

Going for the gold



Students continue 'dunking' tradition

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THE BATTALION

Local bars and ice cream parlors have something in common this week — both are bracing for 2,200 A&M students who received their Aggie rings yesterday and will likely be dunking them in beer or ice cream soon.

One of the newer traditions at Texas A&M is the dunking of the Aggie ring. While no one sure when the ritual started, it is believed to have been in the early 1980s.

Don Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken, said a patron of his bar decided to dunk his ring in a pitcher of beer one day, and the tradition began.

"Ring dunking just popped out on the one day," Ganter said. "I don't really know when or how, but it did. The rules and regulations have evolved as the years have gone by."

The tradition, as it has evolved, says that students must finish their pitchers within the number of seconds that corresponds to their class year at A&M. For example, a member of the Class of '96 might aim to finish a pitcher in 96 seconds.

Deron Robinson, a senior agricultural development major, went beyond his goal when he drank a pitcher in 64 seconds.

"My goal was to do it under 95 seconds and not get sick," Robinson said. "I finished it, turned it over and said, 'Give me another one.'"

Repeat performances are not all that uncommon.

Michael Jones, a senior agricultural business major who dunked his ring last October, is planning to dunk his ring a second time because he finished his pitcher in 100 seconds, but wanted to do it in less than 90.

"I'm doing it again because I know I can do it better," Jones said.

Other students only plan to do it once and for the moment.

Kathryn Farnum, a senior agricultural development major, received her ring Wednesday and is planning to dunk it Sept. 16.

"I'm doing it then so my mom can see," Farnum said. "She's quite the little Aggie fan and she said this is something she just can't miss."

Farnum said her goal is to finish a pitcher in less than three minutes.

"I would like to do it in one minute and 96 seconds," she said, "but I'll just be thankful to

finish the pitcher."

Ganter said he is going to give students another option for their ring dunking experience in order to avoid over-consumption of alcohol.

"We are going to try to draw people away from the whole pitcher of beer," he said. "We're going to offer them a tall glass that has a handle. It would be more of a memento for people, in place of a whole pitcher."

Some A&M students have adopted a new form of the ring dunking tradition because they do not drink beer. One adaptation of the tradition is dunking rings in ice cream.

Josh Riess, an employee of Swensen's Ice Cream, said some students have dunked their rings in The Earthquake, a sundae at Swensen's that has eight scoops of ice cream and eight different toppings.

"When rings come out, we get a fair amount of people in here to dunk their rings," Riess said.

Although Riess said many people rely on friends to help finish the sundae, others rely on competition for their inspiration.

Kate Sherwood, a senior interdisciplinary studies major, and her roommate Susan Palmer, a senior chemistry major, are planning to dunk their rings in ice cream at the same time. The friends will be racing to see who can finish their sundae first.

"My time goal is whatever it takes to beat Kate," Palmer said. "The loser is going to have to pay for the ice cream."

Sherwood said eight scoops of ice cream are more appealing than a pitcher of beer.

"I don't drink," Sherwood said, "and even if I did, I don't want to get that sick."

Riess said non-alcoholic beverage choices are not guaranteed that the ring dunker will not get sick.

"One guy tried to dunk his ring in a pitcher of root beer, and he got pretty sick off of it," Riess said.

Ganter said he has seen other forms of the tradition.

"I saw one man dunk his ring in a pitcher of water," Ganter said. "I've also seen people do it in wine coolers or even cola drinks."

Farnum said the ring dunking tradition is more than just finishing a pitcher as fast as you can.

"More than dunking your ring, it is the fact that all your friends realize you've got your ring," she said. "Dunking doesn't make you more of an Aggie. I've waited three years to get my ring. I'll remember picking it up more than I'll remember dunking it."



Battalion file photo

Chip Breier works on his pitcher of beer at The Chicken, eyeing his ring at the bottom of the pitcher.

WEEKEND PREVIEW

THURSDAY

Andrews, a progressive country performer, is playing at Izzywilly's.

Arrival, a rock band from Houston, is playing at The Tap.

Storyville, a blues rock band from Austin, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina. Willie Jaye, a blues rock performer from Houston, is opening.

FRIDAY

The Killer Bees, a reggae band from Austin, is playing at the Dixie Theatre.

Johnny Lyons and the Country Nunos, a country band, is playing at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Miss Molly & the Whips, a rhythm and blues band from Louisiana, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Mother's Monkey, an alternative band, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

Sleeping Tom, a cover band with a few original songs, is playing at The Tap.

The MSC Film Society is presenting *Priest* in Rudder Auditorium at 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

The MSC Cepheid Variable Committee is presenting the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* at The Grove at midnight.

SATURDAY



Beat Temple, a rock band from Houston, is playing at The Dixie Theatre. Pushmonkey, a rock band from Austin, is opening.

The Big Apple Trio, a jazz band, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

Firecreek, a country band, is playing at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Jeff's Kitchen, a cover band, is playing at The Tap.

The TAMU Caribbean Club is sponsoring a Caribbean party at 3rd Floor Cantina. Liberation, a reggae band, is performing.

The MSC Cepheid Variable Committee is presenting the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* at The Grove at midnight.

The MSC Film Society is presenting *While You Were Sleeping* in Rudder Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Walker to perform for United Way benefit

Jerry Jeff Walker, a country performer, is playing at the FJI house to benefit the United Way. Since the release of his first album in 1967, Walker has drawn countless Texas-music fans to his distinctive shows.

Walker settled in Austin in 1971 and became part of what was later termed the "Outlaw Scene." The music he and his contemporaries wrote and performed didn't really fit into any classification. It wasn't rock. It wasn't country, but it wasn't folk either.

Walker's attitude — not to mention escapades — are well known throughout the music world, but Walker is probably most famous for bringing attention to a tiny Austin-area town called Luckenbach — which is a good thing, because the town can't be found on many maps.

When Walker first went to Luckenbach in 1973, the basic idea was to get back to the "basics" of life. He drank a lot, hung out with people who drank a lot and wrote songs about the people he met along the way.

Walker's most famous song, "Mr. Bojangles," was written about a man Walker met while spending the night in the "drunk tank" after a particularly rough night in New Orleans.

Despite his reputation, however, Walker is not just about carousing at honky-tonks.

Many fans might be surprised to learn that Walker has been married for 20 years and has two children.

