

The essence of an Aggie: honor, spirit, pride

By KEN STROEBEL

The following article was taken from an earlier issue of the Battalion. Ed. Dr. Jim Syler, 1957 A&M graduate, defined an Aggie as a "soldier, statesman and knightly gentleman" who "rides hard, shoots straight and lives his life in such a way that he can look any man in the eye and tell him to go to hell, if need be!"

The popularity or accuracy of that definition is uncertain but it might be interesting to note what others have said about Aggies and A&M, barring normal censorship.

"When I decided to become an Aggie, my brother suggested my parents change their name and move to another city. He wrote them, 'Got your last letter and the sad news that the world has gained another Aggie.' And to me he wrote, 'Glad that you've finally found a place that deserves you,' whatever that means. That's okay, he still thinks AMU stands for atomic mass unit."

Those who saw "Patton" should remember Gen. Omar Bradley played by Karl Malden. The real Gen. Bradley once said, "The men of Texas A&M can stand up to any men in the world and compare favorably their education and training and leadership — leadership in the pursuits of peace, and if it comes to war, leadership in battle."

A century ago then-Governor Richard Coke said, "An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal nor will he tolerate those who do; an Aggie's word is his bond."

Robert Mitchum once told Johnny Carson the worst movie he ever made was about some two-bit cow college in Texas in the '40s. And from the 1946 Daedalian, the yearbook for Texas State College for Women at Denton: "There's a college down near the Brazos strictly for men; it's a military college where young boys fresh from high school enter and graduate as men... it's called Texas A&M." Whoop, whoop.

More recently, like several bonfires ago, John Denver hailed College Station as "the culture capital of the South" and "gateway to Snook." For a minute I thought he was being sarcastic.

But it seems entertainers generally like the reception they get here.

During a performance that rocked G. Rollie White, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's Jeff Hanna admitted, "It's always a shot in the arm to come down here to play for you weirdos 'cause you're all crazy."

John McEuen, who has probably done more plucking than Col. Snaders and Churches' put together, reaffirmed this backstage as he picked away at Opus 36, Clementi on the banjo.

"We always look forward to play-

ing in College Station," he said, smiling through his beard. He added the Band would rather play for a crazy crowd like the Aggies than a screaming bunch of "teeny boppers."

And Henry Mancini's comments were also flattering. "We've had audiences before but this is one of the best we've ever had," he said. "This is quite a group you have here." Funny, I was just going to say the same thing about him.

Two years ago Rod Serling unleashed his nationally famous glower through bushy eyebrows on an innocent G. Rollie White audience and said, "When I was a kid, A&M was a power to be reckoned with." Considering his image, that gives A&M quite a distinction.

Flattery from the outside, from civilized people, is great but it's even better from a former student who saw the error of his ways and tried to do something worthwhile.

After his freshman year in the Corps, Dan Jordan transferred to the Air Force Academy for "a more professional atmosphere." He returned to the scene of the crime about a year ago to report, "I still

consider Texas A&M to be the best military school in the country." Compared to A&M, he said, the Academy "damned sure doesn't have class spirit."

Two Apollo 17 astronauts were awakened on the moon with the strains of the Aggie War Hymn. Eugene A. Cernan and Harrison H. Schmitt had discovered orange dust on the lunar surface earlier that week and flight director Jerry Griffin, class of 1956, made that particular music selection.

"He said that if you could find some maroon dirt today, instead of orange," explained capsule communicator Gordon Fullerton, "you'd probably get a lot more cooperation out of him."

One of the better definitions of an Aggie was one of those things which mysteriously turned up in a quiz file. It was titled "What is an Aggie?" and sadly sported no authorship. It read in part as follows:

"After the security of childhood and during the insecurity of second childhood, we find a bunch of 'good Joes' whom we call Aggies.

"They can be found anywhere: at drill, on leave, in love and always in

debt. Girls love them. Bryan tolerates them, and the state supports them. He dislikes answering letters, wearing his uniform, upperclassmen and the Corps. The guy likes to spend most of his money on girls, some on beer, some goes back into the game, and the rest goes foolishly.

"An Aggie is a magical creature. You can lock him out of your liquor cabinet but not out of your heart; you can get him off your mailing list but not off your mind."

At All University Night last year, yell leader Grif Lasley said, "If he's an Aggie, you're behind him. That's what an Aggie is." And yell leader Mark McLean added, "Deep in the heart of every Aggie is a spirit that can never be beat."

Dr. Jack K. Williams couldn't define A&M that night but said it was "identified by the friendship which pervades this campus." And Coach Emory Bellard defined his Aggies as "a fightin' bunch of devils."

To me an Aggie is the culmination of a parent's greatest hopes or worst fears. He is the guy who walks across campus in the rain to make sure his P.O. box is still empty. But

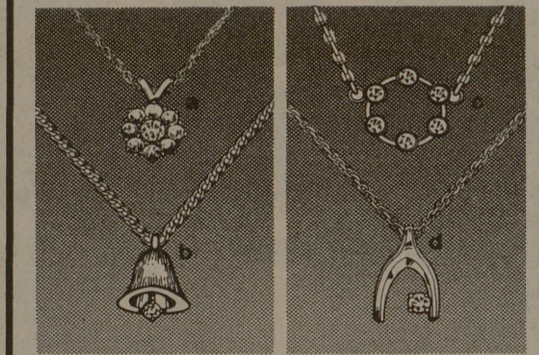
defining "Aggie" is comparable to defining "animal in the zoo" — more comparable than I care to think about. So until Funk & Wag-

nalls gets the word or until they consider trying to take us seriously, you'd best decide for yourself what an Aggie is.

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Illustrations enlarged.

Old A&M rules tough, but seem familiar

By DON MIDDLETON

When we last left them, the first Board of Directors had just set the opening date for the new college. Since all the directors were asked to attend the ceremony, Governor Coke seized the opportunity to hold the third meeting of the Board.

If Coke expected better attendance due to the occasion, he was disappointed. This time speaker Bonner was absent, but previously unheard from director, Charles De Morse made a quorum for the meeting.

The Board waded through tons of financial business and the four-day affair contained little of lasting historical interest, with the exception of one item of business — the establishment of the Laws governing the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, affectionately known in our day and time as the University Rules and Regulations.

In drawing up the rules, the Board first turned its attention to admission standards. State law decreed that no applicant for admission would be considered unless he was "of the white race." (Earlier that year, on August 14, the legislature passed a bill establishing a separate college for blacks.)

It was also decided that all applicants be at least 14 years old and "satisfactory testimonials of good moral character" would be required.

Upon acceptance, each student was required to bring with him to the college, among other necessities, seven shirts, seven pairs of socks, seven collars and four pairs of drawers (hmmmmmm, only four?). Students were also to bring enough money to cover expenses for the term, and a book in which to keep a record of all purchases — to be examined periodically by the President. Can you imagine Jack Williams going through 20,000 overdrawn checkbooks?

The Board laid down a lengthy set of statutes governing curriculum and examinations as well as discipline procedures for violators. Some of the measures were fairly stringent by today's standards.

For example, the policy towards missed exams reads — "Students absenting themselves from any exercises of examination without a satisfactory excuse, shall cease to be members of the college." Period. No exceptions. Seems like a good way to encourage attendance.

The conduct of students was of paramount importance to the school administrators. The wild-west town of Bryan with its saloons and dancing halls was thought to be enough

of a negative influence that the Board set down the following rules:

- No student shall:
 - Drink or have in their possession wine, porter, or any spirituous or intoxicating liquors, brandied fruits, or viands.
 - Go to places where such items are served.
 - Visit a public hotel without first receiving permission from the President.
 - Play cards, or any other game of chance.
 - Cook food or provide entertainment in dormitory rooms.
 - Keep a waiter, horse, or dog.
 - Send or accept a challenge of a duel, or be the bearer of such a challenge.

And the list goes on and on. The thought of such a spartan existence is enough to make any good Ag shiver. Imagine not being able to keep a waiter.

As for the military aspect of college life, the orders are frighteningly familiar, from Call to Quarters and noiseless study hours beginning thirty minutes after the evening meal to inspections, drills and guard duty.

The cadets were required to practice infantry drill every day, except Saturday and Sunday, from the 1st of March to the 1st of December (while the college was in session)

and to be present every Sunday morning for inspection on the main drill field, weather conditions permitting.

Conduct in the mess hall was also strictly defined. Each table had a commanding officer whose duty it was to see that the mess hall regulations were obeyed and to appoint a carver for the table. Loud talking while at the table was prohibited, the carver being the only person allowed to call the waiters.

At no time, in the dining hall or elsewhere on campus, was a cadet allowed to use vulgar language or to make suggestive gestures. Don't talk to me about Old Army.

Times may change but mess hall food doesn't. One of the articles governing dining hall conduct stated that "if any student shall consider any article of the fare provided at the table to be tainted or otherwise unsuitable for use, he may report the fact to the superintendent of the hall, who shall communicate the report to the Commandant of Cadets."

One final item of interest. Quote — "No student shall throw water from any room in the buildings into the hall, or into the galleries, or spit on the floor, or sit in the windows. No object of any kind shall be thrown from windows, doors, galleries, or halls, or at the buildings." Unquote. Water!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



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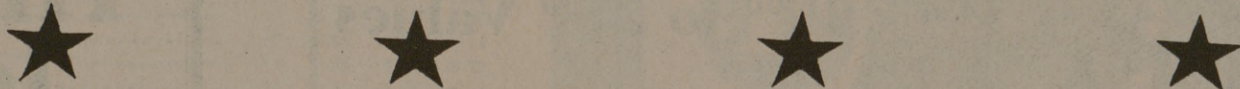
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