



The armadillo

A new book explores the secret behind the mammal's popularity

by Dennis Prescott
Battalion Reporter

The Texas armadillo is finally getting the recognition it deserves, in the form of a new book devoted entirely to the armor-coated creature.

Jerry and Angela Fannin have written a book called "The Unabridged Armadillo Handbook." It is a collection of facts about the Texas armadillo, including tall-tales, cartoons and photographs.

It even has armadillo recipes, including "Gingerdillo Cookies," gingerbread cookies made with an armadillo-shaped cookie cutter. You can find out how to make an "armadillo basket," and even how many Aggies it takes to eat an armadillo.

The armadillo has burrowed its way to a spot of honor in Texas chic, right up there with longnecks and country music. It is featured on everything from beer ads to T-shirts.

"The Unabridged Armadillo Handbook," which will be out

next month, contains what Jerry calls "the legend of the Texas armadillo." As he put it, "It's something that can be handed down from generation to generation."

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The Fannins found during their six months of research that a certain mystique surrounds the burrowing mammal.

Many people don't like armadillos, Jerry said, because they burrow into the ground, ruining crops and lawns. However, *somebody* likes them, he said, as evidenced by an unsuccessful 1981 effort to have the armadillo declared the state mammal.

The Fannins are becoming quite adept at writing novelty books. Their first, "Johnnies,

Biffies, Outhouses, Etc.," a study of Texas privies, is now in its fourth printing.

"We try to approach things from a human interest standpoint," Jerry said.

His wife Angela said, "I maintain that people should enjoy what they read. If they don't enjoy it, they won't read it."

The Fannins insist that writing is only a hobby with them.

"There is a very hard shell surrounding the publishing world," Jerry said. "We don't consider ourselves to be serious authors."

The Fannins are a quiet couple who prefer country living to the hassles of the publishing world. They live in the Harvey community, which is about five miles out Highway 30 towards Huntsville, with their 12-year-old son, Blair.

By the way, it takes at least two Aggies to eat an armadillo, one to eat, and the other to watch for cars.

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