

Yell Practice - midnight tradition



By NATHAN HINES
Battalion Reporter

Midnight yell practice, like nearly everything else at Texas A&M, is a tradition. This tradition started back in November of 1932, before the A&M and Texas football game, said Connie Beanam, Traditions Council member.

According to Beanam, midnight yell practice started something like this:

A group of students were sitting around talking when one of them thought it would be "good bull" to get the "fish," or freshmen, motivated for the game. This started off as a small plan, but it didn't stay small for long. Soon the band and the entire campus had arrived carrying fireworks and railroad flares.

This was the beginning of midnight yell practice as it is known today.

Friday at midnight, before each home game, the student body meets behind Duncan dining hall, on the Corps quad. As the band moves by the crowd, the masses fall in behind it. The yell leaders lead the procession to Kyle Field. Once there, the yell leaders lead the Aggies in the yells—the fighting threats that have become a trademark of Aggie football fever.

One tradition at A&M is kissing your date after each score. To get ready for this, at midnight yell prac-

tice the lights are dimmed and "practice" takes place.

The freshmen without dates light matches so they can spot their favorite upperclassmen during this time.

Another highlight of yell practice is juniors doing push-ups, said Bob Kamensky, Corps commander. During the yell practice one of the junior yell leaders says "beat the junior class (what ever year it is) hell out of the game opponent," and the juniors do push-ups until they reach their class number.

"Yell practice is good bull," said Jeff Hancock, head yell leader. "But there are some do's and don'ts if you want to avoid getting hurt and have the best time."

"Don't try to break into the bands ranks or try to steal one of their white hats," Hancock said. They become very irate and if by chance a person tries to do this, they will find

out why the band is called

Fightin' Texas Aggie Band.

Hancock also suggested: — Don't try to run across Kyle Field. The only people who can run across Kyle Field are the yell leaders.

No one else should go on Kyle Field until after the team has left. — "Wildcat" instead of "Aggie." This is done by holding hands above your head and yelling.

— Women shouldn't wear Aggies have a "tradition" of pinning and grabbing behind the back of the neck to Kyle Field. But you shouldn't be taken as an offense.

— Do not call a yell practice rally. Aggies yell, they don't rally. — Don't go to yell practice Topsy Turvy, but no one should be drunk hanging on them.

"Most important," Hancock said, "participate. Yell, scream, and be motivated for the game."

An 'impossurable' mayor — Clark

United Press International

CLANTON, Ala. — They call him the "possum man" and a quickly apparent why — he keeps one in his office at city hall.

The "possum man" is the mayor of Clanton, Frank Basil Clark, who also is president of the National Possum Growers and Breeders Association of America.

Members of the association include well-known people such as President Jimmy Carter and former President Richard Nixon. No one in the association ever contradicts the name of the group, correctly spelling it "opossum." According to Clark, the "o" in possum is invisible.

"Eat more possum," says a bumper sticker on Clark's car. The association's motto is "a registered possum is a better possum." Usually, if Clark is around, so is a possum. So it was on a summer afternoon as Clark sat in his office in Clanton, a small town in central Alabama, and talked about his favorite subject.

"I've got a possum running around here somewhere," the mayor said. He looked in a paper bag beneath his desk. "He's gone!" exclaimed the mayor, who began a systematic search under his desk and behind furniture. Finally he said, "I see him!" and thereupon pulled a small hairy creature from behind a piece of office furniture.

Clark held the possum for a few minutes, which by this time he started drooling. He explained that the possum moistens its tail the way. The tail, to which the possum pumps its blood, serves as a "radiator" to keep its body cool.

Being president of such an association, one would think that Clark would tell a joke a minute about possums. But behind his handlebar moustache, the mayor adopts a serious vein when talking about the ratlike animal, one of the few marsupials living outside Australia.

Possums have a face like a fox, a tail like a monkey, ears like a dog and human-like hands. They carry their young in a pouch like a kangaroo.

Clark says possums are rapid breeders, their meat high in protein and they could be the answer to the world's food problem. They have a simple, elementary biologic structure and make excellent animals for medical research, he said.

"Could you not learn auto mechanics on a A-model?" he asked. Clark said several research hospitals have started using possums in their work but the meat of the animal is hard to find on any market except possibly the Explorer's Club in New York.

"The fat in a possum is low-saturated," he said, "and cleans arteries like a rotorooter." There are about 35,000 association members who pay a \$5 fee to join, and there are 100 actual growers. You do not have to own a possum to be a member, nor is there any initiation rite requiring prospective member to eat possum, which Clark says sells for \$8 to \$10 per pound.

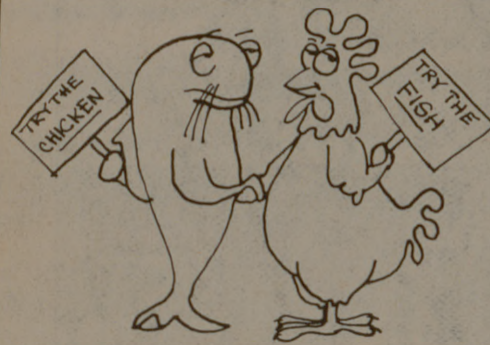
"I can't afford it," says Clark, who reported that possum meat tastes "a little like pork and a little like chicken," and is especially good served with sweet potatoes.

Clark says "there's nothing sweeter than a peach-fed possum." Despite Clark's defense of the possum as a source of high protein food and as a research animal, it is apparent that in this part of the country, at least, the possum's greatest value is as an animal to hunt. Clark himself has been on many such adventures. Usually, the possum, once treed by dogs and captured, is turned loose to be hunted again.

"We need a bunch more possums," said Clark. "We could sell a million possums if we had them." At the end of six hours of possum talk, interspersed with a lunch break and several other interruptions, the mayor's desk was littered with notes from his secretary, presumably about official business.

But Clark said "I put possums first and everything else falls into place."

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