

TRADITIONS: OLD & NEW

Corps spurs shoes for spirit

By KIMBER HUFF
 THE BATTALION

mine what the spurs will look like. "This is not a strictly-monitored program," Foster said. "As long as they wear them, they're fine."

This week, campus has been more noisy than usual. Blame it on the Corps of Cadets freshmen and their "fish spurs," which are spurs made from painted bottlecaps on wire coat hangers.

Steven Foster, Corps commander and a senior political science major, said freshmen in the Corps have worn "fish spurs" for more than 34 years.

The spurs were originally worn by freshmen for five days before the Southern Methodist University game.

"The idea was to 'spur the Ponies,'" Foster said.

Freshman Lee Doggett, a political science major from outfit A-2, said fish spurs are used to make fun of the other team's mascot.

"It's like saying, 'Even our fish are better than your mascot,'" Doggett said.

To keep the tradition from dying now that Texas A&M and SMU play in separate conferences, freshmen wear the spurs before the Texas Tech game.

Foster said the spurs work just as well with Texas Tech's mascot, the Raider on horseback.

"Their horse has been kind of infamous," Foster said.

Foster said the different outfits deter-

Most spurs are made by crushing bottle caps (some obtained from Bottlecrap Alley), hammering holes in them, stringing them together on a wire coat hanger, and molding the spurs to fit on the fish's shoes. The bottle caps are painted according to the freshman class color. This year, the bottlecaps are red in honor of the Class of 2000.

"We got together as a fish class and made ours," said Company B member Allen Thomson, and a freshman electrical engineering major. "It's a bonding thing."

"I like them," Mike Robinson, Squadron 12 member and a freshman agriculture engineering major. "It's more of a unity thing. Even if it were just my outfit doing it, I'd still want to do it just because it brings everyone closer together."

Some squadrons from the Air Force use their squadron number to determine how many bottlecaps should be on each spur. Most outfits require freshmen to have 100 bottlecaps, also called a "class set."

Upperclassmen will sometimes count the bottlecaps on a freshman's spurs to make sure the freshman is not "pulling out" by using less than 100.

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"It's a bonding thing."
 Allen Thomson, member of Company B



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Tech game anniversary of first yell practice

By MELISSA NUNNERY
 THE BATTALION

When the Aggies took on the Texas Tech Red Raiders in 1932, a Texas A&M tradition was born — yell practice.

A Traditions Council brochure said the first yell practice was formed when a group of cadets spread a rumor telling everyone to meet in front of the YMCA building.

Today, yell practice is more organized. It is led by five yell leaders who are elected by the student body.

Yell practice has been at different places on campus in the past. It has been on the steps of the YMCA building, the Grove, the athletic dorms and Kyle

Field. Now yell practice is held at Kyle Field on Fridays at midnight before home games. Before away games, it is held Thursdays at The Grove.

Joe Fenton, curator of the Sam Houston Sanders Corps of Cadets Center, said the first yell practices resembled events at Ivy League schools.

"It started out with an Ivy League approach with megaphones, but it got away from that," Fenton said.

He said legend explains why yell leaders must be juniors or seniors.

"At football games they (upperclassmen) would send freshmen and sophomores out (on the field) to entertain the dates of the upperclassmen," Fenton said. "The dates thought the underclassmen were so cute that they

were hanging over the railing trying to talk to them."

Fenton said the upperclassmen were upset by their dates paying attention to underclassmen, so they made being a yell leader a senior and junior privilege.

Dr. Joe West, Class of '54 yell leader and former president of the Association of Former Yell Leaders, said one of his favorite memories of yell practice is when Paul "Bear" Bryant, former A&M and Alabama coaching legend, greeted the student body.

"Bear escorted the whole team on the stage (at the Grove) and the head yell leader introduced Bear," West said. "He slid off his tie and threw it out to the

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Rachel Redington, THE BATTALION

Freshmen in the Corps show off their spurs, which are made of bottlecaps and wire.

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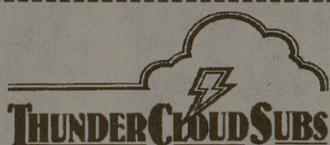
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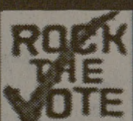
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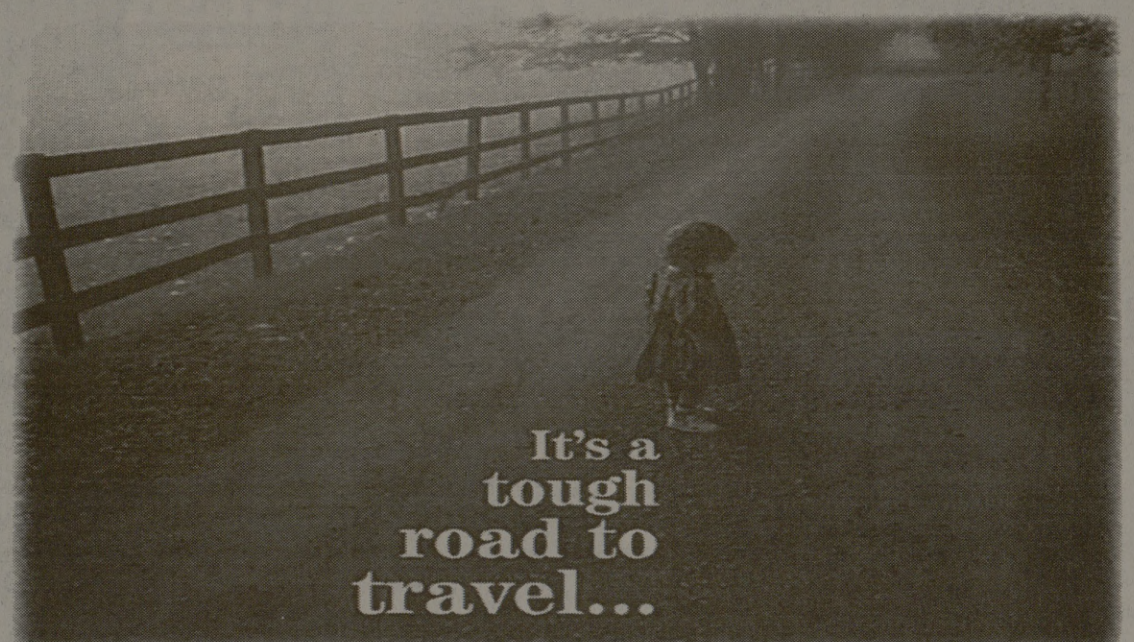
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