

Aggie philosophy demands discipline, training

There are many aspects of Texas A&M that have since the beginning been contradictions in Aggie philosophy. A school that historically prides itself on its small-town charm and friendliness is completely at odds with the rest of the world.



DAN CONE
columnist

The world has evolved since the times the beliefs of traditional Aggies were common values. The culture that has developed into the A&M of today is a far cry from the principles upon which it was founded. If Sully were to walk across campus today, he would not believe his eyes.

Aggies can be described in one word: Unique. No other group of people has the same view of the world as Aggies. This outlook has been fostered over decades into a philosophy separate from any other. The typical Ag has been trained to view the world as all other like-minded Ags do.

This uniqueness has over the course of

many years developed into the myth of the "Red-ass Ag." As in any other society, these people represent A&M's pure right-wing element, defining what is morally and socially acceptable in their extremely conservative view. This "true Aggie" has been canonized into the gospel according to A&M.

Being a "True Aggie" requires many years of discipline and training. Few people are able to claim this true prize because of its intense requirements. From birth to death, the "true Ag" has a responsibility to his or her fellow Ags to carry on their mission.

The first and most important factor in being one of the truly holy is a blind and unquestioning devotion to traditions.

To claim "Aggieness," one must know and believe in all Aggie traditions without question. This requirement disqualifies many, since the number and complexity of the traditions are continually expanding.

This problem has forced the founding of a completely separate organization to maintain and update the history of traditions at A&M. The Traditions Council has

made maintaining all A&M traditions its primary goal.

The second prerequisite of true Aggieness requires even more of the individual.

To be a good Ag, one must not only be part of the 12th Man, a person must specialize in one field of endeavor and excel at it. It takes more than purchasing a 12th Man towel — it also requires the proper implementation of said towel. The most accepted and well-received way use is to stand through a game at what could be best described as the temple of the Aggie, Kyle Field. One must pay homage to the gods of football to earn acceptance into the tribe of the Aggies.

This not only requires the proper amount of enthusiasm, but also the proper execution of the commands given by those guys in white, the yell leaders. Yes, A&M is the only school manly enough to have an all-guy cheerleading squad.

This brings us to the third and most physically difficult portion of true Aggieness, alcohol tolerance.

Only the most tough and brave Ags are able to dunk their rings on the first try. It is not surprising that men excel at this skill, since

ladies have been accepted only since the 1960s. The guys have been able to capitalize on this factor, but there is no doubt that in time good female Ags will be able to dunk with the best of them. It takes a few years of tolerance build-up to be able to accomplish a successful dunking, i.e. not digging one's ring out of a pitcher of puke.

It is only after a person has received his or her ring and left Aggieland that the final stage of the process of Aggification can be completed.

To be a true Ag, one must render unto the University what the University values above all else — money. It is only through sending one's firstborn back to this place of learning that one reaches this pinnacle. This process must begin years before the child is born. Joining the Association of Former Students and the 12th Man Foundation begin the process, but even those financial contributions are not enough.

The ultimate accomplishment is to be able to write a too-large check for tuition and whatever fees are included. It is only through the realization of this goal that the cycle will come full circle and one can truly become "Red-ass."

Now, if you find yourself not meeting the requirements to be a true Ag, don't worry. The best part of being an Aggie is the hypocrisy that is at the heart of the faith.

Just because you don't meet the stiff requirements doesn't mean you can't be a true Ag. While Aggies pride themselves on their traditions and history, every member of the tribe is willing to compromise his or her principles. If you still find yourself short of the requirements, even with the hypocrisy clause, be glad.

It is possible to survive A&M without being permanently scarred by the conservative Aggieism, but inevitably everyone who passes through A&M will be changed in some way.

You will either move toward the right and become stagnant in your blind faith A&M is truly the best place on earth or you will take the University for what it is, a place to receive an education and not a mythic center of some backward faith.

Dan Cone is a sophomore economics major.

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