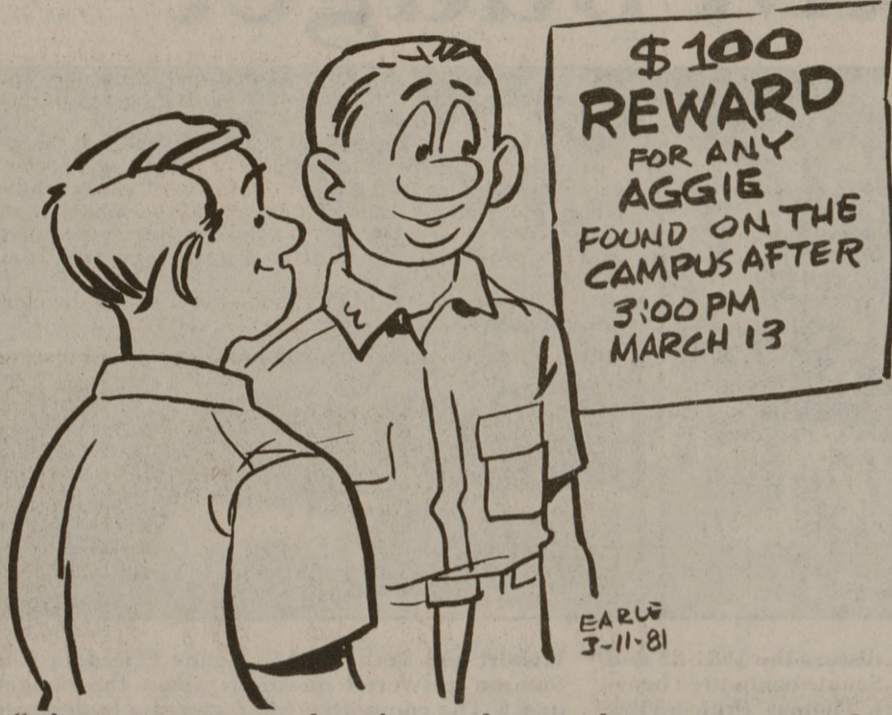


VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 11, 1981

Slouch By Jim Earle



"It's an experiment that I'm conducting, but as a matter of fact, I won't be here myself to see how it turns out."

Not laughing at Brust column

By KENNETH LEPORI

In two months, when Final Review comes around, I'll proudly put on my senior boots and wear them as a part of my uniform for the first time, and I was not laughing when I read the article written by Jane Brust that appeared in the March 9 edition of The Battalion. The article was in reference to Texas Monthly's January cover story.

Miss Brust, though you are entitled to your opinion, you have ignorantly and distastefully insulted the part of Texas A&M that I hold dearest to my heart, and here is my reply.

To begin with, what is it that makes an Aggie different from a regular college student? Is it that Texas A&M has special desks? special classrooms? special sidewalks? No, I don't think so. Nor do I believe that just because one is enrolled or was once enrolled here at Texas A&M can one justly classify himself as an Aggie. For most college students in the United States attend classes, go to athletic events, socialize with fellow students, and do the million and one other things that college students do. And, Miss Brust, all universities attract some of the brightest high school graduates. But here at Texas A&M there is the famous

Reader's Forum

Aggie Corps that has been a part of being an Aggie and has set Texas A&M apart from other institutions of higher learning since its doors opened on Wednesday, October 4, 1876. Those "questionable things that Corps members do" are all part of a system that has been going on since this institution was founded. The system teaches individuals a lesson more valuable than any lesson that can be obtained from any professor or book (excluding the Bible). If you don't believe me ask an old Ag who was in the Corps — I have. However, the Corps is not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, and, yes, there are "two-percenters" in the Corps. But I don't think it is your place to insult or criticize it until you have been a part of it.

And as for insulting the yell leader for "squeezing" six inches below his privates, I

have a reply for that also. He is a fine, conscientious man who was a little most (not stupid) about having his picture taken while "squeezing" properly.

And yes, I am well aware of the Corps population in relation to the civilian population. Also, I am very sorry that you are ashamed of the Aggie Corps that you feel that an article featuring us "debased" your all-time favorite university.

Miss Brust, in this letter, I am not saying civilian students are lower than "miserable worms," nor am I saying that just because one is not in the Corps that he can't justly classify himself (herself) as an Aggie! And furthermore many of my best friends are civilian students and fine Aggies. Yes, Mr. Reinert's article left out some things just as is the case with many articles, but it did show much of Texas A&M's uniqueness. However, if he would have left out the Corps aspect in his article, I think we would have regretfully found that Texas A&M is as different from other universities as we say it is.

Kenneth Lepori is a junior Aggie Bandsman.

Children, teachers find school's roots

By PATRICIA McCORMACK
United Press International

Children at Margaret Sutton School in Owensboro, Ky., looked into the school's "roots" — something any school kids can do (with help from parents, grandparents and blessings from the principal and teacher).

They learned a lot, besides having a lot of fun.

In their search for the school's roots, the elementary school boys and girls ransacked parents' and grandparents' attic trunks and boxes stored in basements.

Out came memorabilia such as willow switches, a dunce's stool and hat, slates, lunch pails, "McGuffey's Reader" and "Ray's Arithmetic," soap (used to wash out children's mouths).

They even found old health books with "pictures of sickly people from Kentucky."

The highlight of the roots project was the day boys, girls, and teachers dressed in old clothing from a previous era and turned back the hands of time.

Principal Vandalyne Hooks clanged an old-fashioned school bell to open the day out of the past.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals features a report on the project in its newsletter "The Communicator." In the report, "Schools Have Roots," Principal Hooks of the Owensboro school, reminds fellow principals:

"Schools aren't just brick and mortar, or classrooms arranged along an open corridor.

"Schools have stories to tell. Stories of when and how and why they were built, and stories of the people who once worked in them and gave the school its character and tradition."

The children learned first hand about some of those stories when they went through an old-fashioned school day, Principal Hooks said.

"Out came the McGuffey's Readers. Children recited in unison. They worked math problems on the blackboard or on slates (no wasting paper).

"They held spelling bees — and were disciplined for incorrect answers. They found that art supplies were nonexistent if they hadn't been brought from home. Some were even punished by being made to sit on the dunce's stool.

"Children and teachers dressed in any

clothing from a previous era. The school population sported everything from miniskirts to bobby sox to high-button shoes.

"Even the cafeteria joined in the fun by providing an old-fashioned 'packed at home' lunch.

"Children were surprised to find their sausage sandwich made on a homemade biscuit and not a slice of bakery bread."

The day concluded with an assembly. Margaret Sutton, its first principal and namesake of the school, the guest of honor, shared thoughts with the children.

"Other reminiscences about days gone by came from Miss Sally Morton, 83 years young," Principal Hooks said.

"A group of former educators entertained with such songs as 'Let Me Call You Sweetheart' and 'Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?'"

"There was no generation gap. The children have discovered that schools, too, have roots."

The children learned their school once had a different name. When it was built in 1951 — on what was then the edge of the city, it was named after George Washington.

Later it was named to honor the first principal — who served 22 years. She saw the school grow through three additions to a total of 800 students. It was renamed Margaret Sutton school when Miss Sutton retired.

Most of the pupils did not know about Miss Sutton. Principal Hooks said Sutton never entered the building after she retired and the school was renamed in her honor.

All she needed was an invitation, it turns out. Her chance came the day the school kids ask her to come back and help celebrate the school's roots.

"Character Building" notes from the same issue of the NAESP "Communicator":

— Marvin Hrubes, LaPorte City, Iowa, Elementary, gave out over 700 Star-Grams in a school of 470 pupils last year. Some were for academic achievement. But some were for good behavior. "That way every kid has a chance to be rewarded," Hrubes said.

— Norma Ragsdale of Wilson School, Sanford, Fla., encourages her teachers to "catch kids being good." Teachers are also expected to let parents know when their children have done something special.

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It's your turn

Corps responds to Texas Monthly

Editor:

This letter is in response to "Being An Aggie is no Joke; Or is it?" by Al Reinert, published in the January issue of Texas Monthly.

Short of overstating the merits of your article about Texas A&M, I'd like to say that I and a myriad of others deem your story worthy of a great deal of praise. The points you've raised quite accurately sum up some of what it means to be an Aggie, and for the clarifying effect the article may have had upon the numerous detractors of the "Aggie experience," we are grateful.

It is the points that you've failed to bring up, however, that in our eyes, necessitate this response. As it stands, your article offers both the University and the Corps good exposure, but only limited coverage. In exposing the University, you've chosen to mention only the Corps, and in exposing the Corps, you've chosen to cover only the punitive, structured facets of Corps life. In so doing, you've left off any meaningful mention of what the purpose of the Corps is. The uninitiated reader, therefore, may take your article's approach too seriously, and hence may have some serious questions as to the logic behind an individual's decision to attend Texas A&M and be in the Corps.

Notable among the aspects of Corps life

you've left out are perhaps the most integral components of the Corps education: Mention of the unexcelled leadership and managerial training, the strong sense of duty to one's self and to one's country, and the self discipline are all absent from your article.

The greatest shortcoming of the entire article, however, is the author's failure to give any sincere recognition to the Corps' greatest accomplishment: its ability to provide and produce true friendship and brotherhood. From day one, cadets are taught to depend on each other, or pay the price for the alternative. In this type of environment, the cadets learn to interact, respond to, and accept each other. The resulting coherence generates the finest camaraderie attainable. Things don't always happen with the severity your photographs indicate. If they did, no one would see any purpose in joining, and there wouldn't be any Corps. People do join the Corps, however — lots of them. Most of them do so in order to receive some of the training mentioned above. I know I did. I've re-

ceived far more than I expected; thousands have before me, and thousands shall continue to do so after me. Put simply, there is more to the Corps than punishment and discipline.

Everything mentioned in the article is true, right down to the "squeeze play" without a doubt, all the events in the photographs look normal to all Aggies. The aspects you do mention are indeed steps in the process of becoming a true Aggie. The things I wouldn't begin to deny. The fact remains, however, that you've left some things out ... some very important things. I feel your story is incomplete without some mention of them. Thus, I submit this response. I can do no more!

Buzz Steiner

Corps Public Relations Committee

Editor's note: This letter has the endorsement of the Corps Public Relations Committee.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 350 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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