ensuring accountability with the policies enacted by the Commandant's leadership.

"He's a straight shooter, you ask him his opinion and he's going to give it to you," said Colonel Byron Stebbins '78, assistant commandant of operations and academics with the Corps of



Hauffe taking a break during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004

Cadets, and also a retired Marine. “He’s going to let you know what he thinks up front.”

Following his personal goals and also the wishes of his late father, he decided to enroll in classes at A&M.

“People talk about their bucket list, it was always something I wanted to do, to go back to school and get my degree,” said Hauffe. “Its something that I really wanted to do for him too.”

Initially, Hauffe was denied admission into the ALED department after a mishap occurred in entering the transcripts for credit he earned while taking night classes during his time as a Marine. The mistake was corrected and he has been an Aggie ever since.

The transition to being a student wasn’t easy for him at first.

“I made a 70 on my very first test and I thought ‘I’m just getting too old and I’m not going to be able to do this,’” said Hauffe. He quickly turned things around and aced the next test and is now set to graduate December 2012.

Senior agricultural leadership and development major and classmate Paul Ferris ’12 said that Hauffe’s professional presence is one that everyone should try and learn from.

“His calm demeanor stands out to me. He knows how to capture and maintain an

audience without going to extremes,” said Ferris.

***“He’s a straight shooter. You ask him his opinion and he’s going to give it to you.”
- Colonel Byron Stebbins ’78***

Surprisingly, many students still don’t see the history behind a man who is anything but egoistic about his past. As a student, Hauffe utilizes years of real-world experience to share insight with fellow ALED

classmates. “They’ve all treated me really well though and embraced me and enjoyed me being in the class with them,” said Hauffe.

After graduation, Hauffe plans on remaining in his role as CTO until he feels ready to retire, again.

So the next time you see somebody in class who doesn’t look the part of your average student, take the time to talk to them and learn about their situation. Who knows, they just might surprise you with all the amazing things they have done.



Hauffe with his driver in Iraq in 2004

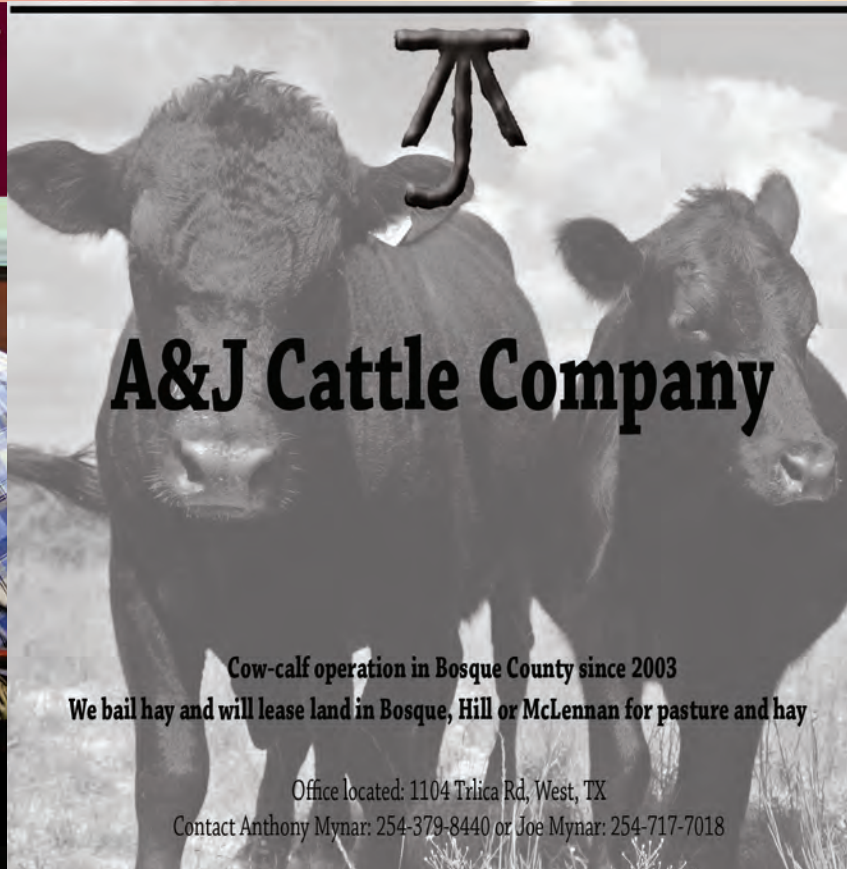
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A Road yet Played

By Cailee Gilbreath '14



Photograph courtesy of Alana Gonzales

Fall 2012

The moment fingers begin plucking the strings of a guitar, the bass beat becomes in tune with your heart and the rhythmic pounding of drums set the pace for the rest of the night. This is when the music comes to life.

Music can have different roles in a person's life. It can be a stress reliever, a workout anthem, a hobby or even a job. At Texas A&M University you can find many students who are playing for the love of the music and the hope that one day the dream of becoming a professional musician can become a reality.

There are many different roads an artist can take on their journey. Most artists look to progress their talents by finding either a band to play with or some sideline playing, but then there are the few with raw talent that cannot be overlooked.

Ty Wellborn

Ty Wellborn '14, agricultural systems management major from Childress, Texas started playing guitar during his junior year of high school and quickly learned the ups and downs of playing and singing for a living.

Wellborn was part of a band, Brimstone, with a few of his friends, but they had to split up after attending different colleges. But Wellborn did not let the split slow him down. Currently, He plays at local bars in the College Station area and writes his own songs when he has the chance.

"It is hard for me to talk in front of people," said Wellborn. "But if I have a guitar in front of me, it doesn't matter how many people there are, I don't get nervous."



Ty Wellborn

Photograph by Cailee Gilbreath

Jake Carr

Like Wellborn, Jake Carr '14 from Lexington, Texas, has pushed himself to make his dream into something worthwhile.

Carr started playing guitar when he was seven years old and has not put it down since. He started posting some of his original work on Youtube and Facebook, but knew that was not enough.

"Do not stop till you reach your dream," said Carr. "There will always be people that try and put you down."



Jake Carr

Photograph courtesy of CJ Brown

The musical songwriter has met other musicians during his musical journey that have helped progress his songwriting and playing abilities'.

He took it upon himself to find band members who want the same thing he does and then started the Jake Carr Band. Every time he plays a concert he is one step closer to his dream.

Dale Julson

Dale Julson '13, an electrical engineer major from Bryan, Texas has been pursuing his musical dream for years. It started when he took his first guitar lesson.

Julson admits that it is a struggle to juggle music and school, but would never give up playing music. Being in a band for part of his college career progressed his playing. He has learned that the road to a musical career can be bumpy.

"Music is its own language, a language that connects straight to the heart. It conveys emotion in ways that words simply cannot," said Julson. "Learning to speak through music can really require you to put yourself out there but it allows you to express yourself in entirely new ways."

“Music is its own language, a language that connects straight to the heart.”

- Dale Julson



Dale Julson

Photograph courtesy of CJ Brown



Joe Teichman

Photograph courtesy of Alana Gonzales

Joe Teichman

Joe Teichman '13, an agricultural communications and journalism major from Dallas, Texas, experiences the joy of sharing his music every time he steps on stage at the local College Station bars.

“The more musicians I met and the more concerts I went to... I decided I'd rather be up on the stage than out there listening,” said Teichman. “I'd rather provide the music than take it in.”

When a musician reaches a turning point and realizes that a musical career is something they want to pursue, their ambition grows and for Teichman, this moment came his senior year of high school.

Musician's have to put themselves out there. They are required to make calls and go through some crazy shows, but any musician will tell you it is for the love of the music.

So when that fork in the road comes up, there are many paths a musician can take. The choice of following in the footsteps of other famous musicians on that platinum lined road can be the difference between a career or a backseat hobby.

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Student Spotlight

Faculty members often become the bridge that allows students to connect their passions with their career. They provide the necessary encouragement that motivates students to realize their potential.

Kassadi Click '13, an agricultural communications and journalism major with an emphasis in animal science, was given that needed boost and used it to start her own business, Kass Click photography.

Knowing that Click wanted to work in the livestock industry, an advisor suggested that she could make a career out of her passion by taking photography of livestock for breeding associations.

After transferring to A&M she met Joelynn Donough who specializes in livestock photography, marketing and writing. Through that relationship, Donough presented Click's work to ShowChampions Inc., a company that specializes in livestock event photography.

Click started working for ShowChampions after transferring to A&M and continued to take photos on the side. Now she is currently photographing engagements, portraits, kids' photos and summer league softball and baseball at home.

"I've had to learn to be really patient because you don't become the best photographer overnight and it does take time for others to notice you," said Click.

You can see photos online at kassadiclickphotography.wordpress.com and facebook.com/kassclickphotography.



Kassadi Click



Natosha Rogers

Many current and future students dream of becoming a college athlete, wanting nothing more than to wear the maroon and white jerseys of Texas A&M University. For Natosha Rogers '13, becoming a college athlete was just the beginning.

Hailing from Littleton, Colorado, Rogers, an agricultural communications and journalism major, has already earned the title of All American Athlete and has broken a total of nine school records in distance running. Even more impressive is that Rogers accomplished all of this before completing her junior year.

Coming out of high school, Rogers running abilities were noticed by many top schools. "I was recruited by a few schools," explained Rogers. "I almost went to Vanderbilt to run track for them with my sister, who is also an All American Athlete, but in the end I wanted to choose my own path."

"I took a last minute trip to Texas A&M and completely fell in love," said Rogers. "Being from Colorado there is the obvious stereotype that Texas is filled with cowboys and cowgirls and I really liked the thought of that." Arriving in Texas, Rogers realized that it was not the old western movie scene she was expecting.

"I really wanted a change after high school," Rogers continued. "Moving to Texas was definitely a change—a big change—but nothing I couldn't handle," said Rogers. "Now, I really feel like I belong here. I love being a part of the three time women's and men's national track and field championship team."

Rogers competes in the 5K, 10K, and 1500m races during the outdoor season and in the 3k and 5K races during the indoor season. Rogers shines off the track as well, with academic accomplishments rivaling her records on the track. "I came to Texas A&M to run track, but my biggest accomplishment is being able to balance being an All American Athlete and maintain a 3.2 GPA," said Rogers. Her work ethic in the classroom earned her a spot on the Big 12 Honor Roll last year.

What the future holds for one of Texas A&M's fastest and brightest athletes is unknown. "As far as after college goes, I'm not sure. I may run track professionally, but I also want to take my LSAT and maybe go to law school," said Rogers.

Whatever Rogers chooses to do in the future, she will certainly have the same success she has experienced in her running and academic career. Until then, Rogers will continue to represent the maroon and white of Texas A&M University to the best of her abilities.

Holli Leggette '13, a Ph.D. recipient in the college of Agriculture and Life Sciences has been honored nationally by receiving the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Graduate Student Teaching Award.

The award recognizes graduate students who excel as teachers in agricultural classrooms.

"The Student Teaching Award is a criterion-based award and is reviewed by a committee of NACTA members. To qualify, a graduate student must have been involved in classroom teaching for a minimum of one year," explained Leggette.

Since childhood she has been dreaming of being a student at A&M and getting her Ph.D. Leggette is a Ph.D. candidate seeking a doctorate of philosophy, agricultural leadership, education and communications.

"I have been afforded opportunities beyond my expectations—presenting research across the United States and Canada, studying with world renowned professors and being a part of the Aggie family," said Leggette.

She has chosen to pursue a Ph.D. in agricultural communications because of two reasons: her passion for agriculture, education and writing, and her desire to gain a better understanding of the theoretical paradigms of communications. Her belief is that these are the stepping stones to succeeding in the world of academia.

"I view my Ph.D. through much different lenses than I viewed my previous two degrees. I have taken advantage of every opportunity available," said Leggette. "I want to leave Texas A&M knowing I have done everything I came here to do plus some."



Holli Leggette

On Campus Attractions

Places to See when You are All Studied Out

By Margaret Ann Thurmond '12



Texas A&M University is one of the largest universities in the nation, and there are many things to do after the studying is done and class is over – or for some, still in session.

Students don't have to travel far to visit a museum, brush up on their Aggie traditions or

smell the roses. The attractions are here in the university's backyard. If the enticement to see and learn something new isn't enough, maybe the fact that all of the activities are free will. Here are a few suggestions of places to visit on campus once the deafening silence of the West Campus Library starts to make you cringe.

Clockwise from top left: Horticulture/ Forest Science Building, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Memorial Student Center, Clayton Williams Jr. Alumni Center, Agriculture and Life Sciences Complex



Photograph courtesy of University Art Galleries
J. Wayne Stark

With the semester in full swing, it's easy for students to get sucked in to their studies and forget about the pleasures of campus life. J. Wayne Stark discovered how to get students out of their routine when he opened an art exhibit in Rudder Hall.

Stark started to build an art collection by asking his friends to donate. He then displayed the pieces twice a year. Thanks to Stark's mission to bring the arts on campus, the university built the J. Wayne Stark Galleries in 1992 as an extension of the Memorial Student Center (MSC).

"[Stark] really felt that students should have opportunities to broaden their horizons, rather than just focus solely on their degree," said Catherine Hastedt, director of the University Art Galleries. "He wanted to bring art to the students."

The exhibit holds mostly American art, but since the pieces are donated the gallery has a little bit of everything. Today there are 12 to 14 exhibits a year that include everything from photography to agricultural art.

Despite the generalization that the Clayton Williams Jr. Alumni Center is just the place to pick up the coveted Aggie Ring, the center has numerous exhibits that feature the traditions of Aggieland.

Clayton Williams Jr. is a former Aggie whose desire for an alumni center led him to give back to the Alumni Association. The association moved out of the MSC and into the center in 1987. Today the alumni center stands with a newly renovated interior.

Upstairs holds an exhibit of former student's Aggie Rings dating back to the beginning of the university. The collection includes rings from important figures in the College of Agriculture, like F.W. Hensel, Class of 1907. Hensel was a horticulture professor who contributed to the landscape and maintenance of the campus and now has Hensel Park named in his honor.

"What we wanted to do was create a destination on campus," said Kathryn Greenwade, vice president of communications. "A place where people could stop in and learn about Texas A&M and get the essence of the Aggie Spirit."

The interactive exhibits of significant Aggie traditions draw the visitor in, and a sense of pride will wash over even the toughest two-percenter.

"I think it will make [students] feel very proud of their university," said Greenwade. "We didn't have a place that told the whole story and put it all together but that's what this does."



Photograph by Margaret Ann Thurmond
An exact replica of a 1946 Aggie Ring outside the Alumni Center



Photograph by DJ Burrus
Plants grow freely inside the HFSB atrium

Stepping inside the Horticulture/Forest Science Building is similar to stepping into a forest: a stream gurgles while medium-sized shrubs shade cushioned benches – a makeshift hideaway for students looking to study or take a short nap. What the students are actually sitting in is the M. Benz Gallery of Floral Art, and it holds far more than exotic plants.

M. Buddy Benz '32 wanted to give back to his alma mater before his death in 1980. He made provisions to have his school of floral design housed in the Horticulture Department.

The unusual and striking designs students see as they walk through the Benz Gallery are arrangements made by members of the Benz School as well as the floral design class – which is offered for class credit each semester.

The gallery features different traveling exhibits as well as art collected by Benz that cycle every three months.

1. University Art Galleries

2. Clayton Williams Jr. Alumni Center

3. M. Benz Gallery of Floral Art

4. Cushing Memorial Library and Archives

5. AgriLife Center



Photograph courtesy of Cushing Memorial Library and Archives
Materials on display in Cushing Library

The term library can bring with it feelings of last-minute-cramming stress or even boredom for some students, but the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives will surface no such emotions.

Located behind the looming Evans Library rests Cushing; a small haven that houses special collections, art and the university archives. Manuscripts dating as far back as the 18th century lie behind glass and wait to tell their story. A wrought iron gate displays brands from famous Texas cattle ranches around the entrance to the Kelsey Reading Room.

Cushing was the first library on campus. Once Evans made its debut, Cushing was left behind until its renovation.

“They completely gutted it and rebuilt it from the inside as a special collections library and archives,” said interim director Dr. Larry Mitchell. “Now we have a beautiful building with beautiful books and paintings.”

“This is the place to find out about the history of our institution,” said Dr. Mitchell. Almost every subject imaginable is covered, including the entire history of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Cushing is the perfect place for someone looking to take a step back into the past.

“It’s the sense of excitement, knowing that there’s something new out there to be discovered,” said Dr. Mitchell. “It makes a great place for students and faculty.”



Photo by Margaret Ann Thurmond
The interactive Texas display located inside the AgriLife Center

Some students may not have had the chance to experience all the features of the new Agriculture and Life Sciences Building since its grand opening – and that includes the AgriLife Center.

The center offers a place for students to relax and learn a little more about their department. It features exhibits, lectures and events throughout the year.

“We encourage visitors to come here,” said receptionist Ashley Harris ’11. “We have our college kiosk that tells about all the departments within our college.”

The AgriLife Center houses permanent and travelling exhibits that last about a month. Most exhibits show the impact of agriculture on a global scale.

The Norman Borlaug Exhibit is permanently on display with his personal memorabilia. Underneath the display lies an

interactive exhibit that tells about his life accomplishments.

Beyond the exhibits, the center provides a venue for future employers and Aggie events. ACE Day is a major attraction held each semester that draws in companies from the Agriculture industry looking for Aggie employees. The staff at the center is working on another tailgate held this fall – last year’s Centennial Tailgate included performances by the Aggie Wranglers and catered Fuddruckers.

Students can always stop by to escape the daily grind. The quiet atmosphere and comfortable benches allow students a moment to themselves.

“We have a lot of catching features that draw you in,” said Harris. “It ties West Campus all together and gives us a place to meet and gather.”



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Sustaining the World, One Acre at a Time

By Renee Caldwell '12

“My mission is to feed the hungry, whoever and wherever they might be.”

-Brady Grimes '11

There's a continually growing market for sustainable agriculture worldwide. Texas A&M University's Howdy! Farm is a model of how a small farm operation exists and is proof that students have the capability to grow fresh, quality produce for local distribution. Though it is not yet organically certified by the United States Department of Agriculture, Howdy! Farm grows all-natural foods. The USDA has strict guidelines for organic certification so, as of now, the farm is a producer of sustainable agriculture.

“Until we apply for certification, we say ‘sustainable’ which is like another word for responsible – both environmentally and financially,” said Brady Grimes '12, horticulture sciences and renewable natural resources major.

In 2009, Grimes was managing the Department of Horticultural and Botany Holistic Garden under the guidance of Professor Joseph Novak, Ph.D. With no real background or connection to agriculture, Grimes began a class project growing all-natural organic produce that expanded into a small one-acre farm by that September. With Novak's help, along with student employees from the Holistic Garden, Grimes' plot produced for three seasons, fall 2009-spring 2010.

“That first summer was really rough... I mean, it was God-awful hot and we had no idea what we were doing,” said Grimes. “In other words, there were a lot of trial-by-fire

moments, and we learned more that summer by making mistakes than what we could have learned by sitting in a classroom.”

Trial-and-error experimentation may have established a solid basis for the science of growing fresh food, but by Fall of 2010, Grimes found himself with thousands of pounds of organic produce and no one to share it with.

“I did some research into TAMU Dining Services and learned they sell over 30,000 meals on campus every day,” he said. “So I thought, why can't we sell to the university?”

According to Texas A&M University's Division of Finance Budget and Planning, only about 16 percent of university revenue is expended on auxiliary enterprises like Dining Services, Transportation Services, Residence Halls and Beutel Health Center. Considering the state budget cuts implemented in 2010, it's no wonder Dining Services would be delighted to purchase fresh produce grown on the university's own turf. The agreement was made and Howdy! Farm was born.

With incoming revenue from Dining Services, Howdy! Farm expanded into four acres by spring of 2011. Novak was preparing for retirement, and the farm needed a new associate professor to aid in research studies and technicalities. Associate Professor Stephen King, Ph.D, of the Department of Horticultural Sciences had a lot of experience in the farming industry and even maintained a small farm of his own. His research

Photographs courtesy of James Wilkins



Fresh peppers sold at a local farmers' market

included plant breeding, genetics and biotechnology, and his special interest in solving specific needs of the consumer made King a “natural choice” for Grimes.

“I knew Brady when he took my vegetable production course in 2009,” said King. “What Dr. Novak did was great for individual home garden use... I’m looking at it like a small-scale production, so our views have merged that way.”

King has insisted that Howdy! Farm remain a student-led operation, so he waited for a swell of student involvement before he pushed for the farm’s participation in local farmers markets.

Farmers markets are groups of individual farmers that meet to sell fresh meats, produce, fruits and other organic goods to the local community. Howdy! Farm is considered a Community Supported Agriculture

system because of the amount of support it has gained from the Bryan-College Station area through participation in the Brazos Valley Farmers’ Market, amongst others.

Being a CSA system offers opportunity for growth in members and land; the more the farm grows economically, the better the agricultural research experience it will provide. Howdy! Farm is part of a closed system where the farm’s output is divided among about 100 shares. Local buyers pay \$240 up front and in return they receive a box of the farm’s produce every week for 12 weeks.

Grimes’ mission with the Department of University Dining and farmers markets is to have students try seasonal, fresh grown food. He firmly believes that teaching people how to grow food is only half the battle; teaching them how to actually eat it is another.

“Here’s an example... have you ever eaten a turnip in your life? Not very many people have, but cooked turnips are actually delicious and so healthy for you,” said Grimes.

Later that spring, Grimes submitted a proposal for a grant that would fund sustainable agriculture research on the Howdy! Farm, and even allow it to expand to its current five acres. His collaboration with King for the



Stephen King, Ph.D., teaches students about the edible parts of a honeydew melon

proposal led Grimes to be awarded a \$50,000 Aggie Green Grant that is reserved for students’ research experiments.

“The grant meant establishing the farm,” said King. “We bought equipment we didn’t have and were able to research important aspects of farming like salinity and intercropping.”

With new equipment and expanding acreage, Howdy! Farm is proof that small farms have potential to fund themselves. Students have the freedom to do great things, including the opportunity to research and educate.

“The grant was the most pivotal moment for us,” said Grimes. “It’s like it breathed new life into the farm.”

Because of the grant, several research experiments are underway at Howdy! Farm. One project is a closed-system tank of fish and plants where fish feces fertilize a hydroponic system. The farm offers the chance to pursue any and all interests for experimentation, and more and more students of all majors come to be a part of the farm’s operations.

“It’s about more than just growing food,” said Lindy Reese ’14, English major. “You’re learning a business and the ins and outs of agriculture.”

Although Reese had never thought to pursue horticulture, she has taken an interest in the farm and now serves as one of Howdy! Farm’s student interns.

Another intern, Matt Weinrub ’13, horticultural sciences major, would like to see the farm incorporated as

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The farm sells produce at the Brazos Valley Farmers' Market on Saturdays

a part of horticulture curriculum and says students can take theory classes on agriculture all day long, but the real learning comes from curriculum that is hands-on.

"Of course we have students from all majors that volunteer on the farm," said Grimes. "The desire to learn and create more is what unites the students... everybody wants to see more out of the farm, and that's what builds it."

Grimes' work in establishing Howdy! Farm brought on his passion for agricultural development and his desire to travel abroad and tell people about it. He graduated in May 2012



Fresh turnips sold at the Brazos Valley Farmers' Market



Brady Grimes '11 plows the soil for the next set of crops

and is currently in Tanzania teaching people how to grow produce on small sustainable farms for the next two years. He's found his niche in sustainable agriculture and wants to make an impact - not by growing food better, but by making peoples' lives better.

"As someone who wants to farm, and especially with what I know about how hungry people do exist... how can I not do something?" said Grimes. "I'm almost obligated to help, but I'm really excited about it."

This year, King is focusing 98 percent of his time on transitioning because of Grimes' graduation. This fall, there are four people taking on Grimes' role and each specializes in certain areas.

"That's why interns like Matt and Lindy are so important," said King. "I'm working with them directly to take over managerial and marketing roles."

According to Weintrub, a lot has changed due to Grimes graduation.

"We have to be consciously aware of how to adapt and find how we can be more efficient," he said.

One thing is certain, Grimes has left behind a legacy that may even become a tradition for Texas A&M University as it paves the way for future agricultural endeavors. Despite the fact that he is in Africa, Grimes sees great things for the future of Howdy! Farm and the Department of Horticultural Sciences.

"I think as long as nothing stops it, this thing has the potential to be a monster," he said.



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Memorial Student Center: Past to Present

By Margaret Ann Thurmond '12



Photograph by Margaret Ann Thurmond





Rudder Fountain, located outside of the Memorial Student Center

Photograph courtesy of Alana Gonzales

Most seniors at Texas A&M University remember the Memorial Student Center well – the students lounging on couches, listening to a fellow Aggie tinker away at the grand piano, and the old building aroma reminding students of why the university is a great place. Students could spend hours studying, promoting organizations or engaging in Aggie camaraderie at the MSC watering hole.

Once the building was shut down in 2009 for renovation, largely due to the dilapidated structure and outdated interior, students dispersed throughout the campus and incoming freshman missed out on the campus gathering-place.

“It was frustrating because there are only so many places to hang out and socialize on campus,” said David Lacey ’13, agricultural systems management major.

With the renovations finally complete in April, the big question was about to be answered. Would the new MSC uphold the character and charm of the original?

The MSC staff wanted to make sure to enhance the Aggie culture apart from just having the latest architecture, said Luke Altendorf, MSC Complex Director. There will be memorial aspects incorporated as well as celebratory components that feature the university’s past to present.



Photographs courtesy of the Memorial Student Center



From Left: First Floor MSC, Second Floor MSC

Photograph courtesy of the Memorial Student Center

“It’s kind of like a church,” said Altendorf. “You’ve got this beautiful structure that helps you do wonderful things but without the people it doesn’t happen, it will be like life is breathed back into the building.”

The new features included in the MSC will propel Texas A&M into the modern age of technology and style while weaving in the Aggie Spirit.

“When [students] walk into the building there’s going to be a wow factor,” said Altendorf.

“I expect the [new building] to be state-of-the-art and contain technologies that sets it far apart from the rest of the buildings on campus,” said Lacey.

The Hall of Honor displays plaques that tell the

story of seven former students who won the Medal of Honor, while the Flag Room takes its place in the building again - with new flooring and refurbished lighting.

“One of the classes refurbished the Steinway piano that’s going back in the Flag Room,” said Altendorf. And if students aren’t quite ready to show off their musical skills, they can practice in one of the four practice rooms located in the basement.

The modern exterior and features will continue to draw students in for generations to come. Students will find their favorite spot around the watering hole again.

Aggie Connections

Major: Agricultural Education Class of '81
Current Job: Sr. Territory Manager, Pfizer Animal Health



Tom Esselburn '81

How did your college experiences at Texas A&M prepare you for life after college?
The Corps experience of “whipping out”, giving a robust “Howdy” to upperclassmen, and simply remembering upperclassmen names has helped me in the business world as much as anything.

What was one of your most memorable moments as a student?
One of my most memorable events was marching in President Reagan’s Inauguration Parade as a member of the Ross Volunteers. The parade was held up for about 3 hours, due to the impending release of the American hostages in Iran. It was a very cold January day in Washington DC as we stood waiting on the greens in our dress whites.

What do you miss the most about Texas A&M?
Taking part in all of the traditions, from Bonfire to Silver Taps, and the Aggie Band and the Corps of Cadets.

Major: Agribusiness, minor in Economics Class of '08
Current Job: Territory Manager, Pfizer Animal Health

What advice would you give for current students?
Enjoy every minute that you have in College Station. Time passes by pretty quickly and before you know it you’re the old guy in the Chicken.

How did your college experiences at Texas A&M prepare you for life after college?
My college experience helped me most after college by teaching me how to prioritize and manage my time. Juggling exams, projects and Corps activities was challenging, and it took failing several times in order to figure it all out.

What do you miss the most about Texas A&M?
I miss being able to see your closest friends everyday. Moving to Western New York has put about 1,500 miles between my closest friends and myself.



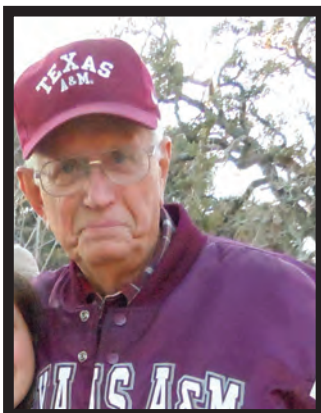
Chris Esselburn '08

Major: Agricultural Economics Class of '62
Current Job: Retired, previously worked for Cargill

Awards: 2003 Outstanding Alumni in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for providing a scholarship in my name. The scholarship is limited to Hansfer and Castro County students in the hope of encouraging students from those counties to attend Texas A&M.

What does your involvement with the students entail?
I serve as a guest lecturer for classes in the Agricultural Economics Department. I am also one of the former students who have dinner with a small group from the seminar class.

What advice would you give to current students?
When I meet with the students I tell them the importance of working for a good company, and to stay with them. That is what helped me and gives me the financial ability to fund these scholarships.



Zay Gilbreath '62

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FARMERS FIGHT

KINGS OF GETTIN' EM

By Allison Werline '12

Photographs courtesy of Dr. Andy Mack



There are many students who love to hunt, but there aren't many who can say that they have killed a crocodile. Luke Mack '15, killed a 14-foot crocodile in Musina, South Africa in the summer of 2011.

Hunting is a hobby that many people enjoy, but the Mack family definitely takes it to a whole new level. Their passion is so extreme that in 2011 they starred in their own television show, *Kings of Gettin' Em*, which airs on the Pursuit Channel.

Luke's dad, Dr. Andy Mack, known as "Doc" on the show, doesn't want to

call himself a "professional hunter", because they are just out there having good time and would be going on these hunts even if there wasn't a show. However, this is a great way to show the public the awesome adventures they have.

Six years after Doc and his partner Keith "KC" Cherry got their video back from a 21-day safari they went on in Africa in 1995, they began kicking around the idea of a creating a hunting show. But they did not want the show to be like others in production.

A lot of hunting shows do not show exact events. But according to Doc, *Kings of Gettin' Em* is "as realistic as it can be.

We don't do reenactments, it's about the hunting experience and we don't try to make it seem like it was better than it was."

The show highlights both the good and the bad hunts,

because everyone knows that every hunt is not always successful.

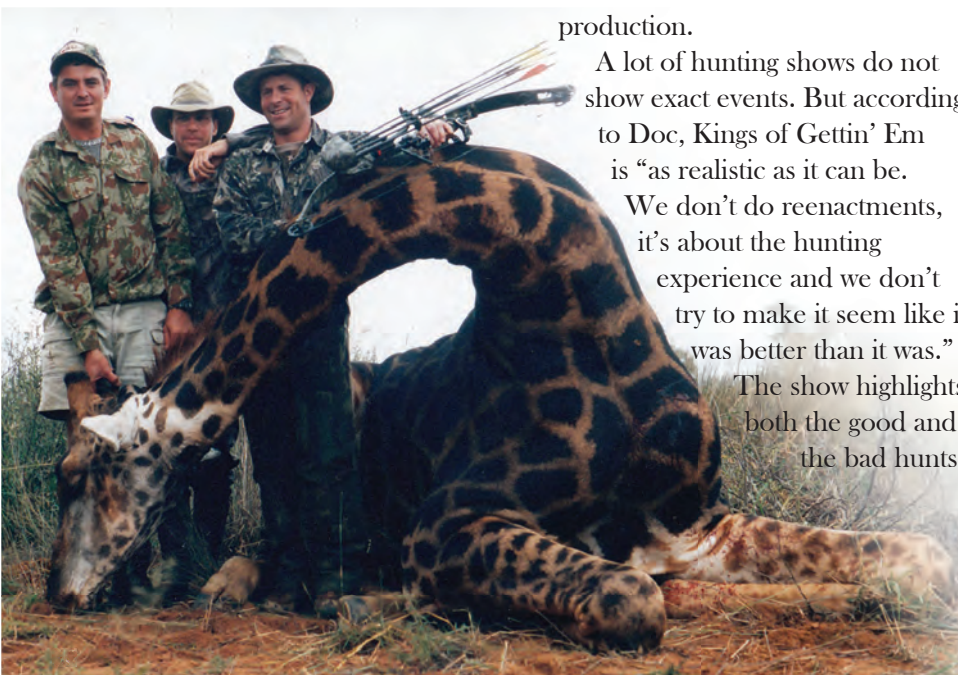
"If we don't kill something, so what, we are still doing what we do," claimed Doc.

"We aren't killers, we are hunters. We will not shoot something that we won't eat." - Doc

The show got its name from a saying that Doc and KC came up with when they were traveling to play three-on-three basketball. Since they won 90 percent of the time they started saying, "We are the kings," and putting their hands up behind their head. Naturally the show took after their saying and became "Kings of Gettin' Em".

Once Doc and KC decided to film a television show they hired two full time cameramen and filmed for a year. After, they contacted three different networks who were all interested in their idea and chose to put their show on the Pursuit Channel.

Doc and KC now have a board of directors and several sponsors including Grizzly Coolers, Yamaha, She Safari and more. They try to



incorporate the products into the show as best as they can so the sponsors get the most out of their investment.

This group of hunters has never had to rely on guides, so they usually hunt alone. Mack said that when he first started hunting with a cameraman it was kind of awkward.

"You don't know what to say or what to do," claimed Mack. "You are used to just being out in the woods by yourself, but now you've got someone watching your every move."

Mack, Doc and KC train and prepare mentally and physically for the harsh climates and intense situations that can arise.

"It may literally take you four or five hours of uphill climbing to get where you can actually see the animal you are hunting in order to make the shot," said Doc. "You shouldn't even plan if you can't prepare."

In addition to Africa, they have had the opportunity to hunt in Alaska, Canada and Mexico. They are currently planning trips to Spain and New Zealand.

Brooks Welborn '15, a turf grass management major, really likes that the show allows the viewers to get to know the hunters.

"They hunt incredible game in wonderful places and the commentary by the hosts makes you feel like you are right there beside them and get the feeling that you are actually pulling the trigger," said Welborn.

Aside from all of the things most people from Texas hunt like duck, white tail deer, turkeys, feral hogs, quail, and dove, the Kings of Gettin' Em have been able to expand their hunting to everything from lions, leopards, Cape Buffalo, wolves, elk, bears

and even a giraffe. But both Luke and Doc say their favorite animal to hunt is feral hogs.

"If you haven't eaten wild hog, you are missing out," said Doc.

"We aren't killers, we are hunters", claimed Doc, who hasn't bought ground beef in 20 years. "We will not shoot something that we won't eat."

In Africa, they are not allowed to bring the meat back. Although they do eat it while they are there, they give the rest to the people of South Africa.

"They are the most appreciative people you'll ever meet, it is unbelievably rewarding," said Doc.

Brandon Warner '11, wildlife and fishery sciences graduate who currently works for Rancho Trinidad, likes what this group of men is doing.

"Putting this show on TV should really help the public's overall view of hunting in a positive way. These guys really are great, and I love to see a fellow Aggie being put in the spotlight," said Warner.

Mack loves that they are getting to share their hunting experiences with people all over the country.

"It's cool that 50 million people could be watching," he said.

Hunting is another way that Mack and Doc have grown together and really bonded as father and son. Mack said they started out going to the deer stand together for typical father-son bonding time but now he considers



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them to be great friends.


"Hunting doesn't just strengthen our bond, it solidifies it," said Doc.

You can watch the Kings of Gettin' Em on the Pursuit Channel, on Tuesdays at noon, Fridays at 6:30 and 9:30 pm, and Saturday at 12:30 pm Central Standard Time.



THREATENED ONCE AGAIN

Story and Photographs by Tray Heard '12



They have horns that curve backward nearly four feet along their spines. Some spiral skyward in the shape of double corkscrews. Others ring inward, creating mirrored “S”s. With these striking features, the Scimitar-Horned Oryx, Addax Antelope and Dama Gazelle stand out among the white-tailed deer that heavily populate the Texas Hill Country. They are just three of roughly 125 non-indigenous animal species that have now made Texas their home.

These non-native species have flourished across the state’s many geographical regions. With estimates of their population near a quarter of a million, this makes Texas home to more exotic species than anywhere else in the world. Animals from Africa, Europe and Asia, against expectations, have thrived here, and have even been brought back from the brink of extinction.

“It’s a point of pride, being able to take a species like the oryx, that was virtually extinct, and have it at the numbers there are today is really something,” said David Bamberger, who began a stewardship program on his ranch near Johnson City in 1969.

“They were extinct in the wild, with maybe 800 alive in the world, and of those 800 only 28 were qualified to be brought in as seedstock,” said Bamberger, whose ranch, simply named Selah, has seen its oryx population rise to over 70 after starting with just three breeding pairs, allowing pairs to be sold and bred in zoos and private ranches across the nation, continuing the conservation of the species.

“Unlike a zoo, I have personally spent my own money, worked with my own two hands to create a place where these animals can thrive as they would in their natural habitat,” emphasized Bamberger.

This method of natural conservation is what brought Scott Grote, the current Ranch Operations Manager, to Selah 12 years ago.

exotic herds is based upon the revenue they take in through culling their large groups. This process involves the sale of breeding pairs to other ranches or charging top-dollar to allow hunters from across the world a chance to take home a big-game trophy, an experience normally reserved for the African wilderness.

“Putting policies in place that will hurt the bottom-line of these ranchers could create a shift where this form of conservation will start to disappear. I think President Theodore Roosevelt is a great example, he’s famous for being an avid big game hunter, but he was also one of the greatest forces for conservation. He was able to see the benefits of limited hunting when a profit can be made that will be put toward preservation,” said Jon Cooley ’12, an ardent hunter and agricultural



Opposite Page: Scimitar-Horned Oryx; Above: Dama Gazelle; Left Inset: Male Dama Gazelle with young; Right Inset: Two Female Dama Gazelles

“Bamberger ranch was appealing because of the stewardship they are devoted to. I also enjoy the variety, the cattle and goats, but the oryx really added another dimension,” said Grote.

With a climate similar to their native habitats, and money to be made, the Hill Country has seen a boom in private ranchers adding non-indigenous species to their land that can co-exist with native Texas animals. The Exotic Wildlife Association, based in Ingram, Texas, has a mission of conservation through commerce and now represents nearly 5,000 exotic ranches across North America.

The practice of conservation through commerce related to the oryx, addax and dama gazelle will be tested over the next few years, as a recent policy change will affect the way these ranchers’ businesses can operate in the United States. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added the three African species mentioned above to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife under the Endangered Species Act this past April, making it illegal to cull any of these privately owned animals without a federal permit.

A large part of what allows these ranchers to maintain

communications and journalism major at Texas A&M University.

The fear of seeing these animals populations drop is commonplace among the ranchers that have worked for years to bring these species back from the threat of extinction. Grote is among a group who understand that if there is no revenue, the herd’s numbers will slowly decrease and they will be replaced by more profitable animals.

“I’m not sure what the effect will be, selling the surplus animals is a large part of what makes our operation manageable. You can always buy more cows or goats, but you can’t get any more oryx when they are gone,” said Grote.

Across the state, ranchers have spent years, and countless dollars, working to create an environment that allows non-indigenous species to thrive, while population numbers suffered in their natural habitats. It is unknown whether new policies and tougher regulations will create a situation where the desire to be altruistic simply cannot survive when there is a necessity to make money.

For further resources visit: www.bambergeranch.org; www.myewa.org; www.fws.gov

Conservation

“It takes a lot of foresight and thought when taking into consideration the historical impact [an easement] will have on the land.”

- Kate Vickery

Since the 1800s, Texas government has documented concerns about water conservation. Two centuries later, in the midst of one of the worst droughts in Texas history, these concerns are still pooling around. Most Texas ranchers, especially within the Texas Triangle, the large area of the state between Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, are unaware of new ways to directly prevent the continuance of water loss for themselves and for future generations.

It is well documented that one of the most successful methods for conserving water is protecting the land from being fragmented and developed.

Simply introducing a “conservation easement” may be a key.

A conservation easement creates a legal preservation agreement between the landowner and a land trust organization for the purpose of conserving land.

In layman’s terms, this voluntary document limits how a piece of property can be subdivided and what can be built on the land in perpetuity. The owner continues to own the land and keep all rights – such as water and mineral – associated with the land rights.

In particular, The Texas Triangle is infamous for the detrimental over-usage of aquifers and resources because Texans continue to build and expand in those areas.

There are numerous jobs, lush properties, and schools that are nationally recognized and have excellent infrastructure. As the population grows, Texans build suburbs, new neighborhoods, new schools, new highways and new lives, all of which add up to one thing: sprawl within the same

... *via* Easement

Story and Photographs by Brittany Hicks '13

Dallas, San Antonio and Houston roots.

The consequences are adding up just as fast, especially in terms of water consumption by this growing population. There are more news reels about water usage restrictions than ever before, including the stage three restriction in San Antonio in 2011-12 forcing owners to only water once every other week. Despite these warnings, Texas keeps building.

Placing a conservation easement on your land will limit the building, immensely reduce the amount of water taken from that area and improve the overall quality of life by retaining more open space.

The National Association of Home Builders projects the market to increase five-fold due to a \$17 billion budget opportunity by 2016.

These homes may be fence to fence but they are new, attractive, apparently energy-saving but not water-conserving. Texas is parched for a better solution.

Of course, placing a conservation easement on one's land is not to be taken lightly.

The money developers are offering for your piece of Texas is tempting, especially for landowners that are "land rich, but cash poor."

A conservation easement is a financially realistic option for many

landowners that will have an impact on the land, water and natural resources' conservation in the state of Texas for generations to come.

Texas rancher, Howard Hicks '69, placed a conservation easement on his family-owned property near Fredericksburg, Texas, a town two hours north of San Antonio and west of Austin.

"Conservation easements are one way to reduce fragmentation of rural lands that lead to more water wells and increase demand on aquifers as well as more impervious surface area that lead to increased runoff, erosion of soil and reduced water quality," said Hicks, "Our family placed a conservation easement on our land, not only to preserve some of the Hill Country in its natural state, but also to maintain water quality in streams and reduce demands on underwater supplies...as more and more rural land is developed around Austin and other major cities, it is becoming more difficult to maintain water quality and quantity in Texas."

The Hicks family takes substantial pride in the land they have managed to preserve over many generations, dating back to 1854. Hicks says he recommends it for anyone concerned about

preserving Texas' open space, but he also understands the significant legal costs and sacrifice of future market value. Even so, the pros outweigh the cons.

"Think of a piece of land as a bundle of sticks. Each stick represents a 'right' associated with land: water, oil/gas, mineral and development rights. When you do a conservation easement, you give away the development rights stick, but keep everything else. The development rights are then protected by a non-profit entity to keep the land pristine." said Kate Vickery, development and communications director of the Texas Land Conservancy.

Vickery says the state of Texas is unique because more than 95% of the land is privately owned giving Texas the most opportunity to use conservation easements as a mechanism for land conservation. So far, it is the best way to continue making sure our land is preserved for quality and quantity of not only water but for life itself.

As of 2012, 3 million acres have been preserved — 1.5 million by land trusts and 1.5 million by the state, cities and parks.

"It takes a lot of foresight and thought when taking into consideration the historical impact

[an easement] will have on the land,” said Vickery.

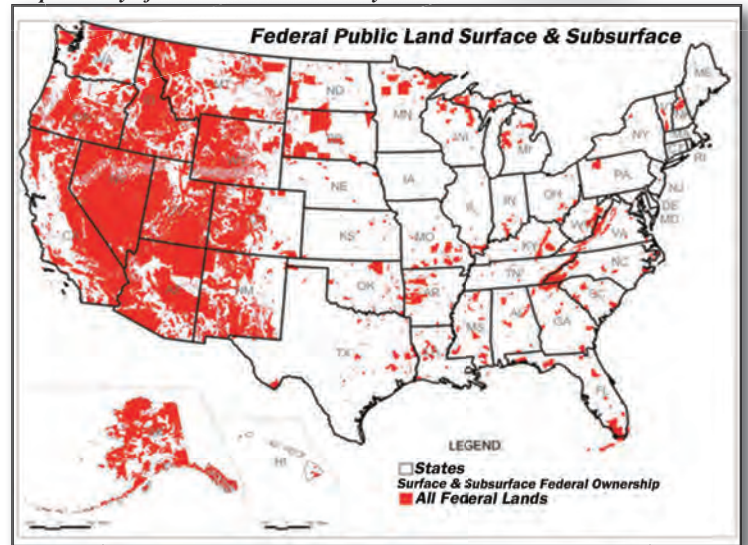
When weighing the benefits of the plant and animal life, water quality and quantity, and most importantly, the reality of preserving the land your feet stand upon in perpetuity – a conservation easement, as a document and stewardship, seems the easiest and most positive influence a land owner can have. Land owners now have the opportunity to partner with a mission-bound group with a perpetual source of funding to take care of the well-being of their land even after they have passed.

This kind of conservation is a way to reduce water consumption and runoff, preserve native plant and animal life and some of the open spaces that we all love and know give Texas it’s southern identity. So, let’s ease up on our resources.

Federal Public Land Surface and Substance map is an accurate comparison of federally-owned land to state-owned land. Texas has the greatest amount of land available for the use of conservation easements in addition to the 3 million acres that have already been preserved by either land trusts or parks.



Map courtesy of Texas Land Conservancy



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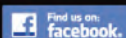
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Fighting Fire with Fire

Story and Photographs by DJ Burrus '12

A deadly drought, horrible Texas heat, high winds and a small sparking power line is all it took to create a miniature hell on earth for the residents of Bastrop in early September, 2011. A single fire that burned for more than a week with walls of flame 30 feet high consumed anything and everything left in its path. The results were devastating: more than 34,000 acres of burned trees and scorched land, nearly 1,600 homes gone, 5,000 people evacuated and two dead.

Regarded as the worst fire in state history, the fire that consumed the Bastrop area was proof of what happens when mother nature's fiery reign is brought upon the Lone Star State. Brush becomes brittle and dead trees, logs, stumps and grass become immobile fuel stations just waiting to be ignited in a moment's notice. Months after the fire, locals are still picking up the pieces in an attempt to rebuild.

Wildfires like the one in Bastrop are not just a local problem. Fires happen yearly across the state of Texas and country due to many things including lightning, illegal burning and firecrackers. Statewide burn bans are in effect more often than not during the summer months due to the high flammability of Texas grasslands, but many ignore these warnings. As a preventative measure, firefighters, along with the Texas Forest Service and the Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas, stay on high alert throughout the summer and fall months in case of fire emergencies.

PBAT was established in early 2011 after the 11 regional Prescribed Burn Alliances were awarded a grant to become one, state-wide alliance.



A fireball bursts into the air in an open field



Charred remains of dead trees in Bastrop, months after the wildfires

“A few years ago we went through the process of establishing a network of these PBAs,” explained Roel Lopez, Ph.D. associate director for the Texas Water Resources Institute and a contributor who helped secure the grant to establish the alliance. “PBAT is basically a state wide alliance or network of these PBAs,” he says.

Fire has been used to control and manage landscapes “since the beginning of time,” said Lopez. “Historically wildfires were common, and are still common, from early lightning strikes to Native Americans using fire as a mechanism to manage the landscape hundreds of years ago.”

Lopez explains that prescribed fires are controlled fires with a set of guidelines that can be applied to a landscape and provide the same benefits that, historically, wildfires offered to those areas.

“Prescribed fires basically mimic what nature used to do via wildfires,” says Lopez.

Unfortunately, the state has little to do with preventing wildfires and prescribed burns because 97 percent of the land in Texas is privately owned. Lopez

explained that there are numerous benefits of prescribed burns, from wildlife to grazing as well as brush reduction to help reduce the risk of wildfires. The main issue is that “people don’t see the difference between wild and prescribed fire,” said Lopez. Residents of the state must become educated and aware of what can be done to lessen the damage caused by wildfires.

Education comes with an understanding of your surroundings. Texans must realize that “many vegetation types and habitats in Texas are what we call fire dependent systems,” said Lopez. “Fire has shaped the evolution of these systems over the course of time.”

That trend will continue in the future, and with climate changes and droughts affecting most of Texas, people need to be prepared for another fire like the one in Bastrop in

the fall of 2011.

Preparing and understanding what causes the severity of wildfires can make all the difference, explained Lopez. For PBAT, the Bastrop fire was a learning experience for the future of fighting Texas wildfires.

“We saw the awful wildfire [in Bastrop] as an example of why prescribed fires are that much more important,” explained Lopez.

Without the use of prescribed fires, acres upon acres of underbrush, dead timber and grasslands are left to buildup, waiting to ignite at any spark. Once the fire starts, these secured fuel sources make the fire immensely difficult to contain.

With future droughts on the horizon for Texas, it is more important than ever to understand the preventative measures and fire control techniques that can be used to lessen the damage caused by the next immense wildfire.



Roel Lopez, Ph.D.

Photograph courtesy of Texas A&M Institute of Natural Renewable Resources

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WINNING THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS

Photograph Courtesy of ISAF Media

By Cera Southerland '13

Since 9/11, most people associate the United States' involvement in the Middle East with war. However, the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture at Texas A&M University and the Texas National Guard Agribusiness Development Teams are taking a different approach to working in the Middle East.

The Borlaug Institute, the global outreach unit of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences that works towards international development of sustainable agriculture in developing countries, has been directly involved in training the Texas National Guard ADTs since 2009.

"Development intervention has always been the focus of our international activities," said Piya Abeygunawardena, Ph.D., associate director of the Borlaug Institute, known to colleagues as Piya.

A Texas National Guard ADT of 10 to 15 guardsmen has been deployed to the Ghazni Province in Afghanistan every year since 2007, where they work with the local people to help rebuild their agricultural systems and infrastructure.

“We’re there to help the government of Afghanistan establish its legitimacy with the people through agriculture extension and education,” said Jet Hays ’84, Lieutenant Colonel in the Texas National Guard and leader of ADT6.

ADT2, the second ADT to be deployed, came to know some of the programs that the Borlaug Institute had with design and application for international audiences, said Piya. With great interest in the programs, ADT2 asked how they could participate in the institute’s design and implementation projects.

In 2008, the Borlaug Institute began discussions with technical experts in the extension service for basics for the ADT training, and then began the project design courses with ADT3 in 2009, said Piya.

The Borlaug Institute began working on project designs and case studies based on the conditions in Afghanistan to present to the ADT during the training program. They also produced a list of people in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M that could be a source of expertise and serve as a “reach-back” for the guardsmen while they were in Afghanistan, said Mike McWhorter, Ph.D., international training coordinator for the Borlaug Institute.

McWhorter said they cater the seven-day pre-deployment training program to the needs of the guardsmen based on what they might encounter while on their mission. Piya said there are three days of technical consultation in which they meet with professors and experts in the College to get background information on the agricultural areas they might face in Afghanistan.

“We prepare a broad framework to help organize thoughts, resources, activities and other ingredients required for a successful project implementation,” said Piya.

Photograph courtesy of The U.S. Army



ADT members inspect a greenhouse in Afghanistan

The remainder of the training program is an overview of previous development projects and case study preparation. By presenting previous development projects and their success, the guardsmen have an idea of what projects to design and implement for their mission.

“What we’re trying to do is knit together continuity from one year to the next,” said McWhorter.

The ADTs have ongoing projects in the Ghazni Province including water management and conservation, honey bee production, park and road development, and environmental improvements such as market development, slaughterhouse construction, and replanting trees and other horticulture activities.

“These are not big, huge projects,” said Piya. “But they are very crucial, important grassroots issues.”

The Borlaug Institute covers a wide area of practical tools within three to four days and presents the guardsmen with case studies, examples and even takes them to various facilities around the Bryan-College Station area, such as the Rosenthal Meat Science Center on campus, to get a first-hand look at some activities they might be dealing with.

“We’re trying to give a dosage of prior knowledge before they’re deployed to understand the culture and local circumstances,” said Piya.

Opposite page: An Afghani farmer thanks and bids farewell to a National Guard ADT member
Below: Texas National Guardsmen from Agribusiness Development Team Six





ADT members receives training on beekeeping techniques and honey production

However, development is not all that easy and Afghanistan is still a dangerous place.

“Development is difficult enough,” said McWhorter. “But when you’re worrying about dodging bullets and IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices], it creates another level of complexity.”

Since some areas do not have running or sanitary water or electricity, the guardsmen will have to adjust accordingly and live with the resources that are available. They will also face cultural barriers that they must understand before they go to Afghanistan. According to Piya, the cultural practices and beliefs of Afghans greatly differ from our own and the guardsmen must recognize that to adapt.

According to Piya, the guardsmen are very cooperative and understanding with everything they learn and undergo in training.

“They’re always on time, never leave early,” said Piya. “It’s unbelievable.”

The goal of these training programs is to have the guardsmen help the Afghans design and fund their own projects and make sure they implement them properly, while leaving behind some tangible results, said Piya.

“The development projects don’t necessarily have to generate profit,” he said. “They must be economically liable [and] generate a positive outcome.”

The Borlaug Institute and the guardsmen of the ADTs want to ensure that the Afghans can continue these projects after they leave the province, knitting the continuity of the projects. For that reason, the ADTs create projects that address the grassroots issues in the Ghazni Province, to help them with the problems that are closest to home for them and in turn, gain local support for the projects.

“What I notice is the [ADTs] are very proud of what they do and we are very proud to be a part of it because development is a noble task,” said Piya.

ADT Member gathers soil samples from a field in Afghanistan



Photograph courtesy of The National Guard



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Eagle Ford Energizing Employment



Map of Texas showing the Eagle Shale formation and its separate components

Agriculture graduates hold the upper-hand in gaining employment during the state's largest shale play

Story and Photographs By Taylor Sass '13

America has overspent, overpromised and overcompensated and the American people are tired of hearing that the country is immensely in debt and our crime rate is higher than Mt. Everest. Americans are tired of hearing about percents, whether it's one or 99, tired of the word "recession" and tired of brilliant college grads who can't find a position in the workforce. It's time to be proud again. It's time to get back on our feet.

That time starts with a desolate road that disappears into the unforgiving Texas heat. Dried brush trees, flat, sandy ground and a single gas station hardly resembles the floor of The New York Stock Exchange, yet this is the future. A humble town in South Texas named Eagle Ford never knew it was sitting on the nation's ability to revive a struggling economy.

Discovered in 2002, the state's largest natural gas reserve, The Eagle Ford Shale, presented itself in the nick of time. Though recently discovered, the economic potential of this shale has boomed in the past couple of years, earning salaries of over \$300 million in 2010 and is expected to create 68,000 jobs by 2020. Not only can our nation proudly sustain itself with natural gas energy, but thousands of jobs are being created in a time of immense unemployment. Little do most agriculture students know but so many avenues in the oil & gas industry are begging for recruits with agriculture knowledge and it's time you

heard them.

What is this Stuff?

Did you brush your teeth this morning? Did you notice the bottled water you grabbed on your way to class? Ladies, what about the tights you wear around campus come rain or shine? We are all consumers of products produced by the oil and gas industry. It's not solely about what we fill our cars with. Ironically enough, the origins of the products we religiously use are not as hard to understand as you might think.

You do not have to be a chemical engineer to understand this business nor fit into it. It's simple, just as we drill for oil; we are drilling for natural gas. "Shale" is a rock formation below ground surface containing natural gas and other components. With new technology, we have been able to capture and use the natural gas and its components, a major resource that we've primarily relied on Russia and Iran to import.

Texas A&M University Geology and Geophysics professor, Thomas Yancey, is more than familiar with the Eagle Ford Shale formation. Yancey received his B.A., M.A. and Ph. D. from the University of California Berkeley by 1971. He became a professor at Texas A&M in 1980 while holding multiple awards and producing many publications for his profession. The industry elite gave an understandable explanation of the Eagle Ford

Pipe being "strung" during construction before being laid in the ground

Shale.

“Eagle Ford is one of the source rocks for natural gas. Natural gas is a fuel, that in the past ten years, has become relatively easy to extract,” explained Yancey. “The immediate impact is that natural gas prices have dropped substantially, but companies that are thinking long term are all developing natural gas resources, because it’s a local resource [and] it’s much less expensive to develop it here than it is to import it.”

In an energy forum by Rice University, called “Shale Gas and U.S. National Security”, it was stated that, “North American shale gas developments are having effects far beyond the North American Markets, and these impacts are likely to expand over time.” With the shale formations we are now able to reverse our dependence on other nations for this precious resource. The forum continued to suggest, “Without a doubt, the natural gas supply picture in North America has changed substantially, and it has had a ripple effect around the globe.”

Natural gas is a leading factor in generating alternate forms of energy. Although the oil and gas industry has

been marked with a bull’s eye by society, it leads in finding and using environmentally safe resources. From what we fill our cars with to what heats our homes, they are constantly working towards new horizons to better our planet and the way we live.

Why You?

If you are wondering “What will I do after life at Texas A&M?” there is a record national shale discovery that is taking place right next to you on ranches, farms, communities and family homes. Who better to relate to ranchers about drilling leases or pipeline easements than someone who has majored in rangeland ecology and management or soil and crop sciences?

Sitting down with land owners, whose property has been in their family for generations and are being presented with an offer of easement purchase, may be better discussed with an agricultural communications and journalism major because of their knowledge and ability to communicate effectively along with their agriculture background.

One industry professional in your corner, Daniel Klick, holds the title of Shell Projects and Technology (US) Project Engineer. After a five minute chat with Mr. Klick, anyone can realize his admirations for both progressing the industry and his concern for being environmentally safe. His goal is to create a difference in our society, whether it is for one person or one million.

This incredibly talented Southern Methodist University grad gave simple insight from the industry directly. “Natural gas in this country is becoming more important as we try to come up with alternate forms of energy, that’s not necessarily crude-oil based.”

Klick displayed his appreciation for agriculture majors in the industry, “The technical stuff is the easy stuff...the industry’s challenges are really around land management. You’re dealing with ranchers and you’re dealing with local communities, obviously huge environmental impacts. So having someone that comes from that background and understanding how the land is being used now and



A welder connects pipe on a natural gas pipeline

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Welders work on the pipe before it is laid in the trench

how our operations might impact [it] is definitely a huge advantage because you're communicating on the same page."

Opportunities Waiting

While college graduate unemployment is a critical issue affecting all of us, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

"You see a lot of positive things happening and people are very conscious of how they work and how it affects the world. That's a cool thing to see."

- Daniel Klick

As agriculture majors, we clearly have the upper-hand in finding employment so let's act on it. Here you have the opportunity to not just land a job, but develop a career.

Career areas such as Land Management and Right-of-Way positions are becoming available. Having an education based on agricultural managerial economics would be a massive advantage in adopting a career in project management in this natural gas boom. Students who understand natural resource and environmental economics would be a first round draft pick for oil and gas employers. These careers would include tasks ranging from being the golden link between

A pipeline marker in the Eagle Ford Shale



land owners and companies, promoting proper use of leased properties and the environment and managing projects and stakeholders. Without these steps in the oil and gas ladder, companies would not be able to climb higher.

For more information about the shale or positions available, visit the Eagle Ford Shale website at eaglefordshale.com. Under the "Jobs" section are links for upcoming job fairs and positions available posted by various companies.

It's Time

Consider it a privilege to be the force behind strengthening our nation as well as safely using our environment's resources. As Daniel Klick points out, "With the abundance of natural gas in the United States, there's potential to monetize natural gas beyond just United States' consumption."

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Home on the Range

By Zach Taylor '12

*“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread,
places to play in and pray in,
where nature may heal
and give strength to body and soul.”*

- John Muir

Just a few miles west of the Texas A&M University campus, nestled alongside Easterwood Airport and Brayton Fire Training School, lies a place that very few Aggies are even aware exists. It is a natural place where students from the Ecosystems Science and Management Department are able to study and perform valuable ecological research that could one day play a major role in the community and quite possibly the world.

Once used by the U.S. Army for military tank maneuvers, the 180-acre Ecology and Natural Resources Teaching Area (commonly known as the “rangeland area”) was given over to Texas A&M in 1946. It remained mostly untouched until the late 1970s, when Texas A&M faculty and staff members began to take advantage of the area’s natural learning opportunities through hands-on management with the land’s vegetation and wildlife.

Over the years, more than 20 wildlife departments,

state agencies and public institutions have used the rangeland area, including Texas Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Academic research is a continuous presence, and studies in water research, agronomy, decomposition and entomology all have a rich history. At one time, the area held nearly 40 head of cattle, and Agricultural Systems classes once performed large mechanic and tractor demonstrations in the 1980s.

The area presently houses several different buildings and facilities, providing students and visitors with places to study as well as store their valuable research equipment. These facilities include a field lab, a large pavilion, dry lab, storage facility, maintenance area, forage drying area and even a classroom.

Research Associate Andy Crane, who has managed the area since 1974, admits that the land holds a very special place in his heart.

“Once you’ve been here as long as I have,” said

(Above) Pond located on Rangeland Area. Photo courtesy of Judith Turlington

Crane, “you kind of take ownership of it.”

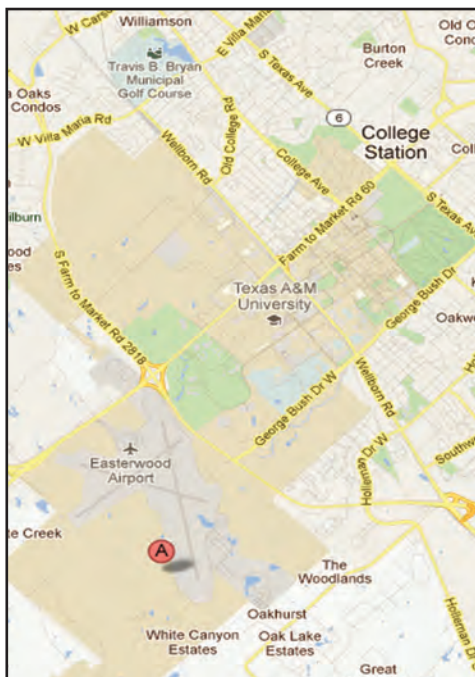
As the rangeland’s primary caretaker, Crane is in charge of maintaining the area’s facilities as well as monitoring the comings and goings of its visitors.

“Unless it’s something really big, they have to go through me,” he said.

In addition to these duties, Crane is also in charge of keeping the area clean and prosperous. Every two to three years, he and several other ESSM staff members conduct a controlled burn to help clear out the area’s undergrowth and vegetation. By doing this, the department hopes to ensure that native plant species can thrive and are not be choked out by invading species.

Although the rangeland area is an opportune place for students to study and observe, it also serves as an important irrigation run-off for Texas A&M. White Creek, a small drainage ditch that runs through the west-side of campus collects excess water during heavy rains and empties into a small pond at the area.

The land also serves as the site for various ESSM events and charity functions. Last April, the department



Map of Rangeland Area and Texas A&M University
Courtesy of Google Maps

held an event called “Footprints”, a 5k run in honor of beloved faculty member Oana Popescu, who lost her life to cancer in 2010 (see sidebar). The run, which covered both paved roads and dirt trails, was meant to bring attention to the department, as well as to the land’s scenic beauty.

“I want people to realize what a fabulous ecosystem it is,” said Judith Turlington, ESSM department Program Coordinator and organizer of the “Footprints” event.

By making the public aware of the rangeland area through events like the fun run, the ESSM department hopes to add to the land’s future preservation and use.

“The more people that know about it,” said Crane, “the longer we can keep it.”

Utilizing the rangeland area for study is an important goal for the ESSM, but some wish to take it a step further. By informing the public about the area’s value, department members hope to one day be able to let students and individuals from all over the Bryan-College Station area come and enjoy the land’s wondrous beauty and nature.

In Remembrance...Oana Popescu: Scientist. Teacher. Friend.



Every student has had a teacher that stood out from the rest, one who played a bigger role than all the others. For many Ecosystem Science and Management students, this teacher was Oana Popescu, Ph.D.

Growing up in Romania, Popescu was surrounded by a family with a love for the outdoors. Her father, Victor Stanescu, was one of the country’s leading forestry experts, and his love for trees soon passed its way on to her.

After graduating from Transylvania University with a degree in Forestry, Popescu and her husband Sorin moved to the U.S. in hopes of finding work in forestry research. In 2003, the couple made their way to College Station, where they both began work as professors for Texas A&M University.

As an assistant lecturer Popescu instructed labs for the ESSM’s dendrology class and worked closely with the department’s students. Her passion for teaching was soon evident to everyone, especially close friend and colleague Professor Carol Loopstra Ph.D.

“When it came to loving her students, Oana was more than just the average teacher,” said Loopstra. Even after being diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer in 2007, Popescu’s enthusiasm for her work and her students remained.

“She was in a lot of pain, but she still figured out how to do it,” says Loopstra, “she pushed herself to the limit and never gave up.”

The love students felt for Popescu was more than just classroom deep, and she was voted the department’s Undergraduate Professor of the Year in 2010. One student even knitted her a quilt when she fell ill, a gift she cherished until her passing in June of 2010.

In addition to being a standout professor, Popescu was also an avid runner and Livestrong supporter. Last Earth Day, the ESSM department hosted an event called “Footprints”, a 5k run to help raise money for the Oana Popescu Love of Trees Memorial Scholarship, an award given to stand-out dendrology students in the ESSM department and Forestry Club.

Throughout her time at Texas A&M, Popescu was more than just a professor. She was an outgoing, vibrant personality, whose love for her students and her work was unmatched. Even though she is no longer here, Popescu’s lives on in the lives of her pupils and her colleagues.

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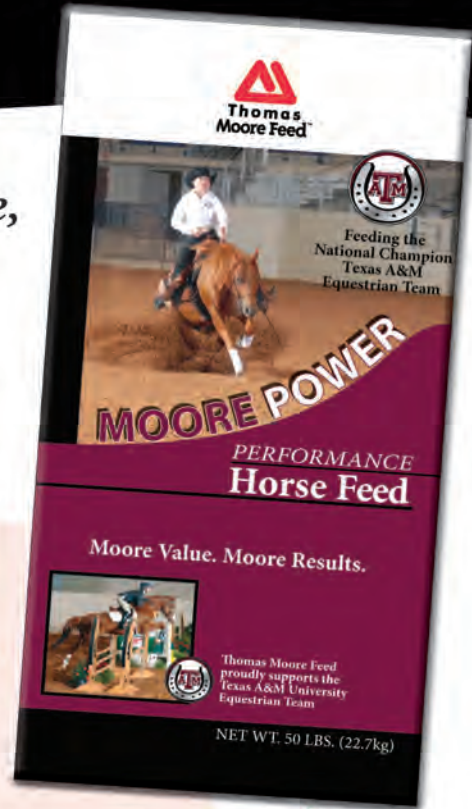
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