



C. E. "Red" Roper of Pasadena has his mule give a bow. Roper was one of 900 persons who began an 82-mile journey by horseback and wagons to Houston from near Somerville Sunday. Roper says he has trained horses and taught mules to bow for 30 years.

Battalion photo by Tracie Nordheim

Trail ride spans 25 years

By SUE MUTZEL

Covered wagons creaked through the camp pulled by dusty, sweaty horses. Whooping cowboys thundered by campfires where grizzled old-timers sat drinking beer and eating beans.

No, this isn't a scene from "Blazing Saddles."

It's Cat Springs, Tex., where about 900 riders and 32 wagons assembled Saturday for the start of the 26th annual Salt Grass Trail Ride. Riders from as far away as Illinois and North Carolina came down to participate in the 82-mile-trek to Houston.

The Salt Grass Trail Ride was the world's first, claimed Travis Marks, son of one of the four originators.

Reese Lockett, Pat Flareghy, John Warnish and E. H. Marks started it with a ride from Brenham to Houston 26 years ago.

Marks, a class of '37 graduate from Texas A&M, donned an Aggie cap, leaned back in the seat of his

plush mobile home, Scotch in hand, and told of his father's role in the trail ride.

"They started it on sort of a lark," he said. "My dad was a natural for something like this. He liked things different."

"They went two years by themselves and then the idea started snowballing."

"Of course when they started it 26 years ago it was mostly wagons and an occasional pick-up."

As he talked of trail rides of yesterday, the other people in the mobile home enthusiastically sipped their drinks and joined in.

"Ol' E.H. could ride from Brenham to Houston and never tell the same joke twice," drawled "Hoot" Crawford, a 25-year member of the ride.

One sight to have seen on a past trail ride was a rodeo clown who rode from Brenham to Houston on a stick horse.

Another year a riderless horse led the trail ride into Memorial Park. The elder Marks, 85 years old at

the time, had led the riders on that particular horse for several years.

That year he was unable to ride the entire way so he rode in a wagon with the horse tied behind it.

When the horse saw the park in the distance, he broke loose and ran to the front of the group to take his usual place — alone.

"That's the truth as sure as I'm sitting here," Crawford insisted.

Who can argue with that? Not everyone has been riding with the Salt Grass for years. A trail ride just wouldn't be the same without some greenhorns along (that's Texan for beginners and city-slickers).

One such greenhorn is Houston Post reporter Phil Jowell.

The bearded, bespectacled Jowell looked slightly uncomfortable with his new habitat.

No wonder. He hasn't been on a horse for 12 years.

Jowell, in addition to day to day coverage of the ride, is involved in a contest concerning his ability to stay astride for the entire 82 miles.

People have been sending in guesses of how long he'll last.

The six winners will receive four tickets each to a Skybox in the Astrodome for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

"It sounded like a lot of fun at the beginning," he said as he and his rented horse eyed each other like two gladiators preparing to fight.

"He ain't gonna throw ya but about three times," drawled an old cowhand as he handed the prancing horse to Jowell.

"Yea, he's a gentle ole horse," Trail Boss I.H. Perry said.

"Put that on my tombstone," replied Jowell, wiping his sweaty palms on his jeans.

But, alas, he clambered on to the horse and it was hard to tell if he was giving or taking directions as he disappeared in a cloud of dust.

"I hope ole Jowell doesn't get hurt," Perry mumbled to himself as he hurried after them. "That's a gentle ole horse."

"We just want everyone to enjoy themselves," Perry said.

They were off to a good start Sunday morning there, moonshine, Boones Farm and Star being guzzled as the man and horse-flesh moved on the road for the first of the with an average of 16.4 miles a day.

They left behind a ghost town of desolate trucks and trailers in a dusty field with only an occasional lonely whinny from horses left behind to break the stillness.

But there will be new campfires, dances and barbecues for the plod-

When the Salt Grass Trail reaches its destination of Memorial Park, they'll be converging with other trail rides from different parts of Texas and Louisiana this day.

Friday morning all of the rides will form a parade through downtown Houston to signal the beginning of the Livestock Show.

Then it's all over until next year when again there'll be heard of "That's a gentle ole horse."

Cooks for A&M's Commons

'Mr. James' has 44-year career

By GARY LOVAN

The bang of pots and pans, the hustle and bustle of a kitchen, the aroma of cooked food; these are things James Sheppard has associated himself with for 44 years of his life.

Sheppard, or Mr. James as he is called by fellow employees, is a cook in the Commons dining facility at TAMU.

He was born on a farm near Caldwell, Tex. in 1912. At the age of 17, he got his first job in food services.

Originally, he chose his profession for two reasons. "In food services I got all my meals free and I worked inside all the time," he said. "That way I didn't have to fool with missing any time."

Mr. James started his career at the old Aggie Inn as a dishwasher. He worked there while attending high school in Bryan, Tex.

His first job as a cook was with the Beatrice Jackson Cafeteria in Oklahoma City, Okla. He started there as a dishwasher also, but was soon promoted to cook. As a cook he made \$12.50 a week.

Sheppard has worked for Texas A&M on two separate occasions. He worked as a cook in Sbsa Hall from January, 1935 to March, 1939. At that time Sbsa Hall was the only dining hall on campus.

Things in Sbsa were a lot different then, according to Sheppard. "We served everything 'Family Style' back then," he said. "And we only served one meal time."

Mr. James said it wasn't easy working at Sbsa then.

"If you could work at Sbsa, you could work anywhere," he said. "If you dropped a pot or pan you got fired. And I was only making \$37.50 a month plus room and board."

He was rehired by TAMU five years ago as a cook. He is now the kitchen supervisor in the Commons facility for the late shift.

Kitchen supervision is not new to Sheppard. During World War II, he was the kitchen manager of a civilian cafeteria in Corpus Christi, Tex.

Short of help because of the war, he had to cut meat, operate the kitchen, plan all the menus and order all items needed by the cafeteria. He worked from nine to 12 hours a day to get the job done.

Mr. James was a chef at Briarcrest Country Club in Bryan for 18 years. He liked that job because of the freedom it gave him to experiment.

"I got to try a lot of different recipes while I was working there," he said. "I really enjoyed that."

For Mr. James, the cooking doesn't always end when he takes off his smudged chef's hat and apron after a workday. He does a lot of cooking at home.

"I cook on the holidays or when my wife has company in," he said. "I always cook Thanksgiving and

Christmas dinners if my kids are here."

Mr. James has three daughters and one son. They are all married now and live in different parts of the country. With the help of his many cookbooks, he taught his daughters to cook.

He is proud of their ability. "My daughters," he said, "are excellent cooks. They're tops."

When he is not cooking, Shep-

pard can usually be found in his canteen.

"It's hard work sometimes," he said, "But I enjoy it. It helps me relax."

Mr. James is retiring in May this year, at the end of the semester. He has been unemployed for only two months in the past years. He says he is looking forward to that day when he no longer has to go to work everyday.



James Sheppard, a cook in the Commons dining facility, began his first job in food services 44 years ago. He says he chose this profession

for two reasons — it's not affected by weather and he gets free meals.

Battalion photo by Kevin

KANM album playlist

HITS

- ZZ Top Tejas
- George Benson In Flight
- Dobie Brothers The Best of the Dobies
- Manfred Mann's Earth Band The Roaring Silence
- Electric Light Orchestra A New World Record
- Rufus Ask Rufus
- David Bowie Low
- Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band Night Moves
- Boston Boston
- Linda Ronstadt Greatest Hits
- The Steve Miller Band Fly Like an Eagle
- Al Stewart Year of the Cat
- Wings Wings Over America
- Stevie Wonder Songs in the Key of Life
- Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson A Star is Born

FADERS

- George Harrison Thirty-three and a Third
- Rod Stewart A Night on the Town
- Linda Ronstadt Hasten Down the Wind

- Fleetwood Mac Fleetwood Mac
- Gordon Lightfoot Summertime Dream
- Dave Mason Certified Live
- Led Zeppelin The Song Remains the Same
- Foghat Night Shift
- Boz Scaggs Silk Degrees
- Lynyrd Skynyrd One More from the Road
- Peter Frampton Frampton Comes Alive
- Joni Mitchell Hejira
- Elton John Blue Moves
- Phoebe Snow It Looks Like Snow
- Eagles Greatest Hits

NEW ALBUMS

- McCoy Tyner Focal Point
- Gentle Giant Playing the Fool
- Denim Denim
- Gerry Niewood Gerry Niewood and Timepiece
- Pablo Cruise A Place in the Sun
- Stephen Bishop Careless
- Aretha Franklin Ten Years of Gold
- Kinks Sleepwalker
- Valerie Carter Just a Stone's Throw Away
- Mel Lewis Mel Lewis and Friends
- Bunny Walter Blackheart Man
- Jimmy Cliff In Concert
- Peter Tosh Legalize It
- John Miles Stranger in the City
- The Dizzy Gillespie 6 Dizzy's Party

RISERS

- Journey Next
- Renaissance Novella
- Jimmy Buffett Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes
- Steve Hillage L
- Leo Kottke Leo Kottke
- Janis Ian Miracle Row
- Saturday Night Live Saturday Night Live
- Genesis Wind and Wuthering
- Average White Band Person to Person

Album reflects groups' problem

By PAUL MUELLER

Before 1975, Fleetwood Mac was an English band with a lot of talent but a relatively small following. That year, they released an album whose title was simply the band's name, and the rest is history.

Music Review

Most of the songs on the album became hits, and Fleetwood Mac became a big name-band, complete with Top Ten singles and lots of hype. But they paid a price for success: conflicts developed between the band's various members, eventually leading to the divorces of bassist John McVie from his wife Christine, who sings and plays keyboards, and of Lindsey Buckingham, the guitarist, and his wife, vocalist Stevie Nicks. But the band stayed intact through all this; their new album, *Rumours*, is based on the personal problems the band members underwent.

Rumours does not have quite as soft a sound as the last album; some of the songs seem to date back to the old rock days. One of these is "Don't Stop," in which Buckingham advises looking forward instead of back, and backs up his voice with some good guitar. Another is "Go Your Own Way," one of the best cuts and already a hit; the title is self-explanatory.

"Dreams" is the token 'disco' song, but even that doesn't keep it from being enjoyable. Stevie Nicks does the singing here, with Fleetwood and McVie providing rhythm section support. It seems like a waste of talent to use them that way.

The album also includes the kind of softer songs that made the last album such a success. One is "Never Going Back Again," which consists mostly of guitar and congas, along with Buckingham's singing. Christine McVie and Buckingham combine piano and acoustic guitar in a nice love song called "Songbird." The band's optimism is reflected in "You Make Loving Fun" and "I Don't Want to Know," which will probably be out on a single before long.

"Oh Daddy" features Christine

singing about those weaker moments when a little assistance is needed. The album ends with "Gold Dust Woman," a rather gloomy song about shattered illusions sung by Stevie Nicks, and featuring some fine guitar by Lindsey Buckingham.

Rumours may not turn out to be quite the monstrous success that the so-called "Big Mac" album was, but it's a good album nonetheless, and does a good job of showing the versatility of this band. It's certainly worth buying if you like Fleetwood Mac.

Latest novel... Vonnegut's 'Slapstick' describes author's life

By LISA JUNOD
Battalion Features Editor

In this fast-paced world beset by desperate cries for intelligent dialogue and discourse and plagued by unemployed English majors' demands for more high quality, intelligent reading matter, Kurt Vonnegut's latest novel, "Slapstick," provides a welcome break for the struggling intellectual.

Like many of Vonnegut's novels, "Slapstick, or Lonesome No More" is small enough to tuck in a lunchbox, short enough to read during a leisurely bath and just thick enough to prop up the front end of a slide projector.

Also like his other novels, there's a lot of Kurt Vonnegut weaving in and out of its pages; in fact, Vonnegut says the book comes closer to being an autobiography than anything he's ever written. Which is why, he explains in the prologue, the time-honored theme of love receives little play in this novel.

Vonnegut's reasons?

"I have had some experiences with love, or I think I have, anyway, though the ones I liked best could easily be described as common decency. I treated somebody well for a little while, or maybe even for a tremendously long time, and that person treated me well in return. Love need not have had anything to do with it."

He adds that he has trouble distinguishing between the love he has

for people and the love he has for dogs, and says that as a holdover from childhood he still spends hours rolling around on the rugs wrestling with "uncritically affectionate dogs." This unhealthy, un-American attitude has had some effect on Vonnegut's personal relationships:

One time, on his twenty-first birthday, one of my three adopted sons, who was about to leave for the Peace Corps in the Amazon Rain Forest, said to me, "You know — you've never hugged me." So I hugged him. We hugged each other. It was very nice. It was like rolling around on a rug with a Great Dane we used to have.

What kind of an intelligent message could be expected of a man who has searched his heart and can find no more love for his people than for his dogs? Why do Vonnegut's characters in "Slapstick" hoard their love; why should they feel that it has to be earned?

While Vonnegut fails to infuse his characters with indiscriminate love, he does permit his alter-ego, Dr. Wilbur Daffodil-11 Swain a rare psychic intimacy with his dizygotic twin sister, Eliza Meellon Swain. Wilbur and Eliza are doomed from birth to be shunned by society; born with six fingers on each hand and "six toes on each little footsie," the twins have massive, sloping foreheads, coarse black hair and steamshovel jaws. They were Neanderthals, so ugly that their

parents cringed at the sight of them. But being humane people — and very wealthy — the parents set up Eliza and Wilbur at their country estate, where the children were raised as perfect idiots.

The idiots, however, could read and write six languages by the time they were 7 years old, and, by

once a year, to talk to the repulsive children on their birthday.

"As usual, Father did the talking."

"How do you do, Eliza and Wilbur?" he said. "You are looking very well. We are very glad to see you. Do you remember who we are?"

Eliza and I consulted with one another uneasily, drooling and murmuring in ancient Greek. Eliza said to me in Greek, I remember, that she could not believe that we were related to such pretty dolls.

Father helped us out. He told us the name we had given to him years ago. I am Bluth-luh," he said.

Eliza and I pretended to be flabbergasted. "Bluth-luh!" we told each other. We could not believe our good fortune. "Bluth-luh! Bluth-luh!" we cried.

"And this," said Father, indicating Mother, "is Mub-luh."

This was even more sensational news to Eliza and me. "Mub-luh! Mub-luh!" we exclaimed.

While Vonnegut packs much of the early dialogue with inane baby-talk, his aim — to show that we will be precisely what society chooses to make us — is clear.

He sheds some light on the world's abhorrence of genius when he has a noted psychologist examine the twins, once a pair of drooling

totem poles, who have finally revealed their intelligence. The psychologist, a tough woman with a chronically bitter attitude, found that while together the twins had a genius mentality, they were uselessly dull apart.

The world is full of people who are very clever at seeming much smarter than they really are," she said. "They daz us with facts and quotations and foreign words and so on, whereas the truth is that they know almost nothing of use in life as it is really lived. My purpose is to detect such people, so that society can be protected from them and so they can be protected from themselves."

Vonnegut's views on love surface again when Eliza and Wilbur have words before he is sent to a special school. They know that once separated, they will lose their genius powers and become common dullards, Vonnegut's view of the epitome of mediocrity: Betty and Bobby Brown.

"Eliza —" I said. "So many of the books I've read to you said that love was the most important thing of all. Maybe I should tell you that I love you now."

"Go ahead," she said. "I love you, Eliza," I said. She thought about it. "No," she said at last. "I don't like it." "Why not?" I said.

"It's as though you were pointing a gun at my heart," she said. "It's just a way of getting somebody to do something they probably don't mean. What else do they say, or anybody else, but, 'I love you, too?'"

"You don't love me?" she said.

What could anybody say about Bobby Brown?" she said.

Later in life, after he has become the President of the United States and has created a system of population after flora and fauna (so that everyone will be a member of an extended family, with brother Daffodils or Chipmunks Wilbur pays a visit to another state, the King of Michigan bur is strung out on tri-ke-Deportamil, a drug designed to keep diseased people from obscenities, when he fully grasps the impact of his diplomatic mission, and of nearly all diplomatic missions.

"Aside from battles, the nations seemed to consist of but powerless old poops like we loved in the long ago, wearing the boots of young psychopaths." Maybe Vonnegut prefers battles to dignified diplomacy, maybe he prefers rolling with dogs to farming out his equally-deserving people. The thing is certain — he's a slapstick.