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LEAD STORY

[Happy Birthday Sam!](#)

by [Jenny Swenson](#) in [Campus News](#)

by [Thomas Boydston](#)

Although Mother Nature refused to cooperate, Huntsville still managed to celebrate Sam Houston's 215th birthday, as well as Texas Independence Day, Texas Flag Day and Walker County Pioneer Day, with style. The festivities began on Saturday, March 1 with a luncheon and reception in the Katy and E. Don Walker, Sr. Education Center. There was a preview of the film Sam Houston, produced by Denton



Florian, a performance on the porch by the Huntsville Children's Choir, information booths and refreshments for guests. On Sunday afternoon, a group marched from Austin Hall to Sam Houston's grave at Oakwood Cemetery. A group of students and administrators formed a small parade led by the Army R.O.T.C. "The march to the grave is primarily a tradition that the university had started," Dr. Caroline Crimm, history professor, said. "The president and vice president and faculty and students and whoever we can get to come, comes. It's primarily a tradition -- we're trying to uphold tradition and history." According to Dr. Crimm, the tradition of marching to the grave was resurrected in 1997 by the Walter P. Webb Historical Society. The ceremony at Oakwood Cemetery began with a musical tribute by the Wright family. The Army R.O.T.C. performed the posting and retirement of the colors, as well as a 21 gun salute and taps to close. Welcomes were given from the Walker County Historical Commission, Walker County, the City of Huntsville, Sam Houston State University, Sam Houston Student Government and the Alabama-Coushatta Indians. The keynote speaker, historian and author Bob Bowan, gave an amusing historical speech, discussing topics such as the crazy geography of Texas and the possibility of Davy Crocket's survival in the Alamo. "We call on different people every year. Bob was here 25 years ago and spoke to us," James Patton, chairman of the Walker County Historical Commission, said. "We've had governors of Texas here, we've had historians of all sorts have spoken, we've had women, we've had Hispanics speak- we've had all kinds of interesting people speak." Guests then relocated to the Wynn Home Arts Center on 11th street for another small ceremony and cake. "We chose the Wynn home this year because it's new and hasn't been open long for the Toast of Texas. I thought it would be something different to do," Patton said. According to Patton, the original concept began in 1889 with a march to the grave with a speech. Over the years, it came and went with the times, and in 1981 was resurrected into the scale we see today. "We never know how many people are going to show up," Patton said. "It's a fun event, people always enjoy coming. It's a lot of work getting it together but once we do it and get it on the way and organized everybody just falls into place. The final segment of the birthday celebrations was sponsored by the Program Council and called "Happy Birthday General Sam". The event was on Monday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and relocated to LSC 320. "We wanted to give students the opportunity to celebrate his birthday, so we decided to throw like a regular birthday party," Laurie Orlando, vice president for public relations, said. "We have hot dogs and cake and chips and goodie bags." Unfortunately, the weather refused to cooperate and rained out the original outdoor plans for the party. "Well, we can't control the weather, and we're really sad that it's so rainy today. But we're still hoping for a great turnout," Orlando said.... [Post the First Comment](#)

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