

# Colonel is 'Music Man'

By LORI SHULER  
Battalion Reporter

It's 5 p.m. of an autumn weekday on the south side of the Texas A&M University campus. The air is filled with the sounds of the instruments of Texas Aggie Band members who are marching, beating and blowing in preparation for Saturday's half-time performance. On the fourth floor of Dorm 11, in the corner window that faces the drill field, stands a man who watches and listens intently. Sometime during the practice he says over a loud speaker in a slow, sincere voice comparable to that of Santa Claus or Grandpa, "It looks like a million bucks, men."

The man in the window is Lt. Col. Joe Tom Haney and the many facets of his life extend far beyond overseeing the daily band practice. "Colonel Haney," as he is called by the Aggie Band members, serves as operations officer on the staff of the Texas State Guard, and composes music in addition to being director of Texas A&M's all-male military band.

Haney, who has been director since 1973, says his responsibilities as director of the Aggie Band are of an administrative nature. He is in charge of the Fighting Texas Aggie Band, the TAMU Concert Band, the Aggieland Orchestra, and travel arrangements, budgets and awards for these groups.

Haney said he leaves leadership and discipline aspects of command up to the band officers. "I come in when there is a problem," he said. "The commanding officers run the administration of the band as an outfit in the corps. I act as supervisor."

Haney came to Texas A&M in 1972 to be associate director of the Aggie Band. Before then, he was a high school band director for 22 years, 16 of them in Mexico.

Becoming director of the Aggie Band "had been in the back of my mind," said Haney who was an Aggie Band trombone player from 1944-45 before going into the army in the summer of 1945.

He received his bachelor's degree in music in 1950 from Southern Methodist University, having gone there because he wanted a music degree which he couldn't get at Texas A&M. Haney also has a master's degree from Sam Houston State University.

The marching band practices one hour per day Monday through Friday and on Saturday mornings for an hour the day of a home game. Haney said this small amount of time is sufficient because "we try to practice smarter, not harder."

Haney said the thing he enjoys most about his job is "preparing a drill and watching it take shape. I enjoy seeing members execute it to perfection and then watching it unfold on Saturday."

"You know, I get excited when the band performs," Haney said, "but I'm sure nervous at the first of the week."

Haney added that he also enjoys being associated with "the fine men of the Aggie Band."

"The band members are all intensely dedicated to the task at hand," Haney said. He said they often help out with what he calls one of his biggest challenges, that of obtaining creative ideas for band half-time drills.

"It's hard to come up with original maneuvers every week. The men in the band often offer ideas that we can use," Haney said. Haney said another challenge of his job is recruiting "to keep numbers and to keep quality as well as quantity." He said this year there has been both an increase in the quality and the quantity of Aggie Band members.

He attributes the increase in quality to the outstanding quality of high school bands and the musicians they are turning out.

The band started the year with 303 members and now has 285. Haney called this "the best retention ever" and gives credit for this to the upperclassmen in the band.

He said the scholastic officer has done an outstanding job controlling freshman study time. The juniors and seniors have given better supervision and the sophomores have worked harder and more closely with the freshmen.

Outside of his duties as Aggie Band director, Haney is also in charge of operations for the Texas State Guard which takes much of his free time.



Tom Seiter and Kelley Novak of the Texas Aggie Band. Battalion photo by Michelle Scudder

"At one time I was spending almost every free weekend of the year...with the State Guard," Haney said. The State Guard has now cut down on his responsibilities although he said it still keeps him busy.

One top of all of his other activities, Haney is also an accomplished composer and arranger of music. Haney wrote a Texas A&M student body favorite, "Noble Men of Kyle," which is dedicated to the band.

He also wrote "Brasso Brillante," which is dedicated to the brass section of the band. "March Furioso," "Blue-Grey Medley," and a new tune the band hasn't played yet entitled "Silver Sabre."

"The Spirit of Aggieland," the school song, and "The Twelfth Man" were arranged by Haney as they are played today.

Haney also likes to spend time with his wife, Mary, play golf, fish and hunt quail.

"And I've just got one problem," Haney said sadly, "I've just got one good (hunting) dog and it's buggin' me to death."

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