

Few Realize Work Needed To Cook Mess Hall Meals



MARY LEE TREECE
Miss Treece, a 19-year-old nursing major, attends T.W.U.'s Dallas Nursing Center. The Mesquite sophomore enjoys dancing and dating. She dates an Aggie fish. (Battalion Staff Photo)

By BILL DINGER
Battalion Special Writer

Few students, other than waiters, realize the tremendous job involved in putting just one meal before thousands of hungry Aggies, a job the mess halls perform three times a day, every day, nine months a year.

One person realizes this Herculean task perhaps more than other. He is Henry Wellnitz, food manager for Duncan Mess Hall.

Until just recently, Food Service personnel worked what could be called a split shift. Under this system, they worked preparing a meal or cleaning up for the next only when a meal was being served. They would then lay off for a few hours, then come back to work during the next meal. Wellnitz explained how this has been changed.

"EVER SINCE Duncan began serving Aggies, its help has worked in a split shift. Cleaners and cooks would have to take a break between meals," he noted.

"As of Monday, however, cleaners and cooks are on an eight-hour, staggered shift. The first shift punches in at 5 in the morning. They'll get everything ready for the breakfast meal, prepare the meal, and clean up after the meal. They stay until 2 in the afternoon."

Something looks wrong here. Five to two? That sounds like nine hours. Wellnitz explained the extra hour as being two half-hour periods given the mess hall help to eat the two meals a day provided for them. During this hour they receive no pay.

AT 10 A.M., while this shift is but halfway through its working day, another shift punches the time clock and begins its working day.

"This group, along with the first group," Wellnitz went on, "prepares the noon meal, and then gets ready for the evening meal. This group is also finished in nine hours."

"I think this new time system will create better morale in the workers, as well as stimulating more interest in the personnel for their work," he prophesied.

AS TO WHAT type of preparation went into the fixing of an ordinary meal, Wellnitz described a typical day.

"Preparation time differs, of course, with the type of food being prepared," he said. "First, the mess hall is divided into three basic sections: a meat section, a vegetable section, and a pantry section which prepares all salads and beverages."

"Each section head makes a list of everything his department will need for the day, and turns this in to Mr. (Oscar C.) Plantt, the head chef. Everything is ordered in cases, cans, etc. Plantt then orders all this from the storehouse, which is located in Duncan's basement."

THE BASEMENT storehouse of which Wellnitz spoke of has a separate staff, and fills only the orders of chief cook Plantt.

The basement storehouse underneath Duncan mess hall covers about as much space as

does the mess hall itself. Cases and cases of everything from pineapple slices to emergency chili (it takes less of the students' board fees for the cooks to make it in Duncan) are stacked in row after row as high as eight or nine feet, throughout the basement.

Due simply to a lack of space on the ground floor, the Duncan butcher shop is also located in the basement, directly underneath the kitchen area.

"WHEN THE needed supplies arrive up in the kitchen, each section takes what it ordered."

"Meat and pastry supplies," Wellnitz added, "must be ordered a full day in advance, though. The central pastry shop here in Duncan, besides providing enough delectables for the corps, also supplies pastries for Sbis Dining Hall and some for the Memorial Student Center."

"We try to keep the amount of time from cooking to serving as small as possible," Wellnitz interjected. "In preparing a meal, dishes are cooked on a fairly rigid schedule, so that everything will be ready at the same time."

WHENEVER possible," he added, "preparations for the next day's morning meal are made during the evening meal, to ease the work the following morning."

It's interesting to note that Duncan buys nothing pre-made, except for canned preparations and fresh bread. All pastries, doughnuts, cakes, pies, everything in this line, are prepared in the central pastry shop. The closest thing to ready-made pastries used are cake mixes.

"Using cake mixes," Wellnitz added, "makes mixing easier and also insures more accurate mixing."

EVERY ONCE in a while, a groan of hunger rises from the Corps when the waiters return to their tables to say that they can't bring the "bull neck" back for a third or fourth time. Wellnitz explained why a dish is cut off so abruptly in such a case.

"Every recipe we follow is broken down into batches to serve 100 people," he explained. "This is true with meat, canned foods, vegetables, etc. We use institutional recipes. The chef is responsible for estimating how many batches to make."

In this way, if three or four waiters went back for additional refills after the last batch had

been dished out, they would necessarily have to go back empty-handed as the cooks cannot make another batch for 100 when at the most, 20 or 30 would get served.

"WE HAVE approximately 90 employees in an entire day." "Under the new split-shift system, however, there would be something like 28 people working in the kitchen proper and cleaning up in the dining area at one time. This number is exclusive of butchers, pantry workers, store-room workers, etc."

The only problem that Wellnitz went into in detail was the problem of waste. He attributed this waste to the necessary flaws in serving food family style in part, and to careless waste of food by Aggies.

"There is quite a tremendous amount of food waste," he said. "Most of the edible food not used by the students but prepared by the kitchen is used to feed the mess hall help. When students make food inedible, they are only hurting themselves."

"ON WEEKENDS, the only thing we can do is to estimate how much to make, by taking into account the events taking place on campus at the time, and by going over past years' precedents."

TWO PERSONS that Wellnitz praised very highly for their excellent work are B. B. Suehs, Duncan's supervisor, and chief cook Plantt.

"SUEHS PUTS his estimate of attendance up on the mess hall bulletin board, and the mess hall operates accordingly," Wellnitz emphasized. "He and Mr. Plantt coordinate closely."

IF MORE Aggies knew how planning and preparation went into those meals that they rant and rave about at times, maybe some day instead of "Beat the hell out of the mess hall," visitors would hear an honest wildcat for the mess hall cooks.



MYSTERY STUDENT IN A BLACK BAG
Oregon State University's class in Speech 113—Basic Persuasion, has at each session a mystery student covered by a black bag with only his bare feet showing. (AP Wire-photo)

'Ag-Gem' Subject Of Short Course

Members of the 16th annual Agricultural Aviation Conference and Pest Control Short Course here Tuesday got a look at a new concept in aerial application of chemicals.

They heard a talk and saw a color movie on the Ag-Gem, a man and load carrying device which hovers just about the ground on a cushion of air. The craft is sometimes called an air cushion machine. It is strictly experimental and is not on the market.

Ag-Gem, which stands for agricultural ground effect machine, was described by John Mercer of the Princeton University Aerospace and Mechanical Sciences Department. He said the machine roughly resembles a flying saucer that never gets more than 2 feet off the ground. Usual "altitude" is a foot or less as it skims over a field like an inverted bowl with hidden wheels.

MERCER LISTED a variety of advantages of Ag-Gem. Some of these included high safety compared to conventional aircraft, economical payloads, operation in small areas, and it flushes the pesticide down around the plant where it does the most good.

Compared to several other standard agricultural aircraft, the air cushion machine would cost less to buy, (estimated initial cost of \$9,000), is probably as economical to operate, and possibly qualified airplane pilots would not be required.

"A ground effect machine is not necessarily easier to fly than an airplane," Mercer explained. "It is, however, much more difficult to get into trouble than with an airplane. For this reason, an operator is ready to go to work after a few hours of dual instruction. This suggests that much lower salaried operators can be employed than those costs associated with airplane pilots."

THESE FACTORS, he added, should give Ag-Gem an insurance advantage.

The disadvantages? Ag-Gem has its share. In its present stage of development, the machine can not be operated over tall crops like corn and cotton. Experiments so far have been with ground hugging plants such as cranberries and potatoes, both of which survived the air turbulence very nicely, Mercer said.

The device does best, he said over crops that form complete ground cover. Otherwise, if bare ground is exposed and dry, terrific dust clouds are generated. Fertilizer spreading is one of the

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Civil Engineering To Hold Seminar On Wood Design

A seminar on "Designing with Wood" for engineering students and practicing engineers will be held here Tuesday.

The program, sponsored by the Civil Engineering Department and School of Architecture, will be from 2 to 4 p.m. in the architecture lecture room, according to Dr. Robert M. Holcomb, civil engineering professor. Prof. James Marsh will make architecture arrangements.

Dr. Holcomb said the three-part program will be presented by representatives of the Southern Pine Association, Southern Pressure Treaters Association and American Institute of Timber Construction.

"Physical properties of wood, pole and piling design considerations, use of wood preservatives, fire-retardant treatment, principles of glued, laminated lumber construction and systems of fastening used in large laminated sections will be covered," Holcomb added.

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Greenhut Revises Economics Book

Dr. M. L. Greenhut, head of the Economics Department, has revised his textbook for the University of North Carolina Press. "Plant Location in Theory and in Practice" was originally published in 1956.

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