

THE GARDENS OF A & M

BY JOHN LEBAS
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M is nestled in the heart of the state's southeastern plains, its landscaping a tribute to the tree-spotted blanket of grasses that covers the region. Members of Texas Aggie Master Gardeners, a new collegiate affiliate of the Texas Association of Master Gardeners, envision a campus with more color and vibrance, where the familiar grass and trees create relaxing gardens.

Dr. Joe Novak, adviser to the volunteer group and a senior lecturer in horticulture, said Aggie Master Gardeners aims to develop gardens to support campus

beautification. The organization, in its first semester at A&M, is pursuing several proposed gardening projects around the University.

"Our purpose is to bring the development of gardens on the A&M campus to benefit the students, faculty and staff and the people of this region," Novak said.

He said gardens relieve stress and students benefit from lounging and studying among plants.

"Where else is there more tension than on a college campus?" Novak said.

He said the group must get approval from Physical Plant or Campus Landscaping before working any project, though several ideas are being considered.

Aggie Master Gardeners hopes to raise food for the needy in an on-campus "food bank" vegetable garden. It will also pursue possible development of the meditation garden at the west side of the Memorial Student Center, Novak said.

The group also wants to support an arboretum and gardens project here, he said.

Leigh Anne Massey, Aggie Master Gardeners treasurer and a senior botany and horticulture major, said she wants to work on the MSC.

She said Master Gardeners could help improve many spots on campus, but such highly visible gardens might be the first projects.

"Then we can move to smaller gardens," she said, "after people know we're here."

Novak said this Master Gardeners branch will try to show the beauty and appeal of gardens through its projects at A&M.

"Many Master Gardeners chapters get interested in

stimulating gardening," Novak said. "Our group will try to do demonstration gardening."

Master gardeners share their know-how with others through demonstration and teaching, Novak said.

They are certified by state chapters as gardening experts.

Group members must complete 50 hours of gardening training and volunteer work with the club to be certified as master gardeners. A&M students can meet the training requirement by completing HORT 301 and 302, which are the horticulture techniques lecture and lab.

Novak said members are called "master gardener interns" until their volunteer work is finished.

He said members do not have to pursue certification, though. "Garden volunteers," entry level members who do not have the volunteer hours and training required of master gardeners, can still participate in all club activities.

Dan Houchard, Aggie Master Gardeners secretary and a junior landscape architecture major, said he wants to be certified but primarily joined the club to do his part to beautify campus.

"When my girlfriend and I visited campus," Houchard said, "I was kind of disappointed. I heard about the club, and it kind of seemed like my outlet."

Houchard said he wants to get A&M's students, faculty and staff involved in Master Gardeners projects. He said community cooperation and support of gardening will make the campus look "awesome."

Houchard, a longtime gardener, said he yearns for personal accomplishment through improving the campus.

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Professor exhibits history of A&M through pictures, stories

BY AARON MEIER
THE BATTALION

The history of Texas A&M University teems with anecdotes and facts. For example, a piece of legislation introduced by the University of Texas proposed that A&M be closed down and the facilities used as an insane asylum. The state legislature passed the proposal by one vote.

Dr. Henry C. Dethloff, a history professor at A&M, has compiled such stories for the second edition of his book, "Texas A&M University: A Pictorial History."

Dethloff came to A&M in 1969, and he said his first assignment posed a serious challenge for a new faculty member and UT graduate. The University asked Dethloff to write a two-volume history celebrating the centennial anniversary of the University. After completing the initial assignment in 1973, the idea for a pictorial history came about and both books were released in 1976.

This past year the University Press asked Dethloff to update the pictorial history.

Dethloff said the most evident changes in the book are in the form of new pictures, a new introduction, and a new concluding chapter. The last chapter of the book, titled "Into the Second Century," recalls the past years of the University.

"The final chapter" captures the tumult, the turmoil and the flavor of the last 20 to 25 years," Dethloff said. "It has been chaotic, but it also has been fascinating."

Dethloff said the school has dramatically changed in the 27 years he has been a professor at home.

Dethloff said his first teaching assignment taught him many things about the University and the culture that defines it.

"I was teaching a History 105 class," Dethloff said.

"When I walked in, there was only one female student, and all the men were in uniform. As I recall, most of them were asleep at 8 a.m."

The book also shows the dynamic nature of the school and its traditions.

A tradition such as Bonfire remains one of the cornerstones of A&M culture, but Dethloff said it has not always been the organized engineering feat that attracts national attention every year.

Bonfire used to be a pile of garbage and wood that was burned twice a year, since A&M played UT twice every season. The frequency was cut down when the Southwest Conference was created in 1914.

Dethloff said Bonfire organized because the residents of the community complained students were taking more than scraps of old wood for Bonfire.

"Cadets began stealing structures, such as outhouses, that were still being used," Dethloff said.

The Commandant of the Corps took over the construction of Bonfire and transformed it into an exercise in military construction and discipline.

Dethloff said the book also dispels some of the misunderstandings concerning the more controver-

sial moments in A&M's history. "Despite the discord over race, minorities, sexual harassment, political correctness, multiculturalism and homosexuality, a widespread sense that 'We Are (nonetheless) the Aggies!' still exists," Dethloff wrote in the pictorial.

Coeeducation was a step the school took in the 1960s and '70s. However, the school had been instructing women for 72 years before the University instated an official policy accepting women.

The book shows a picture of Sophie and Mary Hutson, who were the first women to attend A&M. The twins were the daughters of a faculty member and started attending the school in 1899 as "unofficial" students.

The sisters both wore adaptations of cadet uniforms with skirts, and received degrees from A&M in 1903. Women in the classrooms at A&M

have existed since the school was first established. Dethloff said the official 1971 decision to accept women at A&M compares to the Shannon Faulkner case. Last year, Faulkner made history as the first woman to attend The Citadel, the all-male

military college.

Dethloff said while researching for the book he came across a copy of the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Regents from 1935.

In meeting, Dethloff said a board member casually made a motion to start accepting women. He said the board considered the idea for several years but dismissed the notion as the onset of World War II reaffirmed A&M's status as a military school.

Dethloff's book identifies A&M's primary challenge as the assimilation of the rapid growth in student population and diversity that has brought the University into the next century.

Since Dethloff's arrival, the enrollment has more than tripled.

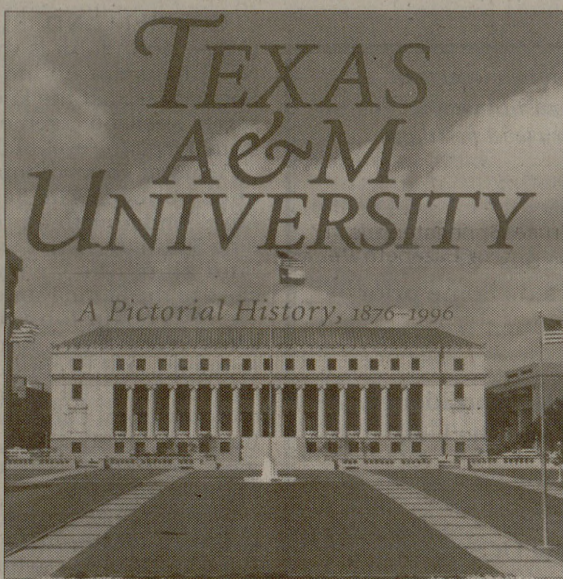
He said adjusting to this rapid growth remains vital to maintaining the University's character.

"There is an Aggie culture that defines this university," Dethloff said. "It is always going to change. There may be some traditions that fade, but that's OK."

The pictorial cites several examples of the changing face of the University. Examples such as the appearance of sororities and fraternities, the acceptance of women into the Corps, the physical expansion of A&M into West Campus, and the erection of the George Bush Memorial Library show the fast pace at which the University tries to change.

Dethloff said he feels confident A&M will deal with the changes in a truly Aggie fashion and that demonstrates A&M's ready acceptance of these major changes.

Fred McClure, author of the foreword of the book and regent to the University System, writes the purpose of the book is to ensure that "the heritage and traditions of the Aggie spirit will be protected and preserved for the generations of Aggies yet unborn."



Dr. Henry Dethloff's book, "Texas A&M University: A Pictorial History," dispels myths about A&M's

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