



Greeks share Aggie spirit, too

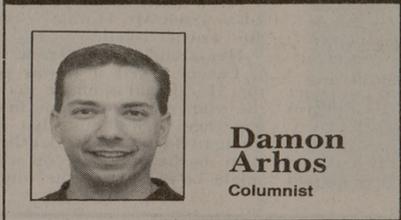
Lately, there have been many opinions flying back and forth about the Greeks and the Corps of Cadets. Being a fraternity president, you would probably expect me to start in on some "Corps bashing," but it is beyond me to start slamming an organization that I feel deserves the respect of all Aggies. I like the Corps, and I don't get into throwing mindless falsities at organizations just to make them look bad.

I guess you could call me one of those "manipulative" Greeks. (You know the type.) I am one of those Fish Camp directors, and I have been and am pretty involved in many of the student activities here at A&M. And I was picked for each and every position I have ever achieved solely because I am a member of a fraternal organization. Right?

Surely this is not so! I would like to think I am qualified for every position I am selected for. And to think, if this is true, I have actually been able to "retain my own identity" and at the same time been able to support A&M. (Get this! I've even been to Silver Taps, to Muster (every year), been active in Student Government committees, been involved in Fish Camp, etc ... (DO WONDERS EVER CEASE?)

But seriously, I feel it is my duty as an Aggie and a fraternity member to dispel many of the myths about Greeks that abound here at A&M.

Contrary to popular belief, many Greeks are interested in Aggie Traditions and activities. Greeks actively participate in bonfire, Silver Taps, Muster and many other A&M traditions. The list goes on and on. Just because we don't always wear our letters, doesn't mean we're not there. And how many times



Damon Arhos
Columnist

are Greeks ostracized just because they do wear their letters to traditional A&M events (like bonfire stack)?

It's not just A&M activities that we are involved in. Greeks participate annually in philanthropic events, charity functions, social service projects and community action programs, to name a few. Many Greeks are active in their churches and synagogues, too. To be honest, being Greek is far from having an excuse to have parties all the time. (Yes, I do own clothing other than mixer T-shirts.)

Much of the controversy surrounding Greek organizations involves their membership selection. Anyone who wants to join a fraternity can do so if they wish. The selection process is a mutual one; rushees are encouraged to go where they are most comfortable, while fraternities and sororities look for members who are potential assets to their organization. Here at A&M, there is a fraternal organization for everyone. It seems to me that I have been through a few interviews for many of the A&M committees and activities in which I was interested.

Or how about those financial requirements that everyone always points a finger at? Guess what? It is not a requirement to drive a BMW, or for your

father to make over \$80,000 a year or to be handsome or pretty to be a member of a fraternity or sorority. When I went through rush, I was never handed a questionnaire asking any of these things. House maintenance, rush activities, parties, alumni contact, intramurals, social service projects and many other activities cost MONEY. It would be impossible for fraternal organizations to function without an income. And unlike many student organizations, we receive no monetary support from the University.

To think that Greeks are out to destroy other student activities or to manipulate the campus into being some sort of Greek utopia is absurd. Unlike many non-regs on campus, we do not advertise against our fellow Aggies. We actively support A&M and its traditions, and consider our blood just as maroon as the blood of any other student at A&M.

It is wrong to stereotype Greeks, just as it is wrong to stereotype the Corps, minorities, women or any other group. There are those Greeks who are apathetic two-percenters who live for their Greek organizations, just as there are those Corps members, non-regs and just plain people who are closed-minded to the ideas and interests of others.

The 3,000 Greeks here at A&M are just as diverse as the student body itself, so try to be open-minded. Try to accept Aggies for who they are instead of what they are involved in, and maybe we can put an end to this endless controversy that has added itself to the list of Aggie Traditions.

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Howdy! Whoop! Gig 'em! etc.

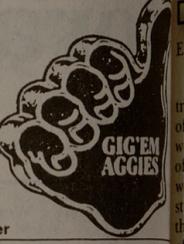
Texas A&M is a university rich in tradition, yet many think the traditions have pulled the University down from a "world-class" status. This is false. The traditions we hold to in these times of change put us above other schools that are supposedly close to our caliber.

Yes, we could take the easy way out and just concentrate on books and research, leaving tradition to die. But then we would conform to a "regular Joe" university. That's not the way it is here. Students have in the past, chosen to keep tradition alive, and they will in the future. Because of bonfire, Muster, Parents' Weekend, Silver Taps, Fish Camp and T-Camp, Yell Practice, observance of memorials and especially Aggie friendliness, Texas A&M is the students' University. No other University allows its students as much voice in activities that affect the campus as A&M does.

I am writing this to compliment the student body for supporting the traditions, the football team and the volleyball team. The participation and attitude the Twelfth Man displayed at the LSU and TCU football games was great. LSU didn't know what hit them after the opening kick-off, and you all didn't even let them get up. The volume of noise on the field and the enthusiasm with which the Twelfth Man yelled, showed the Tigers the real power of Kyle Field.

In Washington, we sure needed the Twelfth Man. You would have made the difference, but that's the past and we have plenty to look forward to. At TCU, the Frogs must have thought they were in College station, because the Aggies rocked the TCU stadium. That kind of spirit pulls the game our way.

Waylan Cain
Head Yell Leader



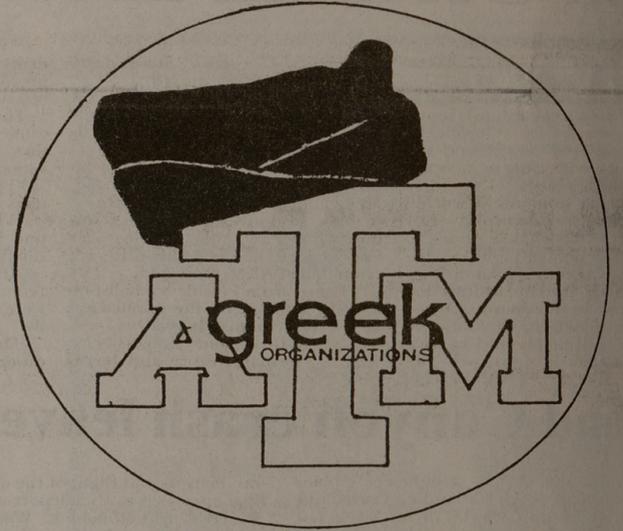
The attendance and participation the Twelfth Man at the Volleyball games also has been awesome. crowd definitely makes a difference these games.

Many teams overlook the strength of emotion. This emotion comes from players and the students on hand. We need to motivate each other. With Aggie Band and the Twelfth Man, never be at a loss for motivation.

Non-Regs, Greeks and the Corps have a hand in this, and must work together to keep the Twelfth Man strong and working.

This necessary involvement in University is what enables Aggies to be called "boss" four years after graduation. The leadership needed for positions may seem to be learned at a price of frustration and maybe a grade or two, but it is a small price pay for the friends made and the influence — especially the enhancement of your own life.

Ags, keep tradition alive at A&M get involved, stay motivated, keep thumbs up, don't forget to say "dy," and let's deafen Southern Mississippi and beat the hell outta them.



Age of campus trees documented in Archives' photographs

Many words have been written and many others spoken on campus as well as in the community about trees, some supposedly famous and others not, on the Texas A&M campus. A few of the words have been based on fact, but many of them simply have repeated myths without any basis on truth. This column should help clarify some of these myths.

One popular myth is that the large live oak tree between the Academic Building and Bolton Hall is well over a century old. In fact it is quite popularly known as the Century Oak and has been referred to as such since before the A&M Centennial in 1976. Several pieces of irrefutable evidence, as well as one piece of oral testimony, show that the tree is not that old.

Early photographs of the Texas A&M campus, one as early as 1883, reveal that



Charles R. Schultz
University Archivist

the campus was truly a bare prairie at that time. Other photographs in the 1890s and the early 1900s give evidence of basically the same thing.

The March 1, 1923 issue of the *Daily Bulletin*, which was published each school day by the Publicity Department, contains a lengthy article about Uncle Dan Jackson, a popular Black custodian who assisted in building the first buildings on the campus and then worked continuously for A&M. In the article, Uncle Dan is quoted as saying that the first tree on the campus was the old cedar tree in front of the Civil Engineering building that is now named Nagle Hall. We may conclude from this that no tree existed anywhere on the

2,416 acre original campus until after 1876.

The December 18, 1918 issue of the *Reveille*, which has succeeded the *Daily Bulletin*, has a reference to an 1895 photograph in the 1918 yearbook. The anonymous author of the article comments that "the most conspicuous feature of this picture is the remarkable muddy road leading up to the old building. Then, too, the view is impressive in its aspect of loneliness. The College Campus was originally a bald prairie, and the picture referred to above reveals very little change in that respect in the first 20 years of the life of the College."

Another popular myth is that certain trees in the area in the proposed expansion of the MSC also are very old. Some have even claimed they are between 150 and 200 years old. The same evidence cited in reference to the so-called Century Oak can be used to help refute the claims of the age of these trees. Other pictures in the Archives, dated into the 1920s that show the area of the MSC and at least part of the proposed expansion area, are also useful in helping to determine the age of these trees.

A close examination of all the available appropriate photographs in the Archives leads one to conclude that live oak trees were introduced to the Texas A&M campus between 1900 and 1910.

One of the trees in the proposed MSC has been given the name Rudder Oak by opponents of their transplanting or removal. Other people refer to several of the trees as Rudder Oaks. From avail-

able oral testimony it appears that it was an architect named D.D. Matthews who originally proposed that the 1970s expansion of the MSC be altered to save several trees. Since the proposed change in the plan put forth by Matthews would provide more square footage of space without any additional cost, President Rudder immediately approved the change. If this is really the case then perhaps the tree or trees should be named for Matthews rather than Rudder, if they should be named for anyone.

Another bit of information that can be gleaned from the photographs of the A&M campus between 1883 and the 1920s is that trees have been planted and removed from the early days and will probably continue to be planted and removed. This is probably as it should be. Trees after all are a renewable natural resource and were never intended to live or be in the same location perpetually.

To be truly consistent the opponents to the moving or removal of the oaks in the vicinity of the MSC should be equally opposed to the bonfire for which several thousand trees will be cut down during the next few weeks. Where are their words about the bonfire?

No one has come forward with funds to save the Rudder Oak, which some experts say is in stress and has been for some time due to the wall built around its trunk and the dirt piled upon its roots some years ago. From looking at the tree it is evident that it is not as healthy as other trees on the campus.

This column is not intended to be a

total endorsement of the concept of full destruction of trees or a total denunciation of oral tradition. Rather, it is intended as a reminder that all sources of information, all possible documents need to be examined and that old photographs in the Archives can frequently provide information not available in written form.

For many years historians and researchers have considered photographs solely as things to include in their books to break up the text. And more now such scholars are realizing that photographs are real documents and can provide good, accurate and dependable information. After no one made a written record of particular trees were planted on campus other than that group of memorial trees on the perimeter of the Sisson Drill Field. Even there conflicting records exist as to which tree is a memorial to a given individual and even which are the real memorial trees.

Since there is no written record of plantings, only oral tradition and photographs exist to document the ages of trees, but that does not appear to be a viable option at this point. When oral tradition and photographs agree, there is no problem with the accuracy of either source of information. When oral tradition and photographs present different information, then there is a question of the accuracy of oral tradition.

The photographs and other documents referred to in this column are exhibit on the second floor of the C. Evans Library.

The Battalion

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