



Battalion photo by Susan Webb

Janet Hinton, sophomore from Baytown, and Randy Summers, a sophomore from Westlaco, are enrolled in the angling class offered for the first time this semester. The course

deals with various casting techniques. Janet prefers rubber worms for bait, not as an appetizer.

Angling Aggies study dry fishing, snag new course behind Kyle field

By JEAN HENKHAUS

Aggies have been casting their fishing lines on the old Texas A&M baseball field recently. They might not be catching any fish yet, but they are on the way to developing casting skills, gathering know-how on fishing tackle maintenance and starting a hobby that will last them a lifetime.

It's all part of a new class being offered this semester by the Texas A&M Physical Education Department called "Angling."

The class is for students who don't know anything about fishing and for those who already have fishing skills they want to develop, says instructor David Knotts.

The angling class is filled to capacity with around 600 students enrolled. About 60 percent are men and 40 percent are women, says Knotts. The class meets for one hour, once a week, and students earn one hour of credit.

Their "classroom" is the old baseball field behind the football stadium. Dry-land targets are set up in several positions and distances so that students can master casting techniques while striving for accuracy, Knotts says.

Many people think a fishing line thrown in and that's it, but Knotts says that there's more to it. For example, bass are very sensitive to sunlight and prefer the security of cover such as brush or logs. If the sun is shining, bass will usually stay on the shady side of a log. There-

fore, accuracy is important in aiming and striking the right location. Missing the spot could mean scaring the fish away—or the fish could wind up ignoring the bait altogether, Knotts says.

This type of target setup meets the standards of the American Casting Association. The ACA was formed by interested fishermen who set standards to insure quality in angling instruction.

The course emphasizes freshwater fishing. During bad weather, however, students will be shown films on salt-water fishing, along with instruction in equipment maintenance.

Four types of reels will be used during the semester.

"The open-face reel, Knotts says use of this reel is tricky to learn but the reel is a favorite among bass fishermen.

"The spinning reel. A favorite for all types of fishing.

"The closed-face reel. This one is good for beginners, according to Knotts.

The fly rod. This device requires more skill and action and is commonly used in stream fishing.

All equipment is furnished free of charge to those enrolled in the class.

Live bait is not used in class, but students will be required to make a hand-carved lure out of wood.

"This will try to show them that angling is a year-round activity," says Knotts. "Even during the bad weather or off season, there are things that they can do."

An optional feature to the course is a weekend outing and fishing tournament at a nearby lake. In each section students will elect one or two representatives to help coordinate the expedition.

Besides teaching the mechanics of fishing, Knotts says he hopes to instill a quality of courtesy in the students.

"The emphasis is not only on the skills but on the proper ethics," Knotts says.

Grading of the course will be on individual performance and will not compare classmates to each other, Knotts adds.

But how does fishing tie in with physical education?

"We're trying to teach people ways to use their leisure time that will provide hours of enjoyment as well as the benefits of being outside," Knotts explains.

The course is an outgrowth of Outdoor Education, a program that promotes learning in an outdoor situation. It is branching out to include using a "back to nature" outlook even in classes such as math and English.

Knotts, a former Colorado game warden, has been associated with the Outdoor Recreation program for five years. Before coming to A&M this fall, Knotts was chairman of the department of recreation at Tyler Junior College.

He notes that classes will be offered again next semester, and that an advanced section may be added.

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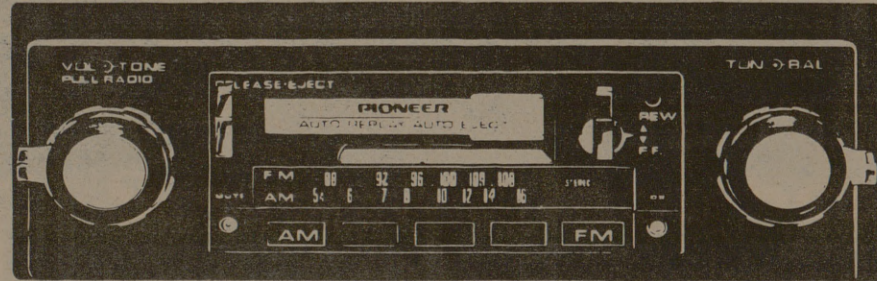
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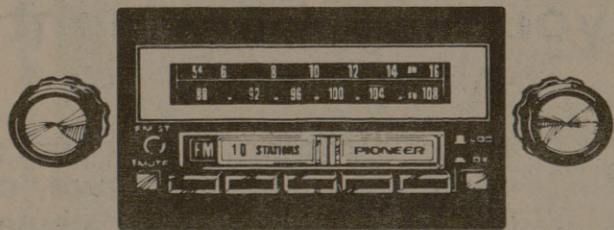
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