

Catching 'Christmas gas' a part of Aggie tradition

The first 100 years

By DON MIDDLETON and JOHN ADAMS

When the Beat t.u. euphoria faded to a tolerable level late yesterday, Middleton realized that it was time to pound out some words of wisdom concerning the history of our hallowed school. Adams had probably been sitting in his office for three

toilet on the fourth floor of Dormitory 2. That's where Corps Headquarters was located — and still is. It happened two more times that year, and Corps Staff still didn't move out.

That was also the last year that the "Longhorn" was published. The next year and someone got the gas and changed the name of the yearbook to the "Aggieland."



College President W. B. Bizzell, to the left of the Rice Owl, grins approvingly along with the cadets who stole the stuffed mascot in 1920. Courtesy University Archives.

days waiting for his sometime partner to show up.

But Middleton had fallen victim to a tradition older than kissing around touchdowns, quadding, Aggie jokes or even hazing. Yes, devoted readers, Christmas gas is here to stay.

While half of this writing team was slaving over a file filled with interesting facts from A&M's past, the other half was teaching fish to sing "Winter Wonderland" in two part harmony.

The gas is not new to "Sing-Sing on the Brazos." Oh, no. The gas has been here for longer than your great-grandfather, class of ought-something, can remember.

It was here in '47 when some enterprising cadets striken with the gas removed the flush valves from all the

And that same year Coach Homer Norton got the gas and produced a losing season. That was something Homer rarely did. In fact he only did it five times in the fourteen seasons he coached the Aggies.

In the old days, the gas was not just something that floated around prior to Christmas and Summer recesses and during the entire senior year. The gas was enshrined every year in a special section of the yearbook called "The Greenhorn."

No one, not even the College president, was safe from the barbs hurled by the Greenhorn staff. In 1924 the Greenhorn ran a page called "The Daily Bulletin," presumably a parody of The Battalion. One of the articles was headed "Dr. Bizzell to return from Europe." Bizzell was

president at the time.

The article read: "Dr. Bizzell, who has made a contracted trip to Europe and part of Rhode Island, is expected to return to Toddville by way of Navasota at two o'clock next week. Reservations have been made for him on the Bryan-College Interurban. Dr. Bizzell writes that he notes a striking difference between Americans and foreigners, in that they speak a different language.

"College residents are anxiously awaiting the President's return, as it is rumored that he has grown a flowing beard."

Nobody ever accused Bizzell of being immune to the gas. Take, for instance, the time he posed for a picture next to a purloined Rice Owl along with the cadets who purloined it.

It was only natural to steal Rice's Owl, since three years before, in 1917, they had a case of the gas and got Rice's Goat.

During those days, from 1914 to 1929, it was easy to get the gas. Mainly because the Aggies had ten winning football seasons in a row.

The coach from 1917 to 1928, with the exception of 1918 when he went to war, was Dana Bible. We doubt if he ever had the gas. But he never had a losing season at A&M, either. His first season he went undefeated, untied, and unscored upon.

In fact, he beat his opponents by a combined score of 270-0. He did it again his second season to prove it wasn't a fluke. Aggies, 275 — opponents, zip.

Yes, the gas has been around for quite a while and it looks like it's here to stay. Very few Aggies escape at least a mild case of the gas. It's hard for us to imagine making it through finals week without a good, rip-roaring dose of it.

Ten bucks says Pat Thomas and Ed Simonini have the gas, but good. Along with Garth Ten Napel, Edgar Fields and Lester Hayes. Not to mention Blake Schwarz, Jimmy Dean, Jackie Williams, Richard Osborne, Robert Jackson, Bubba Bean and Bruce Welch.

Thomas made All-American for the second year. There's going to be a change in the fish campusology question. Thomas joins a rather elite group of Aggies who accomplished the same feat — Joe Routt, Jack Little, John Kimbrough, Charlie Krueger and Bill Hobbs.

This is the sixth year the Aggies have placed two or more players on the first team. In '39 there were three and in '68 there were four. The team's record in 1968 was 3-7. Hm. The sportswriters who pick the All-Americans must have had the gas.

By now you must be convinced that although some traditions come and go, the gas is cemented firmly into the lifestyle of the students, officers and faculty of the A&M College. The face of the school may change, but the gas — well, you get the message.

Campus Comments

How do they stand it? Senate vacancies abound

By SANFORD RUSSO

Campus Editor

After watching the student senate in action, it's truly amazing that anyone stays in the body very long.

In fact many people don't stay in the Senate past three meetings pleading grade trouble, inability to fulfill obligations elsewhere, or are asked to leave because of non-interest.

There are always senate positions to be filled. Not a senate meeting passes without a plea from Jeff Dunn, student body president, for someone to apply for this position or that.

It's gotten to the point, in the past, that by the time spring elections roll around, half the senate is presidentially appointed-senatorially approved.

What this means is friends of

senators, people who couldn't make it in an election or senate "groupies" end up with what should be elected positions.

It's enough to make one wonder if voting exists as a courtesy and not as a decision-making action. It also causes the question "does the Senate really represent me?" to be asked.

Another factor of consideration is the people who run for senate seats. Are they really sincere if they leave the senate after a month or two of "service?"

It's a well-known fact that if a person puts up enough flyers and big enough billboards they can be elected to almost any office they desire.

Maybe popularity and name-recognition shouldn't be the criteria by which Senate seats are filled and later vacated.



"That sure sounds better than 'wait until next year!'"

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DEADLINES FOR THE AGGIELAND '76

DECEMBER 1 was the last day for organizations that reserved pages in the AGGIELAND to pay for their pages, or to lose their reservations.

JANUARY 31 is the final date for seniors and graduates to have their pictures taken at UNIVERSITY STUDIOS. The reason for this extension was because many dead and dying elephants had difficulty dragging their carcasses to the studio on time.



A group of sophomore cadets helped the football team get Rice's goat in 1917. Courtesy University Archives.



"OF COURSE, WHERE SOVIET DETENTE IS CONCERNED, I GUESS I'M A LONALD LEAGAN CONSERVATIVE!"

The Battalion

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