



Aggies at Fish Camp enjoy a square dance as part of the many activities.

## Fish camp still popular among A&M freshmen

By MARK SPICER  
Reporter

Fish Camp celebrated its 31st year this summer, and it's still growing.

"Next year another camp may have to be added to the four already scheduled in order to accommodate those who otherwise would be turned away due to lack of space," says camp director Phillip Rosenfeld.

Fish Camp is a student-run activity that caters exclusively to freshmen. Counselors are upperclass students who are "pretty well-rounded individuals," Rosenfeld said.

To qualify as counselors, potential candidates "go through an extensive interview process" which evaluates their knowledge of University life, their familiarity with the school, and especially their desire to help freshmen, said Rosenfeld, a senior management and marketing major from Baltimore, Maryland. Many counselors, Rosenfeld said, are student leaders.

Casey Ramsey, a senior journalism major from Brownsville, has been a counselor for the last three years and regrets not having at-

tended the camp as a freshman.

"It's outstanding," Ramsey said. "I would say that it's a mistake for an incoming freshman not to know about it or to know about it and not go."

He said that being a counselor gives him the opportunity to pass on his knowledge of what it means to be an Aggie to the next generation of students.

Fish Camp started in the early 1950s when Gordon Gay took some freshmen camping and it has become an Aggie tradition. This year's camp had about 2,450 freshmen and 616 counselors, Rosenfeld said, 80 to 85 percent of the counselors went through the program as freshmen.

During the four-day camp, University faculty members and staff members speak to the students on topics including traditions, personal goals, study habits, and career development.

The primary objective of the camp is to help freshmen make the transition from high school to college as smooth as possible.

"I thought it was great," said Markham Jones, a recent A&M graduate from Sweeney. "They teach

you all the traditions and basically you know what A&M is about."

Jones said more people go to school here than live in his hometown and that he was overwhelmed the first day of class his freshman year. But, he added, "Going to Fish Camp enabled me to meet a lot of people and I had a lot of these people in class later."

Mike Marino, a junior industrial distribution major from Houston, said "It gave me a headstart in meeting a lot of people and having a lot of fun." He had heard about the camp through friends who were going to school here and said that both his father and two sisters graduated from A&M.

Marino said that going to Fish Camp gave him an opportunity not only to meet a lot of other freshmen who were getting ready to go through the same thing he was, but it also gave him the chance to meet some upperclass students who really wanted to help him.

"It helped me set some goals for myself," Marino said. "I learned that I could really do whatever I wanted to or be whatever I wanted to be."

## Cadet Slouch, cartoonist show humor of Aggie life

One student has been at Texas A&M University for 31 years and still hasn't come close to graduating. But, he doesn't seem too concerned about the delay.

The student is Cadet Slouch, the cartoon figure who has graced the pages of The Battalion since 1953, when his creator, Dr. Jim Earle was a senior at Texas A&M. Earle is now head of the Department of Engineering Design and Graphics.

"Probably more humorous situations exist at Texas A&M than at any other college or university," Earle said in the introduction to his book, "Slouch — The Aggies' Aggie."

"No one enjoys this humor more than the Aggies, who are all blessed with an avid sense of humor. Whether the joke is on the prof, the teasp, their roommate or even themselves, the Aggies enjoy a good laugh."

And Earle gives the Aggies plenty of opportunities to laugh at themselves. Whether he is portraying the life of Slouch and his friends Simp and Fish Jethro, or comparing life at the then-all male Texas A&M to the fictitious Coed U., he catches the flavor of life at Texas A&M and puts it into situations the Aggies find humorous.

Earle, a native of Jacksonville, started drawing cartoons when he was a senior in high school. Four years later, Cadet Slouch made his first appearance in print.

"There's not much of a romantic story concerning the evolution of Slouch," Earle said. "I just started drawing cartoons and decided it would be fun to have a continuing character."

Earle said the early Slouch frequently took stands on campus issues. "But, I never received any criticism, even when I was younger and less responsible. I would use people's faces that they could recognize but never with a great deal of hostility, and I never would hit below the belt."

"Even though some of the teachers I had would hint that they felt they should be in the strip, I still had reservation about whether people would like it. But no one ever complained, probably because I tried to do the strip in such a way that they didn't have anything to complain about."

Today, Slouch's opinions have changed and he rarely takes a stand on controversial issues. His appearance also has changed dramatically over the years. Only the Corps of Cadets uniform remains the same.

"Slouch wasn't modelled after anyone," Earle said. "A cartoonist expresses himself — anything he does reflects himself. I never thought I looked like Slouch but maybe I do."

"The Slouch of today is rounder, less angular. His hairstyle has changed over ten years from an exaggerated military cut to a regular cut. He still isn't up-to-date—I usually have his running about 10 years behind the time."

The evolution of Slouch can clearly be seen in the four books of Slouch cartoons that Earle has compiled: "Slouch vs. A&M" (1954); "We is the Aggies" (1955); "The

Struggles of Slouch" (1956); and "Slouch—the Aggies' Aggie" (1961).

Earle said there are very few brainstormers connected with drawing a continuing cartoon. "It's usually a matter of deciding to do something and plotting away. Once the thinking for a strip is done, it only takes about eight to 10 minutes draw it."

In addition to the daily cartoon, Earle is the author of engineering design and graphics textbook and illustrates textbooks and technical works. He also provides drawings for campus organizations such as the Singing Cadets.

"There's an endless line of clubs and groups who need work done," Earle said. He does this work free of charge because "they can't afford to pay me so I don't ask them to."

"My lack of time is frustrating," Earle said. "There's no time to be a good teacher, cartoonist, author and department head. None of these areas receive the time they deserve."

A "Slouch Award" is given annually to the outstanding member of The Battalion staff. Members of the staff choose the winner and Earle provides the funds.

"I worked on the Batt as a cartoonist for a long time and just decided to give the money. It (the Slouch Award) might give them an incentive to work harder."

Earle received his bachelor's degree from Texas A&M in 1955, his master's degree in 1962 and his doctorate in education in 1964. He and his wife, Theresa, and his two daughters, Elizabeth, 19, and Susan, 17, live in College Station.

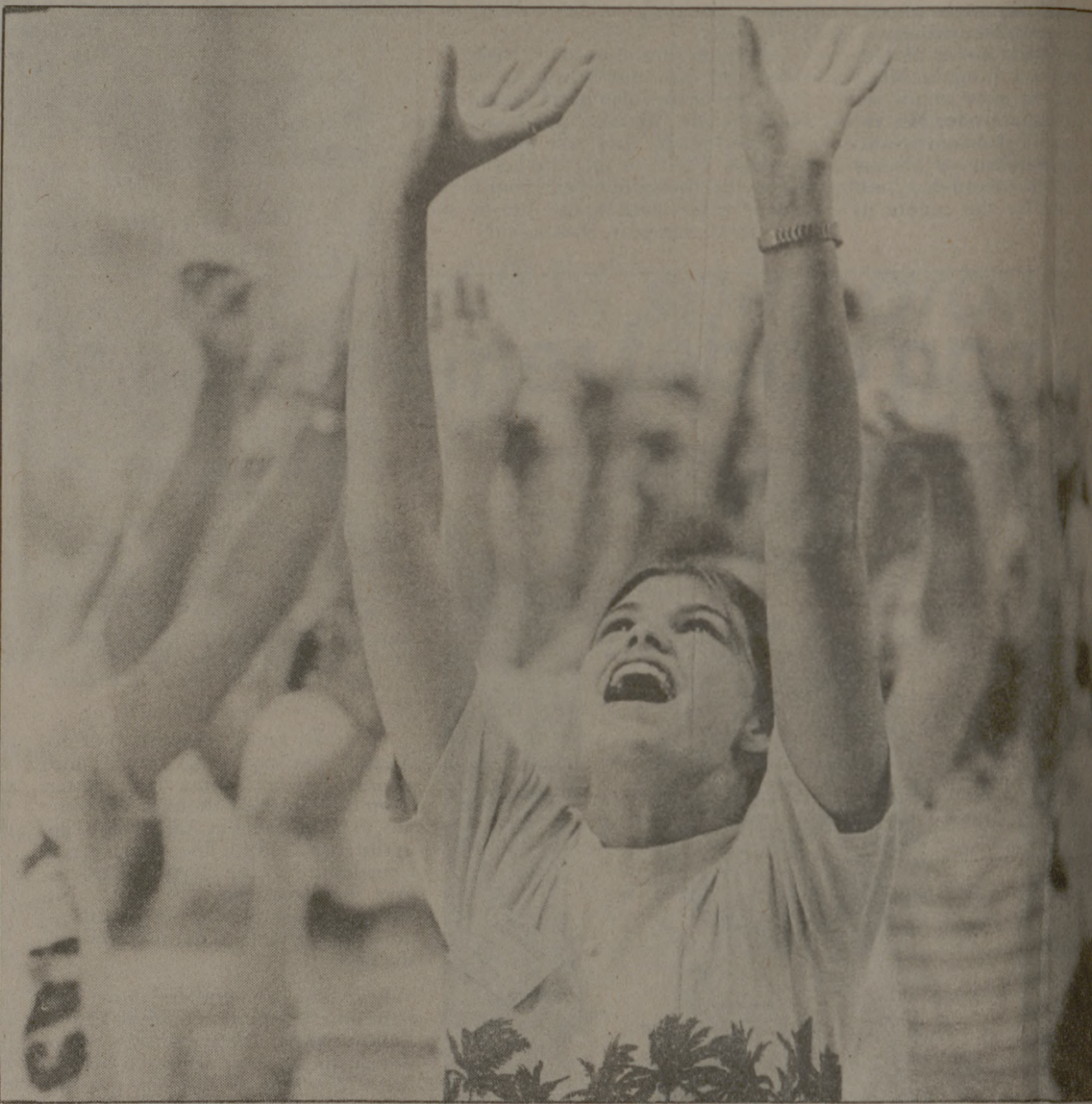


Photo by MICHEL CHANG

A freshman learns the proper gesticulations for an Aggie at a Fish Camp session.

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