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Study urges Wellborn Road relocation



Staff photo by Pat O'Malley

A recent study has indicated that 20,000 cars daily will travel Wellborn Road by 1985. The study recommends two major alternatives — each with two subalternatives — be explored as remedies to the problem of increased traffic along Texas A&M University's west side.

By DEBBIE NELSON

Traffic problems along Wellborn Road could be sailing over the heads of Texas A&M University students in a few years.

A new Texas Transportation Institute study recommends elevating Wellborn Road from University Drive to Jersey Street with a pedestrian mall underneath and possible relocation of the railroad.

The concept study of congestion problems caused by cars, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians and trains along Wellborn Road sees the need to speed traffic flow between the central and west sides of campus.

Although the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents has not voted on acceptance of the plan, the Board's planning and building committee has given endorsement to elevating the road segment. If approval is given, \$13 million funds must be sought to elevate the road.

Dr. Charles McCandless, Texas A&M associate vice president for academic affairs, said the Highway Commission would have to be approached for funds for the road elevation. "We consider it to be a high priority item," he said.

Moving the railroad would take more time, both with funding and exchanging or purchasing the tracks' right of way.

An estimated 20,000 vehicles will travel Wellborn Road daily by 1985, the study says.

One hundred eighty-five accidents occurred along Wellborn between Jan. 1977 and Sept. 1979. Traffic problems will continue to multiply with large crowds at sports events and the planned construction on west campus.

Funding the \$6,000 Wellborn Road study was the Metropolitan Planning Organization, made up of Texas A&M, the

cities of Bryan and College Station, Brazos County and the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation.

Two solutions are examined in the study — to elevate Wellborn Road at the cost of about \$13 million or to depress Wellborn Road at the cost of \$39 million, with pedestrian malls to be below or above the road, respectively. Subalternatives of relocating the railroad are estimated at \$13 million more.

The study recommends the road elevation plus railroad relocation. Local traffic ramps at Old Main Drive and Joe Routh Boulevard are included in the artist's conception of the alternatives. Also, an entrance ramp at University Drive is suggested.

"The big step now is to find the funding available," Diane Bullard, the TTI research associate in charge of the study, said. "Right now the process is more or less at a standstill."

The study recommends the drafting of a detailed design study, plus an engineering study of the road to include daily traffic and pedestrian counts and safety considerations.

The planned road change is on Texas A&M's five-year plan which (as at other Texas universities) under state law is submitted to the state Coordinating Board.

Bob Rucker, working on the Texas A&M five-year plan, is also revising the master plan to include elevating Wellborn and removing the railroad.

"The master plan is what you could do from now to eternity... an ideal you would like to achieve," Rucker said.

"Any master plan is accepted in principle but must be flexible enough to be modified with changing needs." Continued university growth could cause further changes in the planned construction, Rucker said.

Hoffman slated to give up today

NEW YORK — Even as a fugitive, former Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman couldn't stay out of politics. Disguised by plastic surgery and a beard, he testified before a congressional committee, was appointed to a federal commission and received a governor's commendation.

When he wasn't busy in his role as an environmental activist, Hoffman tended his tomato garden in Fineview, N.Y., population 15, an idyllic island retreat on the St. Lawrence River, not far from the Canadian border.

Today, six years since he jumped bail on narcotics charges, the 43-year-old Hoffman was to surrender in Manhattan to special state narcotics prosecutor Sterling Johnson. He disappeared in 1974 after being charged with selling 3 pounds of cocaine to an FBI undercover agent.

For the last four years, he has been living in Fineview, one of the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River, posing as a free-lance television writer named "Barry

Freed," he said in a television interview Wednesday. ABC News said the fugitive Hoffman appeared before a congressional committee looking into a project to dredge the river and met Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y. After the hearing, he even received letters of commendation from Gov. Hugh Carey and was appointed to a federal commission on water resources.

Three weeks ago, Hoffman reportedly called ABC, said he planned to surrender, and wanted to be interviewed first by the network's Barbara Walters. Walters flew Wednesday to Fineview, on picturesque Wellesley Island on the St. Lawrence.

She said the ex-Yippie leader, who has had plastic surgery on his nose, sported a beard and a short haircut during the interview.

He lives in a turn-of-the-century cottage with Joanna Lawrenson, a former model and the daughter of writer

Helen Lawrenson. The couple has a 9-year-old son, Allen.

Hoffman's neighbor, Juddie Spottick, said the man she knew as Barry Freed was just a "nice neighbor" who was "just like you or I."

While living as Barry Freed, Hoffman organized a group called "Save the River Committee" to protest a dredging project of the St. Lawrence River, which island residents feared would destroy the ecology of the area.

"Until this fight, the community didn't have a lot of meaning for me," the former Yippie admitted. "I really didn't have any identity. I mean I really sort of needed the struggle."

Hoffman was a member of the Chicago Seven, a group of radicals charged with masterminding violent demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic Convention. The group was convicted, but an appeals court later overturned the convictions.

Anderson expects FEC campaign fund verdict

WASHINGTON — John Anderson, who contends lack of money may be the biggest problem in his independent quest for the White House, now has cause for optimism.

The Federal Election Commission meets today to decide on a staff recommendation that he be declared eligible for post-election government payments.

But approval of the report was not certain. In 1976, the staff wanted Eugene McCarthy to be made eligible, but Democrats on the FEC scuttled that effort because of the worry he might hurt Jimmy Carter in key states.

Democrats are more worried about Anderson's potential to damage Carter this time.

Even if the panel decides against Anderson, it won't end the matter. Anderson has challenged the law as discriminatory against independents and a court decision is expected soon. If the FEC sides with Anderson, then the court suit probably will be moot.

Even though he wouldn't get the money until after the Nov. 4 election, a positive vote by the FEC would be a big boost for Anderson because he would be able to borrow against the money.

Reagan and Carter each get \$29.4 million from the government by virtue of winning their party's nominations.

Anderson has not been able to afford television advertising that his campaign director, David Garth, thinks is the key to making Anderson a serious contender.

Last week, he scrapped a high visibility whistle-stop tour of the Midwest for lack of funds and, unlike his two major rivals, he doesn't have the money to charter his own airplane.

If the FEC rules in Anderson's favor and he gets 5 percent of the national vote, he will collect at least \$3 million in federal funds.

Under the complicated formula, a 15 percent showing — about what he is now getting in the polls — would bring him more than \$10 million. Depending on how many votes he receives, he could even reach the top plateau of \$29.4 million.

Designed to aid students in college transition

Fish Camp teaches freshmen A&M-ology

By SCOT K. MEYER

The transition from high school to college represents a total change in the life of the average student. Which is why some freshmen, or fish, spend the first week of class wandering around as though lost. The term "fish" itself was intended to designate the incoming students as being in over their heads.

To make the transition as painless as possible, the Student Y Association sponsors a "Fish Camp" program during the summer.

Fish Camp started in 1953 when Gordon Gay, director of YMCA activities, took a small group of students camping near Mexia. Today Fish Camp accommodates 1,650 freshmen in three different camp groups. Each camp group is divided into five camps.

Fish Camp is located at Lakeview Methodist Assembly in East Texas, near Palestine.

The purpose of Fish Camp is to help incoming freshmen prepare for life at Texas A&M, and make friends with other freshmen.

We are the Aggies
Fish Camp serves as a crash course in A&M-ology. Incoming freshmen learn nearly everything there is to know about the history of this University from such experts as Dr. Henry Dethloff, a history professor at Texas A&M who wrote a book on the history of Texas A&M, and John Adams Jr., author of "We Are the Aggies."

"Freshmen find out about all the traditions, and learn the meaning behind them," Diane Klopp, Fish Camp director, said. "It's a way of getting them personally involved with A&M," she said.

The fish also learn school songs like the Aggie War Hymn and The Spirit of Aggieland, as well as the yells, Klopp said.

Donnie Albrecht, Fish Camp advisor, said the goal of Fish Camp is to "give incoming students a complete orientation." So in addition to learning about the history and traditions at Texas A&M, fish listen to University faculty members speak. Some of the speakers were Cliff Ransdell, dean emeritus of engineering, who gave a talk on "individuality," or how to be your own person, Dr. Rod O'Connor, head of freshmen chemistry discussed study skills and Ron Blatchley suggested ways of adjusting to campus life. Dr. Carolyn Adair, director of student activities, also spoke to the students, as did several student leaders who discussed the opportunities available for any fish who might wish to participate in student organizations when they come to campus.

"Having faculty members make contact with the students is critical," Albrecht said, "it definitely makes an impression, and the students are less likely to be intimidated by the faculty later on."

"Interest sessions" are held during the afternoon; the titles of which are: Athletics at Texas A&M, Career Planning, Communications Skills Workshop

and Values and Campus Living: A Christian Viewpoint.

More important, though, is the opportunity fish have to talk with the camp counselors, Albrecht said. The fish can sit down and talk on an informal, one-to-one basis with the counselors, who are fellow students and have recently experienced many of the aspects of University life which the incoming student might be worried or curious about, Albrecht said.

Faculty speakers are invited to come out to camp by the students, Albrecht said. Klopp said the faculty members are willing to make the trip and take the time "because they feel Fish Camp is a worthwhile program."

The counselors come for a variety of reasons. Largely it is to give back to freshmen something that they themselves got out of Fish Camp, Klopp said. Most of the counselors attended camp as freshmen, she said.

Venita McCollon, associate director of Fish Camp, said that if it were not for Fish Camp she would probably not be a student at Texas A&M. She said she came back as a counselor to watch incoming freshmen experience the same changes that she did. Working with the freshmen and watching them become enthused about Texas A&M, she said, "is like studying for a chemistry test all week, and then making an A. It's a tremendous feeling."

Which is perhaps why counselors are willing to take a part of their summer, and push themselves until they are tired and have no voice left. To get what McCollon describes as a "warm, fuzzy feeling." Another reason to be a counselor, Klopp said, is that "it's a lot of fun."

Counselors are all volunteers, and are not paid.

The Spirit of Aggieland
In addition to the college preparatory aspects of Fish Camp, there are also what could best be called spiritual aspects. These range from a stress on Aggie unity to what the Fish Camp brochure describes as "finding out where God fits in."

"There is definitely a Christian atmosphere at the camp," Klopp said. "Counselors and camp directors aren't told to stress it, but it always comes out," she said.

Every night campfires are held. "They are basically a quiet time, or a time for reflection," Klopp said. Albrecht said the campfires "have a super relaxed atmosphere" in which students can let the events of the day "sink in."

Each of the camps goes to a different campfire, which reflect a variety of different approaches.

Ransdell conducts a campfire which is initially illuminated by a single candle. Ransdell tells the students that the flame of his candle is symbolic of "the spark of God's love." Everyone faces a choice, Ransdell said, whether to keep the "spark" to himself, or to share it with others.

Ransdell then demonstrates, using the candle, that

if one keeps the spark to oneself, very little light is given off. The campfire area is still dark. But if one shares God's love with another, symbolized by using the candle to light someone else's candle, the result is twice as much light, Ransdell said.

"The darkness of atheism is pushed back further and further as the light is shared," Ransdell said.

The flame is then shared until everyone at the campfire has a lit candle.

At another campfire, flames are foregone in favor of "warm fuzzies." Warm fuzzies are symbolic of the good feelings you can generate within someone by expressing feelings of caring or love. Persons attend-

ing the campfire are urged to share their warm fuzzies lest they turn into "cold pricklies." According to the story, cold pricklies represent the uneasy hostility which can reign if feelings of love are not shared.

Although the style of the campfires differ, the result is basically the same. It is a time of hugging and crying, when most campers appear tremendously moved.

Fish also chant "fire up" during the day to show their enthusiasm. Albrecht said this is a way of demonstrating a "positive mental attitude, or PMA."

"It means they are happy, excited and ready for a new experience," Albrecht said.

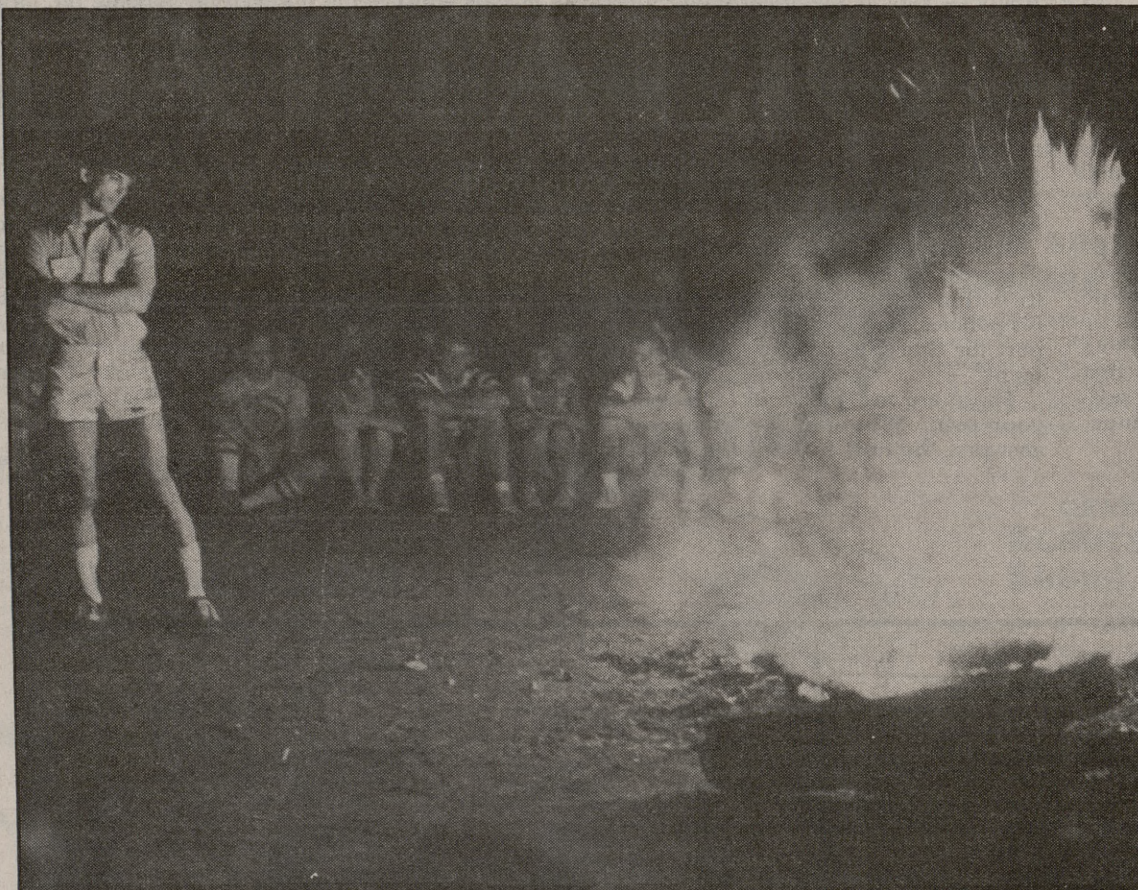


Photo by Bob Sebrer

Former Student Y Association president Bob Shield addresses a group of Texas A&M freshmen at a Fish Camp campfire. About 1,650 freshmen attended one of three camp groups this summer prior to the start of school.

The Weather

Yesterday

High 100
Low 72
Humidity 75%
Rain 0.0 inches

Today

High 100
Low 72
Humidity 70%
Chance of rain slight