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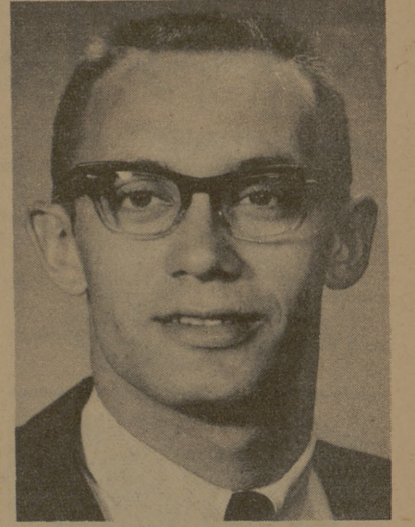
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BERNGEN

Aggie Had "Hot" Work In Egypt

Some like it hot. One of those is Frank Berngen, 20-year-old A&M student who worked in 127-degree temperatures last summer in Egypt.

Berngen, junior physics major from Chillicothe, helped plant cedar trees and dig irrigation ditches in the Sahara desert as part of a soil conservation program. The thermometer climbed to 127 degrees in the sun and 107 in the shade.

Young people from all over the world, including Russia, toiled for four weeks in an international work camp about 100 miles west of Cairo in the desert's north part.

"They called the place Waidelnatroun. It is the dried up bed of the Natroun River," Berngen explained.

"We worked from 7:30 a. m. to 1 p. m.," he said. "I wore a big western hat—the others wore military caps. Their heads nearly burned up, but I made it fine."

Berngen said the students ate mess hall style, with beans, tea and a piece of tortilla-like bread smeared with jam for breakfast. Lunch featured water, cucumbers, watermelons, tomatoes, rice or noodles, carrot stew, bread and a small piece of beef. Supper included salted cheese, dates, mangos and cucumbers.

All of Berngen's summer wasn't devoted to work. He spent several weeks teaching swimming to beginners in Cairo. In addition, he worked out daily with several members of Egypt's Olympic swimming team.

"We visited all the sporting clubs in the area," Berngen recalled. "At night we would go to the National Club where the boys in my group were used to demonstrate swimming techniques. Later we played water polo."

Berngen is a member of the A&M swimming team.

Visits were also made by the group to the pyramids, the Valley of the Kings, Aswan Dam, Port Said and the Suez Canal.

"I was amazed by the pyramids of ancient Egypt, but I was surprised that Cairo is such a modern city. It's thriving with 3.5 million people and they have some fine buildings," Berngen said.

Air-conditioning is seldom available in Cairo, he pointed out. He remembers seeing a huge river rat on the eleventh floor of the Nile-Hilton. Cockroaches three inches long were not unusual, he said.

"If you could get used to their ways of living, you could stay in Cairo very economically," Berngen explained. "Things are cheap. You can get a government apartment for a pound or two a month. And you can eat off the street (not in the best restaurants) for about \$10 a month."

"The friendliness of the people impressed me. They were helpful and honest. I could leave my camera in my room and expect to find it there when I returned. And if you buy something there and for some reason decide to take it back, they will refund your money without question."

Berngen made the trip through Operations Crossroads Africa. He had scholarships totaling \$1,150 to make the visit.

Travel is not new to the West Texas resident. He's been to Europe, Thailand, Hong Kong, Alaska and Mexico in earlier travels. And he hopes to work next summer in Europe as an engineer.

Berngen is a member of the Travel Committee, SCONA X, and is vice president of the Baptist Student Union.

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