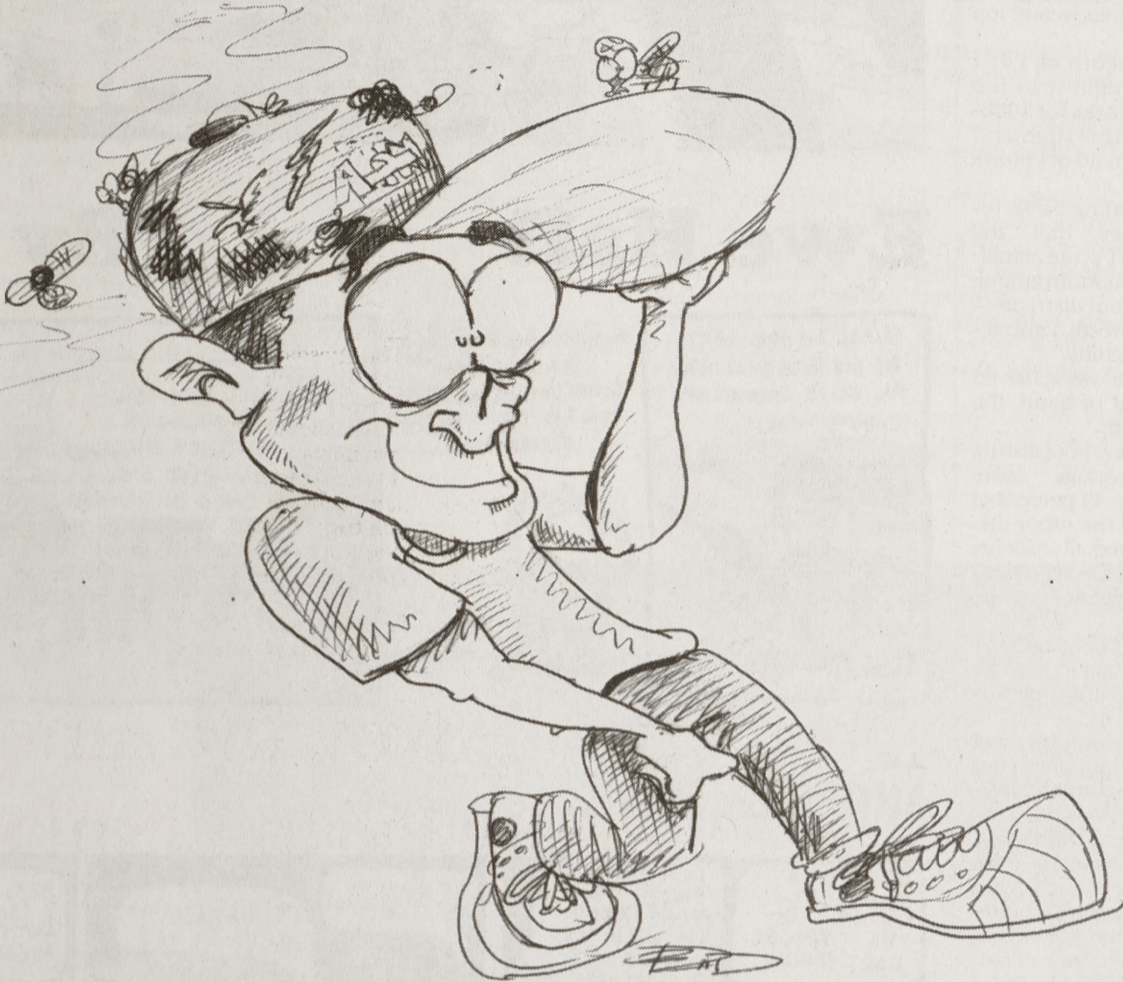


September 18, 1997
Thursday • September 18, 1997

Heads up to hygiene

Campus cap wearers display unsanitary personal upkeep with hat apparel



Mold, mildew and fungus aren't just Taco Bell ingredients anymore; they now roam campus on the filthy, unwashed brims of ratty baseball caps.



DONNY FERGUSON
columnist

Dingy, dirty, cruddy hats may be the only thing more stomach-turning than Victoria's Secret's "Janet Reno Collection." In accordance with an unwritten, universally-understood social contract, cap wearers have a certain responsibility to their collegiate counterparts to maintain a fresh and pleasant item of head wear.

Personal hygiene has never been a college tradition. A secondary education often becomes a four (or five, or six) year hiatus from a daily appointment with Irish Spring, and the use of Color-Safe Tide occurs with the regularity of an Oakland A's win.

Luckily, lapses in hygienic ritual tend not to seriously affect most items of collegiate apparel, but baseball caps are a unique item of clothing. Unlike shirts, they are worn around the head, a part of the human anatomy which tends to get as sweaty and dirty as a Grateful Dead roadie.

But unlike their grime-attracting cousin, underwear, caps are attention-getting items worn on the outside of the body. And given their around eye-level placement, cap crud is more easily identifiable than other laundry-related disorders, such as sweat spots and week-old boxer funk.

Like high taxes and Kathie Lee Christ-

mas Specials, cap crud hurts everyone. From the owner of the afflicted apparel to the disgusted classmate, down to the team, fraternity or event embarrassed by the grimy head wear, everyone suffers when baseball caps turn an unsavory shade of McNugget brown.

Given the widespread effects of dirty baseball caps, it is only a matter of time before Sally Struthers begins churning out a tear-jerking series of "Fight Hat Grime" infomercials, urging viewers to send Clorox and Cheer to needy students at the university of their choice. Owners of the soiled attire would then send their donor letters, drawings and a picture of their freshly washed "Gore 2000 - From the White House to the Jail House" cap.

Whatever the remedy, something must be done to stop the proliferation of putrid caps.

The best course of action is to wash the darn things. Toss them in with the darks and let Maytag do all the work. Judging from the condition of campus' caps, most seem to be permanently planted on individuals' heads, so their temporary removal is understandably difficult.

However, the rights of students to attend classes free of moldy headgear is more important than one's ability to turn his or her white "Texas A&M University Administration - As Seen on '60 Minutes'" hat a Keith Richards-like green.

With the ownership and display of a baseball cap comes certain responsibilities, most importantly, to keep it clean and presentable.

Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.

Block seating at football games isolates Corps from crowd

Segregation is alive and well at Texas A&M University. This segregation, however, isn't being enforced by Jim Crow laws, but by the Athletic Department and the Corps of Cadets.



JOHN LEMONS
columnist

With the start of the 1997 football season, the members of the Corps of Cadets are pulling tickets together in block seating during the first two Aggie football games.

In an experiment that defies convention, the entire Corps of Cadets is being grouped together on the first deck of Kyle Field next to the Aggie Band. Segregating the Corps at football games is a mistake that alienates cadets from other Aggies.

Absolutely, there is some merit to grouping the Corps together at football games. The move allows the Corps to present a unified front. By standing, rooting and yelling together, the Corps can stay secure in its homogeneity. The cost, however, of building unity within the Corps outweighs its benefits.

While grouping the Corps together may be a

great spirit booster for members, it sends an ominous message to the rest of the world. Lining up all of the cadets together in one show of force is reminiscent of the May Day parades that used to occur in the former Soviet Union. In these parades, the Soviets would parade their troops, tanks and missiles to prove their military might.

Although Aggies may occasionally yell "Farmers Fight" at games, showing A&M's military muscle is a bit too aggressive a signal for Aggies to send at Kyle Field.

As if a militaristic demonstration isn't enough, placing the Corps on Kyle Field's first deck isolates the Corps from the rest of campus. There is a friction that already exists between the Corps and non-regs. The new seating arrangement only exacerbates this situation.

There is a perception on campus that Corps members consider themselves to be upper Aggies. That is, many believe the Corps thinks of themselves as the truest Aggies of all.

This perception is only reinforced by commonly-heard phrases that identify the Corps as "keepers of the spirit" and "the heartbeat of Aggieland."

Football games were the only opportunity during a semester that many non-regs had to mingle with Corps members. During the game,

a cadet could stand next to a non-reg and sing "We are the Aggies, the Aggies are we." Now, though, unity among all Aggies has been sacrificed for unity within in the Corps.

If unity among cadets is the paramount concern for the Corps, perhaps the entire Corps should be transferred out to the Riverside Campus. The Corps could live and take all of their classes out there. Then, the Corps would never have to interact with the rest of campus.

Jim Kotch, athletic ticket manager, said 1,972 first deck tickets were sold to Corps members and their guests between Monday and Friday before the Sam Houston game.

"We had second deck tickets on freshman day [Thursday], which is very unusual," Kotch said. "Corps members were out of the second and third decks."

The Corps' exodus off of the second and third decks should be commended on one account — no shaded seats were allocated to the Corps. The Corps generously left these seats open for other students. This, however, does not change the fact that the Corps is occupying the prime real estate of the first deck.

Whether or not these are the best seats in Kyle field is questionable. What is undeniable, though, is that there is a demand for these seats. Many Aggies will go their entire football-

watching career without making it down to the first deck.

Moreover, cadet freshmen who would have been relegated to the third deck are sitting in seats that previously only seniors could hope for. Upperclassmen who were once guaranteed a spot on the second deck will now find themselves making the long haul up to the third deck.

Fortunately, the new seating arrangements are not set in stone. The block seating will be evaluated after this week's game against the University of Southwestern Louisiana to decide if the move is permanent.

The solution to the seating situation is simple — if the Corps insists on sitting together, they can sit in the less than desirable horseshoe or third deck, rather than cheating loyal fans out of the first deck seats they deserve.

However, if the Corps leadership is really interested in unifying the student body, they won't deign to sit among the other students. Segregation in the name of Aggie spirit is still segregation.

After all, anyone who has ever read the letters in the end zones of Kyle field knows Aggies is spelled A-G-G-I-E-S, not C-O-R-P-S.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.



MAIL CALL

Howdy tradition makes A&M friendly

In response to Mandy Cater's Sept. 16 column, "The Howdy Factor:"

Howdy! We, the founders of Howdy Ags felt it was necessary to clear up some misconceptions Mandy Cater has about our organization and what we are trying to accomplish.

Cater states that "The Howdy Council" is "an off-shoot of the ever necessary Traditions Council. First of all, the name of the organization is Howdy Ags, not Howdy Council."

Also, although we will team up with the Traditions Council on some projects, Howdy Ags is a completely independent organization under the Department of Student Activities.

The goal of Howdy Ags is to renew the Aggie spirit and camaraderie of all Ags through the reviving and maintaining of the howdy tradition on our campus.

We plan to do this in fun ways without making any Aggies feel uncomfortable or threatened by the word

"Howdy."

We are not going to be showing howdy down the throats of anyone as the cartoon implied. We would love to see everyone on campus take part in the tradition, but we realize each person has their own choice.

Cater also stated that "some traditions are in need of change" and "howdy is dying for a reason."

Although we agree that some traditions are in need of change, we feel that the howdy tradition is the one that makes A&M the friendliest campus in the world. Without howdy, A&M would be just like any other campus, cold and impersonal.

We could not leave this university without doing something to save a tradition that we feel is so important.

We want to thank the other Aggies that have voiced their support for the howdy tradition. We encourage you to continue to say howdy and help "save the word."

Let's come together and make sure that Texas A&M University remains the friendliest campus in the world for all future generations of Aggies. Whoop!

*Pat Moran
Class of '98*

*Chris May
Class of '98*

*Joe Forman
Class of '98*

Freshman opinion absent from story

In response to the Sept. 12 news story "Corps halls provide housing for civilian women":

I am writing this in response to the above mentioned article. I enjoyed the article, however, a few things puzzled me. I realize that this is a news article and not an editorial opinion, but I believe this writer could have been more inquisitive.

First of all, not one freshman girl living in Kiest or Spence was interviewed, only upper classmen, one being a resident advisor. The majority of residents living in these dorms are freshmen, correct?

Also, five guys were interviewed and only two girls. I myself am one of many freshmen girls living in Kiest, and think that our opinion should have been asked.

Personally, I love living on the Quad. The landscaping is beautiful, and I can see the sunset to the west of Kyle Field every night.

Opinions and statements were given in the article and I think those people should know some things. Karie Fehler wrote that Kenny Jones "approves of women living on the Quad" and Kyle Betty was quoted as saying, "...I really think the Quad should be the Corps'. The whole Corps should live together."

Do Kenny and Kyle realize that we had no choice in the matter and that we were all put here on overassignment? However, I won't get started on the unfairness myself and others have been

given in the matter of student housing. Also, Jonathan Dancy was quoted as saying, "It's nice to see girls, but some of them have signs in their windows saying, 'Want a date?' They put their names and phone numbers on these signs."

It seems kind of desperate to

me." Jonathan forgot to mention that the first floor of Kiest (the Corps staff floor) had a dry erase board with the exact same thing. That seems kind of desperate to me, not the mention all the running around some cadets do on campus to find dates 48 hours before Midnight Yell.

My point is that please get both sides of the issue printed, unless of course, it is an editorial opinion. It does seem that both sides are printed in this article, until a freshman living in Kiest reads it.

*Monique Marrou
Class of '01*

