



Graphics by Lynn E. Lytton

Working for fun

Hobbies, pastimes become source of part-time income

By Kristi Outler

All work and no play may make Jack a dull boy, but some people are able to prevent this old adage from becoming reality by consolidating work and play. Hobbies once pursued for the sole purpose of personal enjoyment can be turned into a moneymaking venture. Many Aggies are doing just that.

If art is a reflection of the soul, then deep within the depths of Scott McCullar's soul lies a class clown waiting to emerge. And emerge it does through the characters of his comic strip "Warped" which appears in *The Battalion*.

McCullar's cartooning began when he read of a contest in a science fiction magazine. His entry never was published, but his artistic desires stayed with him. McCullar set out to find an outlet to display his new found talent.

"Just when I was collecting some cartoons was during a summer when *The Battalion* lost one of its cartoonists," McCullar says. "They had a void and I thought I had talent to fill it. I'm into my eighth year — an embarrassingly long time."

Despite popular misconceptions, McCullar is not a student, and he derives repeated amusement from this misunderstanding.

"I work on the sixth floor of the library in the Learning Resources Department, and I work a full 40 hours a week there," he says. "I'm full-time staff, although it kind of delights me that the general impression is that I must be a graduate student."

"Every fall I get a big thrill out of thinking somebody out there who doesn't like my stuff and has been putting up with it for four to six years has to be wondering when I'm going to graduate," he says. "And then I'm back for another semester."

Material from his strip comes from a variety of sources, McCullar says. Practice has made the art of coming

up with gags easier throughout the year.

"It's like any other talent, you practice," he says. "It's a natural outgrowth of bull sessions or parties or sitting down and drinking with friends. It is an outgrowth of class clown antics or being a smart alec. With practice and encouragement you pursue it and it becomes very natural."

Being the creator of a comic strip, McCullar is endowed with a godlike power to give life to characters with individual personalities like the human beings they humor.

"In a way, having your own cartoon strip is convenient because you can either base it on people you know already or you can design your own people," McCullar says.

He says some of his own traits are manifested in his characters.

McCullar likes cartooning so much that he is trying to turn it into a full time occupation.

"For the past three years I've put together a variety of samplers to send out to the newspaper syndicates," he says.

McCullar uses *The Battalion* as a learning opportunity, a chance to perfect his craft.

"I use it (*The Battalion*) the same way the students do, as a continuing lab," he says. "I take advantage of a learning lab where your work actually appears. Hopefully, I am putting the job to good use in learning the most I can about cartooning. And like most creative work it's getting to communicate your material to the public. It's always a big thrill."

McCullar says the best thing about cartooning is the chance to release a side of himself that without cartooning might not emerge.

"I like getting to be a smart alec on a daily basis," he says. "You entertain yourself first and then, hopefully, it goes beyond that."

Music is another hobby that can produce cash in addition to

enjoyment. Junior psychology major Mike Metzger has been playing the bass guitar as a hobby for nine years.

"When I was a little kid I used to listen to my Beatle records and I always liked the bass lines from Paul McCartney," he says. "It made me want to play."

Metzger played the bass in his high school's jazz band for two years and also played in a few bands with friends.

"We played a wedding reception once," he says. "We also played at the senior talent show."

Last October, however, Metzger and three of his friends discovered that their music could bring them money as well as enjoyment. They formed the Flesh Harvesters and sent demo tapes to various clubs. Metzger says the band has played in about five or six places.

Metzger has no plans to pursue music as a career, but the end of college won't mean an end to his involvement with music.

"I'll continue playing for my own enjoyment," he says. "It relaxes me."

Todd Harwell, a sophomore German major, is the Flesh Harvesters' drummer. His involvement with music began years before the band was formed when he joined the sixth-grade school band.

"I started out on the trumpet, but I really didn't like that," he says.

At the end of his sixth-grade year Harwell switched from the trumpet to percussion instruments and got his first drum set before entering the ninth grade.

"I was just more attracted to rhythmic patterns than tones," he says. "It took me so long to get the trumpet stuff down."

When he tried his hand at percussion the patterns just came naturally, he says. He continued to improve through involvement with his high school band. But most of Harwell's improvement came from

the practice of playing along with records. He joined his first extracurricular band just for kicks.

"It just seemed like a cool thing to do," he says. "We didn't make any money. We did it just for pleasure."

He says that he prefers autonomous bands over school sponsored bands.

"It's (school bands) all autocratic," Harwell says. "You're dictated on what to play and how to play it. A school band has no composing. All you are doing is going through the motions and then coming out with a product."

"In a band like us (the Flesh Harvesters) you compose; you do everything by yourself," he says. "It's all on your shoulders, the creating. That is just incredible compared to having a piece of music thrown at you and told how to play it."

Harwell didn't begin playing the drums with aspirations of becoming a rock star, but he says that if the opportunity presents itself in the future then he will consider it.

"Initially, all through high school, I didn't have any desire to make it into a career," he says. "I always thought it would be a waste of time and it was just the lucky ones who get to do that. Now, if luck took me that way, I'd have to evaluate the situation because education is incredibly important to me."

Meanwhile, Harwell is making some extra money from the band's shows. However, the music is what matters to Harwell.

"I'm a music lover," he says. "I love music, from the revolting all the way to the most beautiful music you can come up with."

Art and music aren't the only pastimes that can generate a part-time income. Others are inclined to pursue hobbies of a more mechanical nature.

Taborri Bruhl, a senior journalism major, turned his love of cars into a supplemental job this past summer.