

focus

Aggie spirit doesn't end with football

The spirit of competition extends from the artificial turf of Kyle Field to the legislative chambers of the Capitol

By LIZ NEWLIN
Battalion Staff

The delicate indentations on the bottom band of the Texas A&M University senior ring aren't there just for looks. According to Aggie folklore, they represent the assholes from the University of Texas. The "little secular school in Austin" is clearly Texas A&M's chief rival, but most other schools in the Southwest Conference seem to count the Aggies as their major foe also.

"It seems like everyone sets up Aggies as their chief rival," President Jarvis Miller said. "Aggies seem to be confident they're the

best," Miller laughed. "We do have an air of conceit. We in turn set us up as being their chief rival."
"The rivalry is because we're identifiable as Aggies and we're not ashamed of it. I note other schools are jealous of the spirit we have and don't know how to get it," Richard "Buck" Weirus, executive director of the Association of Former Students, said.

Although rivalry and spirit among colleges is most closely identified in the South with football, it is changing and expanding. John Welch, senior, said, "The spirit at A&M is changing, not dying. It's no less intense. It's shifting from football to basketball and baseball."
Miller said rivalry is evident in more academic fields like debate, judging teams and even in recruiting high school graduates for college.

Apparently, the most important aspect of rivalry is not on the football field. It is in the state capitol at Austin and concerns funding. A constant battle is fought among public institutions of higher learning in Texas, Miller said. Texas A&M and UT are funded through a permanent university fund supported by oil profits and investments from lands given by the federal government. That income is split (one-third for Texas A&M, two-thirds for UT) according to the number of students at both schools.

Weirus said, "The only time we don't like t.u. is on Thanksgiving. The rest of the time they're our very good friends."
Two other classifications of public colleges and universities in Texas do not share in this permanent fund. Miller said other state colleges supported by property taxes and the newest institutions, which have no guaranteed funds, are "very definitely" in competition for money. "We saw it in the Constitutional Convention (to draft a new state charter) to change the funding."

Texas A&M's special rivalry with the University of Texas seems almost as old as the two schools. Robert Harvey, student body president, said, "The two have come up together. They've been relatively the same magnitude in Texas. . . . It was very logical that the two would compete with each other."

In several states, the land grant college (like Texas A&M) is in fierce competition with the major state university (like UT).
Ranking the other conference schools in order of rivalry proves almost impossible. Of the responses to the Battalion's poll on Texas A&M's greatest two enemies, most listed UT. Candidates for the number two spot were Jimmy Carter, Texas Tech and the University of Arkansas. Many others dislike Rice University.



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Eeyore parties

(Continued from page 1.)

"Owl bowing," seen at the A&M-Rice football game, is carried on by members of Hanszen College. Once each football season the old fiberglass owl is brought in front of the cheering section to be praised.

"I think they use it when they think we need a miracle," Rosegrant said.

"Spooks," "Silver Spurs" and "Cowboys," among other creatures, carry out spirit at the University of Texas.

Spooks is a freshman-sophomore women's spirit club that paints store windows orange along "The Drag," or Guadalupe Street, next to the campus. Silver Spurs take charge of Bevo, famed longhorn, while the Cowboys have a cannon called "Old Snokey."

Creek organizations promote most of the spirit, says Judy Spalding, student body president.

Other activities include a light show at the Texas Tower, half orange after a football victory, all orange after victory against Texas A&M, and all orange, with white lights forming a number one, after

becoming Southwest Conference Football champs.

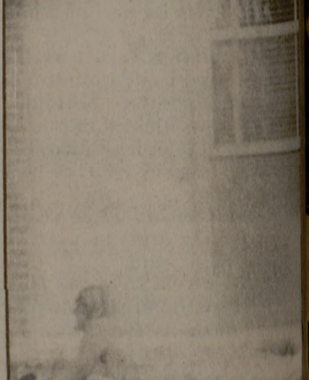
But "Eeyore's Birthday Party" is the big event of the year says Spalding, who confesses that she's not much of a football fan. At Eeyore's party (taken from a chapter of "Winnie the Pooh") each year in April students dress in costume and walk to an Austin park for a day of celebration. She says this is the one time students shed their old cloaks of organizations and social distinction.

UT school spirit does falter, though, says cheerleader Debby Morris.

"I think it's the same as any place, if you've got a good team the spirit is great."

Pep rallies regularly occur three times a year: once, before the season begins, and before the Oklahoma and A&M football games.

But the size of the school divides the students, Morris says. "A&M is a large school but they seem to be much closer. At Texas there are not many ways to bring everyone together."



Quadding isn't quite as dry wildcatting, but it is a display spirit by the quadders, usually taken as such by the quaddie.

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