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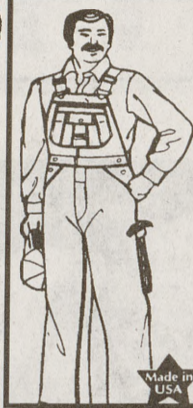
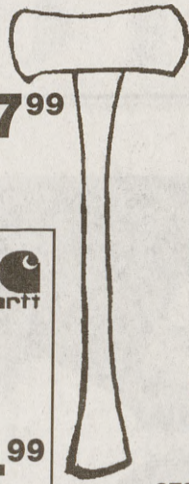
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Spirit goes to student's heads

By AARON MEIER
THE BATTALION

Last fall, fashionable hair styles made popular by television stars appeared all over campus. Jennifer Aniston's hairdo from the comedy *Friends* and George Clooney's Caesar cut from the drama *ER* became extremely popular. This year, an increasing number of campus residents sport a cut uniquely Aggie in origin — a letter shaved into the head.

Letterheads appeared on campus less than 15 years ago, making it a relatively new tradition, but its prolific nature makes it one of the most noticeable.

Campus residents, typically freshmen, sign up to become letterheads and use their hair to spell out different phrases to motivate the dorms for Bonfire.

The letterheads voluntarily shave most of their hair off leaving the remaining locks in the shape of a letter, that, when put together with other newly-shorn dorm mates, spell out phrases demonstrating their devotion to building Bonfire.

Residents of Aston Hall plan to spell one of the longest letterhead messages on campus with 69 skulls required to complete the undertaking.

Dan Finnell, letterhead for Aston Hall and a freshman environmental design major, said he knew he wanted to be a letterhead before he stepped foot on campus. A former student told him about the tradition, and Finnell said it sounded like something he wanted to do.

Finnell's hair forms the letter "O," and he said the bald spot in the center with the fringe surrounding it earned him the nickname, "Friar."

Blake Jackson, an Aston Hall letterhead and a sophomore general studies major, also decorated his scalp with an "O."

Jackson said his formerly long, curly, brown hair now resembles a bird's nest.

He said Finnell convinced him to become a letterhead, and in the excitement of the moment, the Aston "Os" earned another nickname.

"I told Dan that we could be 'O Bros' or even 'Fo Os,'" Jackson said.

Jackson's and Finnell's parents have not seen their sons' explorations into cranial phonetics, but both have promised to send pictures home.

Jackson said that before he finally shears off the rest of his hair, he plans to explore the Dennis Rodman path of hairstyles.

"I plan on dying it a bunch of different colors then shaving it off," Jackson said.

Male students have lost their exclusive status as let-

terheads. An increasing number of female students have become heroines of hairlessness.

Danielle Pinson, a freshman bioengineering major, became one of the growing number of women who were willing to lose hair in the name of school spirit.

Pinson became a fish head. Her hair is shaved the back of the head, and instead of a letter, the remaining hair is sculpted into the shape of a fish indicating her status as a freshman.

The fish is inconspicuous because the rest of her hair covers it, making it barely noticeable.

Pinson said that when everyone had their hair shaved, the residence hall made a party of experience.

Pinson said after she became a fish head, a sive effort was established to get other people shave marine animals into their scalps.

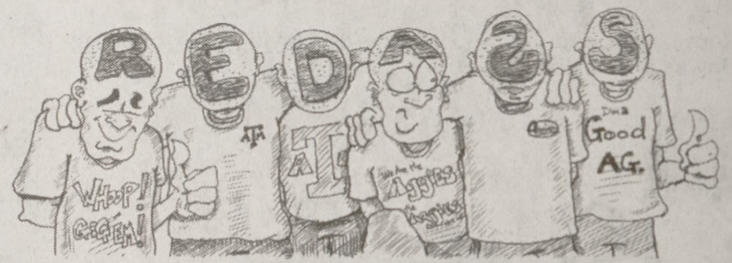
"There was a group of people standing by sign-up poster, and as people would walk in the door, they would basically attack them," said Pinson.

For those worried about potential hazing, Finnell said the entire experience remains voluntary.

"I tried to convince my roommate to do it, but wasn't interested, so I backed off," Finnell said.

Pinson said that when some people saw much the other fish heads enjoyed themselves, others became more than willing to join in bonding experience.

"It was like they got caught up in the moment," Pinson said.



The letterheads and fish heads seem unaffected socially, and some cases, they have become more sociable.

Jackson said women love to see his head.

"The chicks all day long," Jackson said.

Finnell said his letter forced him to become more extroverted, because it brought him out of his shell and made him more sociable.

Pinson, whose Aggie tribal marking remains hidden by her longer hair, said that whenever she sees a letterhead, she likes to walk up to them and talk to them about it.

Traveling with the unusual buzz is also an experience. Finnell said he braved into the outside world and took his revolutionary hair style to Houston for the Texas Academic Skills Program test.

He said he tried to wear his hat during the test, but in the middle of the test, he removed his cap briefly, and the gasps behind him forced a smile to make its way across his face.

Jackson said he worries that his bird's nest hairstyle might become a new trend in his hometown of Dallas.



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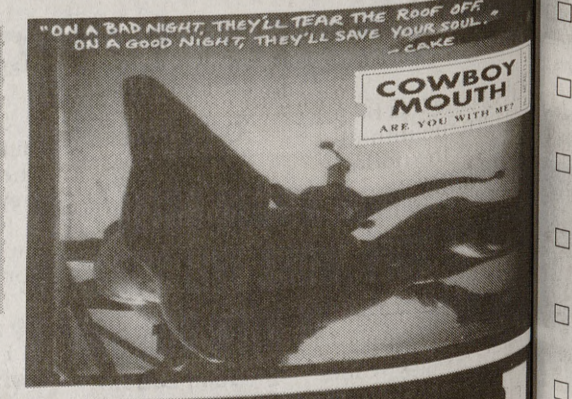


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