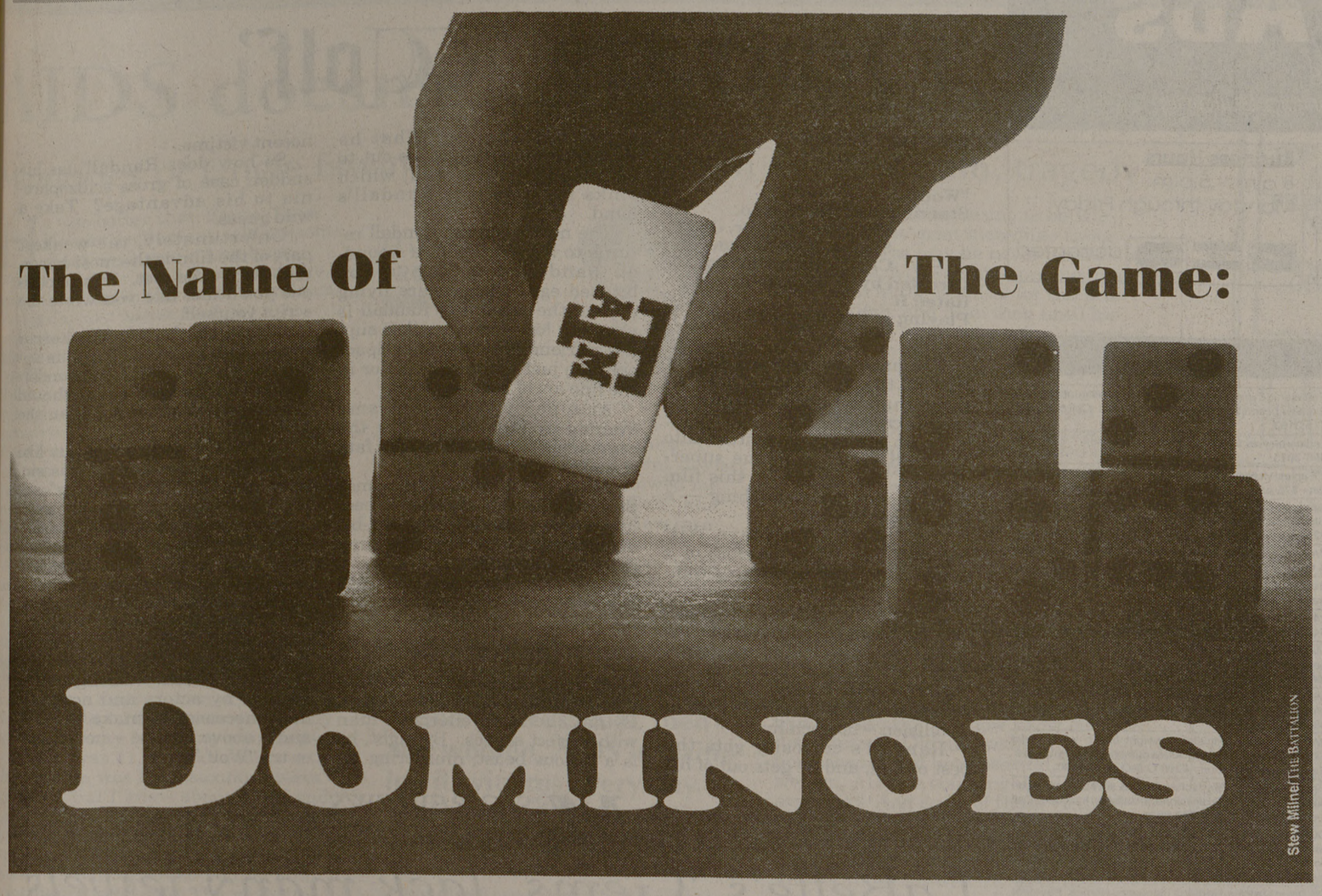


Texas-bred 'Forty Two' embedded in A&M tradition

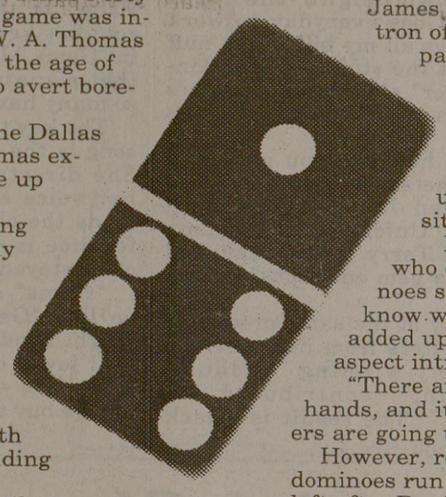
Jeremy Keddie
The Battalion

Walk into the Dixie Chicken, and you are likely to find groups of people gathered around the graffiti covered tables. Generally scattered on these tables are pitchers of beer, someone's keys, packs of cigarettes, and dominoes.

And the dominoes, as well as the beer, will remain on the tables from the moment four willing players walk in, until they are ushered out at 1 a.m. to the sounds of "Good Night Irene."

Phrases like, "Whose shake is it?", "Windows are trump?", "No splash, no plunge, no sevens, and forced lows," and "That'll walk" are scantily heard over songs like "Colorado Kool-Aid."

They are phrases from a game referred to as "Forty Two", although some will emphasize that it is "Texas Forty Two." After all, the game was invented in 1887, by W. A. Thomas of Garner, Texas, at the age of eleven as a means to avert boredom.



In an article in The Dallas Morning News, Thomas explained how he came up with "Forty Two:"

"There was a strong prejudice against any form of card playing in my household," said Thomas. "Dominoes were not regarded as instruments of the devil, so I got to fooling around with the possibility of bidding with numbers."

"Forty Two" is similar to "Spades" with partners trying to win "tricks" while capturing points. Each game consists of seven rounds, and is worth one point plus the points won from each trick. Points can be won by capturing dominoes worth multiples of five. There are 35 total points in the dominoes, and if you add up the "point dominoes" and the number of tricks, you have 42.

So what makes this complicated game so interesting to people?

Hubert, who wanted to be referred to by his first name, played in the "Forty Two" state championship in Halletsville.

"It's an easy way to meet new people," said Hubert.

And occasionally relationships do emerge from playing dominoes.

James Taylor, who has been a patron of the Dixie Chicken for the past four years, met his girlfriend playing dominoes.

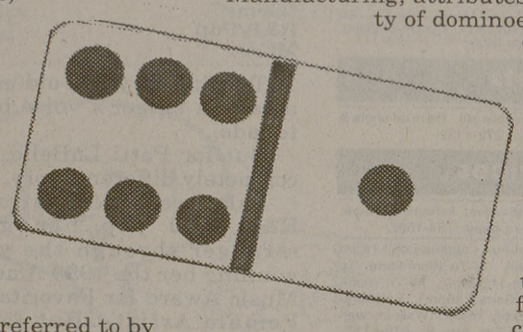
"My girlfriend and I have had more fights over dominoes than anything else," Taylor said. "She gets upset when we play on opposite teams and she loses."

However, Enoch Phetteplace, who claims to have played dominoes since he was old enough to know what the "pips" – or dots – added up to, said the psychological aspect intrigues him.

"There are so many variations in hands, and it's interesting to see how others are going to play," Phetteplace said.

However, reasons for why people play dominoes run deeper than the pile of ash left after Bonfire, and dominoes are as popular as the long-standing A&M tradition.

Scott Pitzer, sales manager of Puremco Manufacturing, attributes the popularity of dominoes in Bryan-College Station mainly to the students. He claims that A&M is the epicenter of dominoes.



"Dominoes today comes from an agricultural background," said Pitzer, "and lots of kids at A&M come from rural towns."

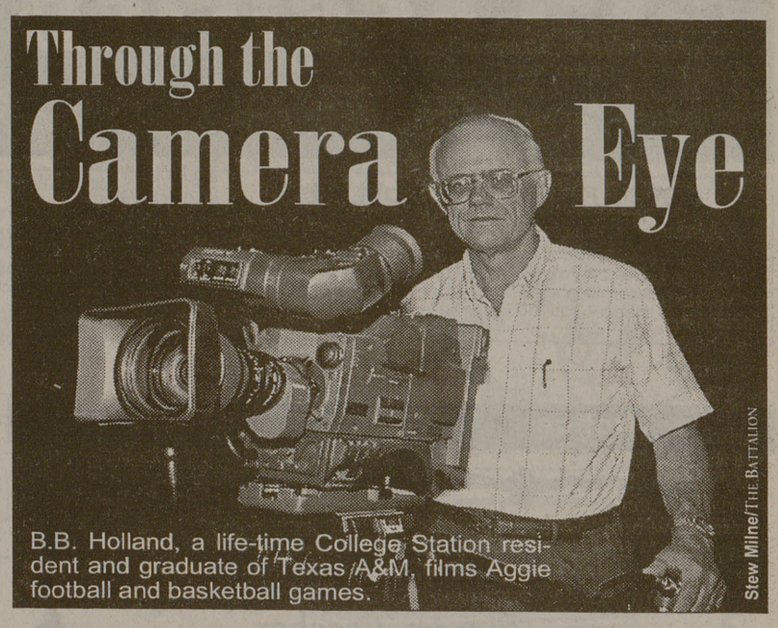
Puremco Manufacturing, located in Waco, is the nation's last manufacturer of dominoes, and sells over 100,000 sets a year, with the A&M logo reigning as the best-selling design. Pitzer also explained that traditions play a large role in the popularity of dominoes here.

Some might say playing at the Dixie Chicken is sort of a tradition. In exchange for an ID, the bar will loan you a set of dominoes. There are players of all skills and styles, and should the domino sets run out, someone can usually be found looking for an extra.

Although "Forty Two" is the most popular game played at the Dixie Chicken, some still prefer to play straight dominoes, arguing that "trumps" make "Forty Two" a game of luck.

Aside from having the most players in the region, Hubert said the best players of "Forty Two" come from the Bryan-College Station area.

"There's no other place in the world where they play 'Texas Forty Two' as much as they do here," said Hubert. "And the better you get, the more you want to play."



B.B. Holland, a life-time College Station resident and graduate of Texas A&M, films Aggie football and basketball games.

'I've never missed a game'

Local filmmaker captures 23 years of A&M athletics and his own slice of life

Christi Erwin
The Battalion

Sometimes it's the people on the sidelines who make the biggest difference.

This holds true for B.B. Holland's contributions to the A&M Athletic Department.

Holland, Class of '55, videotapes football games and practices and basketball games for the athletic department.

Profile

The coaches and the players use the tapes to see what they are doing right or wrong and to plan for future games, he said.

"I've been everywhere — 258 consecutive games, 23 years worth," Holland said. "I've never missed a game."

Holland said he has seen some changes in A&M football over the years.

"Practice has not changed that much, but the players keep on getting bigger," he said.

George Hamilton, his partner of 22 years and photojournalism teacher at A&M Consolidated High School, agrees with Holland.

"I am 6'3 and the players used to be about the same size as me," he said. "Now I look at their shoulder blades."

Hamilton said that the players attitudes have also changed.

"Since Coach Bellard and definitely Sherrill, players are more carefully chosen, more intelligent and have better mouths," Hamilton said. "Today, we have good down-to-earth players who are easier to get along with."

Holland said not only have the players changed, but so has technology.

We used to film the games and send the film to Houston for processing. Then a change in print processing made it possible to install a film lab below Kyle Field, he said.

Now with tape and Kyle Field's state-of-the-art video lab, coaches can view practice instantly, he said.

Holland said Athletic Director Wally Groff helped him get the funding for the video lab.

Groff said Holland's videotapes are important to the coaching staff and serve as a teaching aid for the players.

"He (Holland) is a natural since he has the time, desire and great ability," Groff said. "Whether bowl or regular game, we can count on B.B. Holland being there."

Holland said he benefits from his job with the athletic department because it allows him to travel with the team and see things he would otherwise not have the chance to.

"When we go to away games, George (Hamilton) and I rent a car and go sightseeing," he said.

"It will take us 16 hours to get to Texas Tech," Holland said. "The most interesting route is not always the shortest route."

Except for Holland's sightseeing trips, he has lived in College Station all his life, and has seen the city and the A&M campus grow.

His grandparents lived next to the old creamery, where West Campus is today.

Holland said it is strange for him to see all those "fancy buildings" because he remembers when his grandparents lived there. He said a tree with a double trunk still marks the spot where his grandparents' home was once located.

Holland received both his undergraduate and masters in history and education at A&M. He taught 8th-grade history for 16 years, taught two years at the high school level and was principal of South Knoll elementary for another 16 years.

Holland, who is now retired, says he loves to "piddle."

To him, "piddling" is restoring Studebakers and winning first place at two national car shows.

"Piddling" also involves taping athletic games, "dabbling" with woodwork, taking photos and maintaining a well-groomed putting green in his front yard.

"I'm a jack of all trades," Holland said, "but the master of none."

Welcome to the jungle

Warren E. Mayberry
The Battalion

Ever wondered where the deer and the antelope roam? Try looking on the west side of campus at the Wildlife Research Center, where they are joined by lions, ostriches and coyotes.

The center was started in the mid-1980s by Dr. James McCraty, former head of the physiology department.

Dr. James Herman, veterinary clinical associate, said animals were donated to Texas A&M from a private collection to start the center. Through this collection, the center was able to expand.

"We sold the founding animals to improve the center," Herman said.

Proceeds built the existing wildlife fencing and added a 12-unit working chute in the split level lab. The design of this chute allows the technicians to work safely with the smallest to the largest animals, Herman said.

"We are especially appreciative of the chute design when working with deer," Herman said. "Deer are too small to work in normal cattle chutes, so we had to design a chute that would allow us to adapt to any animal."

The 15-acre facility houses more than 100 animals, including an orphaned lioness which is part of an embryo transfer project to save Siberian tigers.

Embryo transfer and artificial insemination are two techniques the center uses to save endangered species.

"The Iranian goat is our current embryo project," Herman said. "This goat is on the brink of extinction."

The veterinarians transfer embryos from the female of the species and place them in domestic sheep, and much of the center's projects help human research, Herman said.

"Antelope and tigers aren't the only creatures aided by the center's studies," Herman said. "Humans are helped by our research just as much as other animals."

The various species of wildlife are used as a model for research, and can in some cases prove better than many of the traditional research animals such as rodents and domestic animals.

One project where animals serve as a model is in the study of tuberculosis in deer. The research on deer and the spread of TB from deer to cattle may break the portion of the cycle affecting humans.

"The chain found in deer in terms of the spread of TB is from organism to deer to cattle and then to humans," Herman said.

The center is able to help another health area, human "outbreaks," he said.

"The recent outbreak of rabies in South Texas is one of our biggest projects," Herman said. "We are trying to create a vaccine for rabies much like (what is) used in Europe."

He said the research involves the use of a vaccine first tested in foxes in Georgia. The hope is the serum will work on coyotes who are spreading the disease in South Texas. This serum will help producers in the area combat the disease without killing coyotes, Herman said.

Producer-oriented research stimulates much of the center's activities.

Ostriches have become a large agricultural resource in the last several years. However, not much is known about the flightless birds.

Dr. Blue McClendon, a professor of veterinary physiology, is studying ostriches and their use as an agricultural resource.

The National Ratite Association funds research to study the use of ostrich meat, oils, and skins as agricultural commodities, and this research is in part why the center was founded, McClendon said. The center's existence allows the technicians the ability to answer the infamous research question, "What would happen if...?"

Photo illustration by Stew Milne/The Battalion

Knowledge for knowledge's sake is why Herman feels the research center was founded.

"We also wanted to have a place where students could gain hands-on experience, and the center allows us to do just that," Herman said.

Mike McLendon, a veterinary student and technician at the center, feels there are more benefits to the center than just the research.

"The center gives graduates and undergraduates an opportunity to gain experience with research."

Students see a process from the animal stage to the lab and back to practical application, he said.

"A neat thing about working at the center is the chance to do work that not only helps animals, but people as well, while hanging around with people who enjoy the beauty of animals," McLendon said.