

Summer snow

Enterprising Aggies selling gourmet snow cones

By CATHERINE CAMP-BELL
Reporter

It's possible to find snow during the hottest months of the year in College Station. Where? At Mount Aggie Snow Cones in the Skaggs Alpha Beta parking lot.

Gourmet snow cones in 28 flavors have people flocking to the stand, some coming back two and three times a day.

Two enterprising Aggies, Phillip and Peter Wingate, have found a way to have fun, show a profit and pay for their college education all at the same time.

"We have Cadillac snow cones at Volkswagen prices," Phillip said. "We go Caddy all the way — quality is never too expensive."

His younger brother, Peter, 19, adds: "These are the best snow cones you'll find — that's what people are telling us."

The brothers, twelfth and fourteenth in a family of 18 children, stress two reasons they think their snow cones are better than any others in the area: unique flavors plus actual "snow" in their snow cones.

Customers have a choice of flavors including: banana, blackberry, brandy, chocolate, coconut, creme soda, ice cream, nettar, peach, popeye, rum, tutti frutti, watermelon and pina colada — alcohol not included. And of course, there are the traditional flavors — grape, strawberry and cherry.

But the Wingates' pride and joy is their "top of the line" ice machine, which crushes ice into fluffy "snow" unlike some machines that crush ice into slivers of crystals.

"These snow cones are so soft and fluffy," Peter said. "People don't like crushed ice, it's too crunchy." Because the snow cones are surprisingly low-priced for their size, it's easy to become a regular customer. Snow cones range from five to eight inches tall and cost less than one dollar.

Peter said much planning took place before opening the shop, right down to choosing the package for the product. For example, the brothers decided to use styrofoam cups instead of paper cones, because the cups don't leak, aren't cold



Photo by JOHN MAKELY

Leann Davis, a junior French major from LaMarque, gets a grape snow cone from Philip Wingate at the Mt.

Aggie Snow Cone stand. The shop specializes in gourmet snow cones and carries over 20 flavors.

to handle and can be set down for convenience.

"We've been packed the last few days," Peter said. "Working for yourself is fun, it's not like selling insurance or cemetery plots, but we're not in this just for the fun."

Both brothers admit it's a great way to meet people.

"We've got this one guy who comes by everyday, always gets a medium but tries a new flavor everyday," Phillip said. "And he eats a snow cone faster than anybody I've ever seen — he just wolfs them down, lickety split."

As Phillip loaded another block of ice into the machine, a customer asked for some advice on which flavor to try.

Phillip suggests blackberry, his personal favorite, but the customer says he's torn between wild strawberries and pina colada.

The customer goes for the icy white pina colada.

Minutes later another customer walks up and asks if "popeye" tastes like spinach. It doesn't.

"Most customers like to ask that question!" Phillip laughs. "Actually, the flavor popeye tastes like a cross between bubble gum and mint."

The Wingates said they would like to own a chain of snow cone stands someday and with the numerous take-out orders they've had, their business had multiplied.

"Our biggest take-out was for 25 snow cones to a class in the Business College — our first on-campus delivery," Phillip said.

Phillip and Peter plan to open a snow cone stand during the football season.

"We'll probably make 'em mad!" Phillip said.

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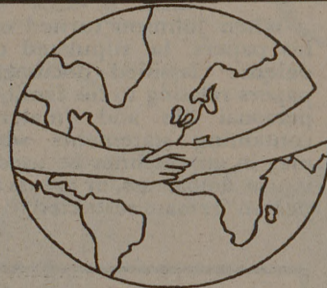
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