

# The Skulker on saving trees

Editor's note: This is part two of a four-part interview with A&M's ecology Skulker, a nighttime man-about-campus who does exist.

Slowly as the Skulker, or TS, spoke, my confidence returned. I asked:

"Skulker, your first big hit was the tree planted on the spot where every year a portion of A&M students burn trees as a gesture of hope for a football victory over the University of Texas. Some have said that the words you wrote next to the planted tree were only symbolic of a bigger meaning. Is this true, and if so, what were you trying to say?"

"Yes, I hit first last Arbor Day in January by planting a tree on the bonfire site. My second hit occurred two weeks ago and involved signs on trees. Obviously I have strong feelings about the passionate desire to chop down living trees to burn! I have yet to receive a logical reason for this. Don't mistake me. I am not against a bonfire as much as I am against using trees for it. Maybe we should use the trees growing on this year's campus for this year's bonfire! Or maybe we should utilize engineering skill to build a bigger bonfire out of trash lumber and from old or condemned buildings. Do you know that the traditional Aggie Bonfire was always made of trash before World War II? I like tradition and I can't understand why the Aggies persist in doing something against the original Aggie tradition."

I started to interrupt, but the Tree Savior was fired up over the issue. He sighed heavily, and almost reflectively said: "Of course, there is another

side of the bonfire issue. The Texas Clean Air Act of 1969 states that "Except as authorized by a rule, regulation or variance or other order of the board, no person may cause, suffer allow or permit the emission of an air contaminant or the performance of any activity which causes or contributes to, or which will cause or contribute to, a condition of air pollution." Does Texas A&M or the student body of Texas A&M receive a special variance or authorization to burn a huge pile of trees which has been soaked with petroleum products?"

(The bonfire may not need a variance, an exception to the above ruling provides for ceremonial burnings as long as they are not a public nuisance. Having the bonfire has yet to be legally questioned so there is no way of knowing what the outcome of such a ruling would be.—Ed.)

I couldn't answer him. I didn't know. He went on:

"It seems strange that an institution such as Texas A&M, where at least 75 percent of the activity is related to natural resources and their conservation, would allow its students to destroy living trees for the sheer fun of it."

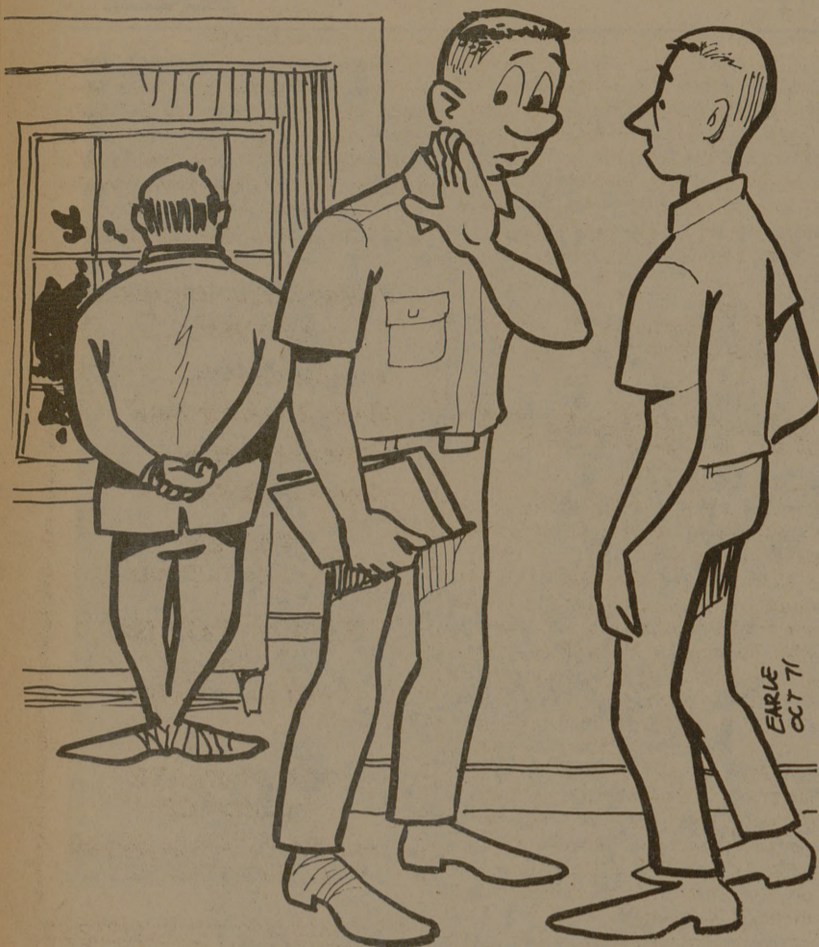
"Yes, yes, that makes sense, but don't you think someone is going to say you have a hang-up for trees?" I hadn't really intended to ask the Skulker this,

that he did have a hang-up for trees, something I thought peculiar for someone from this area.

"Boy, do I have a hang-up for trees! Sometime we should all lie on our backs under a tree and just watch it live. And then, for kicks, make a list of everything that happens on that tree: a perch for birds or a place for a bird nest; insects feeding on the juices oozing from a limb broken by tree wind; birds feeding on the insects; a squirrel gathering the acorns; a little worm inside the acorn; the roots tapping the minerals and water from the soil.

"And then you know that the trees produce oxygen and use carbon dioxide. Man consumes oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide. Seems like one system supports the other. That's a good idea. I guess Joyce Kilmer had it all put together in "Trees." Continued tomorrow.

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A representative of the Southern Methodist University School of Law, Dallas, Texas, will be on campus 8:30 a. m. - 12 p. m. Thursday, October 7 to talk with interested students about admission requirements and financial assistance. For information and to make appointments, see Miss Pat DeHaven, Placement Office.



"We better wait until he gets over th' freeze on his salary!"

## A&M and change

There is a movement on this campus that, in the long run, will radically change Texas A&M University. It will take its past and current shapes and twist them in such a manner that in the future this school will be a very different place.

It isn't a revolution brought by "outside agitators" or by a clandestine group here. It is happening all around the campus, in many cases very visibly.

Most Aggies will not be moved by it very much, at least not yet, but the movement implies much, much more when applied to others.

It does mean that the Corps of Cadets will become a campus minority with only a minority voice in student affairs. It means that eventually this university will have a large number of coeds. It means that the traditions that have been used as a link to the past are going to become only a minor part of campus life.

This will come about by intent on no one's part. It will happen because of change.

The reason for this change is simple. Growth. We are growing, expanding and changing so rapidly that keeping up with the advancement is almost impossible. Like the fetus of an animal, we are adding with incredible speed an arm here, a sensor there, an internal organ somewhere.

And of these arms and organs there are cells, the individuals, the students, faculty and staff that comprise this university.

Student-wise we are more than 14,000 strong. If faculty and staff are added, more than 20,000 people come onto this campus daily. We are a long way from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

But still we are told by some that this should even now remain dedicated solely to the ideas of ROTC and a past-oriented school.

It does not make much sense.

It is good for this school that these changes are taking place.

It is good because to deliver a high quality of education this university must grow. It must range over all fields of thought man's mind can touch. The oceans, space, environment, and man himself are all very desperately in need of all the study and expansion of knowledge that this school can give.

It is good because this expansion implies expanded thought. Implied are the ideas that range from those of the Weathermen to John Birchers, from the ecology freaks to the polluter, from the pacifist to the bomb-them-all people.

These ideas are what make this or any university exciting.

In the traditional vein of thought there is no room for all these ideas, but in 14,000 people you will find them all. It is a direct conflict. There is either traditional uniformity or there is not. Since we now have such a large school, there can never be uniformity—even on the smallest of issues.

There can never again be the Corps of Cadets—and no one else. There can never again be an all male school. There can never again be the traditions that are followed by all.

There is no way out, it can already be seen happening. Stand on a street corner and watch the Aggies, all 14,000, as they pass. There walks the returning of the past to its proper position and the face of the future. There walks the growth of this university and the by-passing of those who would hold it back.

There walks the best thing that ever happened to this school, its growth, and its change.

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