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Aaaaaaaay! — Gig 'em, . . . Aggies!

Yells make spirit come alive in stands

By Michael Kelley
Of The Battalion Staff

First held in the early 1900s, Texas A&M yell practices have served as a means for the Twelfth Man to get fired up to support the Aggie football team in "beating the hell" out of their opponents on the field.

Leading the yells are five yell leaders — three seniors and two juniors.

The first yell leaders were freshmen who entertained the dates of the upperclassmen in the late 1800s. Many of the girls, who traveled by train from Texas Women's University to date the cadets, were attracted to the upperclassmen, leaving the freshmen cadets dateless.

In order to entertain their visiting companions, the seniors started having the freshmen do acrobatic stunts and lead songs and chants. But since the freshmen were drawing the full attention of the up-

perclassmen's dates, the juniors and seniors soon took over the job of leading yells.

The first yells were nothing more than long chants and phrases used by the cadets to make noise at football games. These evolved into the organized yells used by the Aggie crowd today.

Yells are done from a position known as "humping it," when students bend over slightly at the waist and place their hands just above their knees. This allows for the loudest yell, since the back is aligned with the throat and mouth.

In order to let the crowd know which yell is next, the yell leaders pass on hand signals to the students on the lower deck of the stands. This signal is passed back until all of the students know which yell to do. The yell leaders then use certain body motions to signal when to yell.

Yell practices are used to prepare the Twelfth Man to maneuver this sequence in the stands, just as the A&M football team

maneuvers on the field. The most popular of these is midnight yell practice, which is held at Kyle Field the night before home football games.

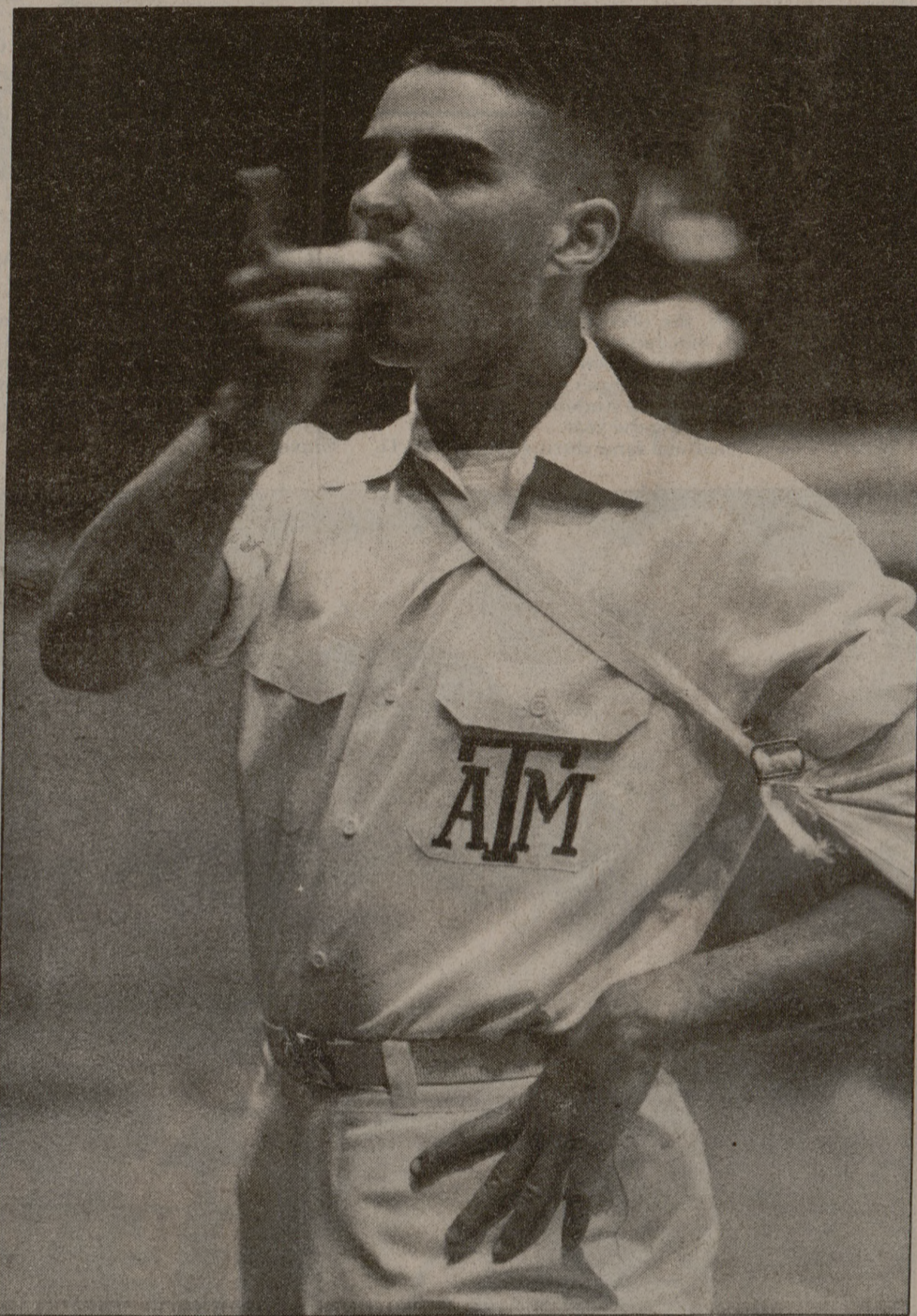
The first midnight yell was held in November 1932, the night before the big game against the University of Texas. A junior cadet named "Peanut" Owens decided to motivate the freshmen for the game by convincing the yell leaders to show up on the steps of the YMCA Building. The freshmen formed a long human chain known as a "snake" and roamed around the campus, ending up at the torch-lit steps of the YMCA at midnight. This is why yell practice is held at the YMCA after winning home football games.

Midnight yell practice today begins when students assemble behind Duncan Dining Hall. Juniors from the Corps of Cadets sur-

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Battalion file photos



Yell leaders, like 1988-89 head yell leader Steve Keathley (above) lead the A&M student body in yells at yell practices (left) and games, with the intent of raising school spirit, along with as much noise as possible

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