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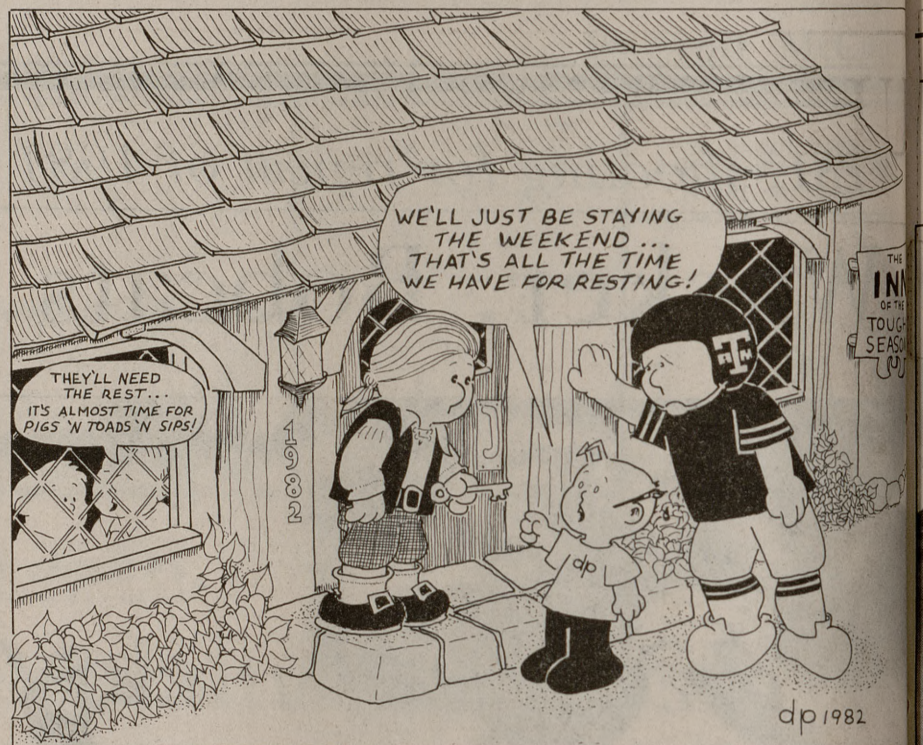
Nash hopes Aggie swimmers well-kept secret

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff
Mel Nash, the Texas A&M swimming coach, knows his squad is one of the best-kept secrets in the country. But Nash doesn't want anyone to know about his sleeping swimmers until the Aggies' opponents find out for themselves — the hard way. "I think we can shock a lot of people this year," Nash said. "The only two people that realize how good we are is Bill (assistant coach Miller) and me."

When Nash decided to accept the Aggie coaching job four years ago, he sat down with Miller and made up a 10-year plan on how he would like for his team to progress over the next decade. In that plan, Nash and Miller decided that after four years, the Aggies should be able to compete with the best teams in the nation. In 1982, they can. "I think we can crack into the top twenty," Nash said. "Our depth will finally pay off. Things are looking promising now. I expect us to be a heck of a lot better than we were last year. And the good part is that we're still all juniors this year so whatever we

do this year, we'll do that much better next year. But this year alone I think we have a good five to 10 men that can qualify for nationals." Nash said the Aggies should be strongest this year in the men's division because the women's team has been plagued by injuries during early fall workouts. "Right now our women are about two weeks behind the men," he said. "But the men are really coming along well. I think we'll be strongest in the butterfly, freestyle and in the relays. We're really excited about the depth we have in the (butterfly) fly. We have Kevin Londrigan, who was our only qualifier in the nationals last year, John Heldenfels, who was the Texas state champion two years ago and a guy named Bob Salas who we're really excited about. He's a freshman that just walked on and ... has some of the best times of anyone."

The first test for the Aggies will be today at 5 p.m. when the swim team travels to Fort Worth to take part in the Southwest Conference Relays. "All eight Southwest Conference teams are going to be there (Baylor doesn't have a swim team)," Nash said, "so it should be a good test for us. The relays are a real good indicator of team depth. A lot of teams, like Houston, have one or two superstars but don't have the depth it takes to compete in relays. And that's where I think we'll excel. It's just amazing how we pull together in relays. We should do pretty well."



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Wacker

(continued from page 13)
maining games with ASU, Abilene Christian and Texas

A&I. "We're not as strong as we were a year ago — there's no question about that," Wacker said. "If we win (the national title) this year, it'll be a dogfight. If we win this week, we'll be assured of a tie for the conference title and we'll be assured of a playoff berth."

"But we're going to go down to the wire in every ballgame. We're going to have to win late and we're going to have to win tight. I don't think there's any way we'll win the last three games. It'd take a miracle."

"We're not blowing anybody out of the tub — we're not good enough to do that. But it's kind of fun. It means more to you that way. If we do end up winning (the national title), these kids will have a lot to be proud of, because they will have done it on sheer guts and determination."

Wacker said he and his coaches have taught their players that it is essential to concentrate on only one opponent each week.

"Before and during a game, it's the most important thing in the world," he said. "Once a game is over, it's the least impor-

tant. We are going to forget and play the next game."

"We'll never punish a kid we'll coach aggressively. I'll keep making the same mistake, I'm going to get your earhole and you're gonna know that we don't like to make that mistake. We're going to drive them as hard as we can make them the best that they can be."

Wacker said he'd like to see this program going on to a higher level or my taking a shot at a larger school. I don't think I want to leave the state, though."

"There are too many things going here to give up," Wacker said. "It's not a job, where I have to find a job, probably as happy as any coach in Texas right now, there's a lot to be said for this."

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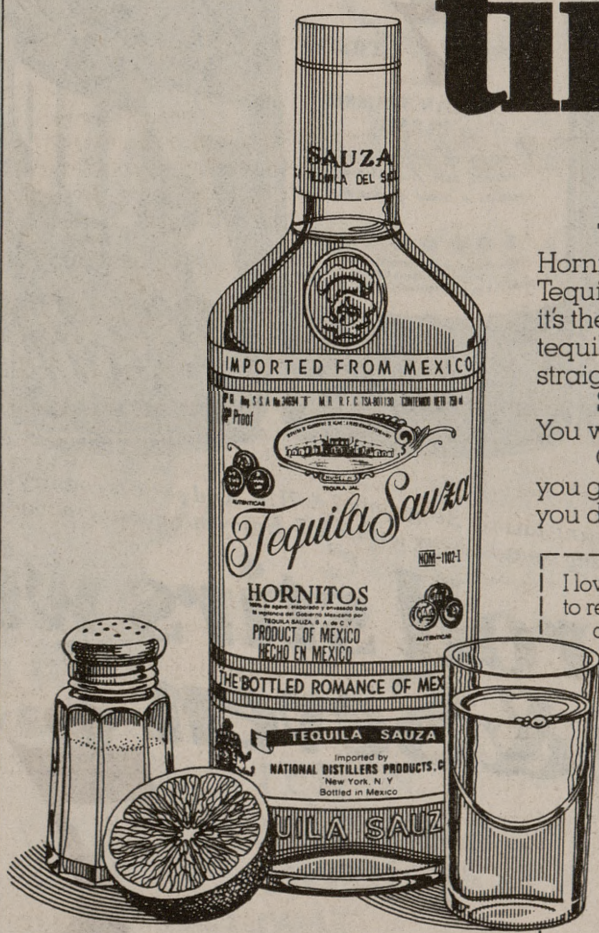
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