

## Celebrity Skin

### Famous look-alike students handle life with stares, questions for autographs

BY SUSAN OVERCASH  
The Battalion

My new nickname is 'Big Mac,' Matt Ferguson, a senior petroleum engineering major, said. "I think it must be the red and goatee."

No, "Big Mac" Ferguson does not bear a resemblance to Ronald McDonald.

Instead, several students across campus have taken him for celebrity baseball player Mark McGwire.

In November, McGwire broke Roger Maris' home record, hitting 70 home runs in the '97-98 season.

Although Ferguson followed the home-run race, said McGwire is not his favorite player.

His resemblance to the celebrity, however, has won several students to ask for an autograph.

"I was at the Rec Center, and I turned around to a friend, when off to the left this guy said, 'Can I have your autograph?'" Ferguson said, "I looked him in the face and he said, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you were Mark McGwire.' I was laughing pretty hard."

Ferguson is not the only student on campus who resembles a celebrity.

From James van der Beek to Gwyneth Paltrow,

many Aggies said there are perks and quirks that come with being mistaken for a celebrity.

Becky Barker, a junior management information systems major, said she has been mistaken for actress Gwyneth Paltrow on several occasions.

Paltrow made a name for herself through such movies as *Seven*, *Emma* and *Great Expectations*.

"I've had numerous people tell me that I look like her," Barker said. "Especially when her movies come out, and she's in pictures a lot."

A former model, Barker said her 6-foot frame and long blond hair contribute to her resemblance to Paltrow.

Barker said her happy and energetic personality also add to the confusion.

"She seems very happy, and I'm always very happy and hyper," Barker said. "Even though I think that might annoy some people."

Being mistaken for a celebrity is not new to Barker. In high school, many people commented on her resemblance to actress Jodie Foster, star of *Silence of the Lambs* and *Sommersby*.

Barker said being mistaken for Foster was not necessarily a compliment.

"I had a lot of people tell me I looked like her," Barker said. "I had a lot of makeup artists tell me that when I was modeling, but I don't think she's



Clockwise from left to right: **Matt Ferguson** swings as Mark McGwire, **Carl Modesette** is thought to be James Van der Beek, **Becky Barker** raises questions about Gwyneth Paltrow and **Alicia Williams** poses as Mariah Carey

CARIÑO CASAS/THE BATTALION

very pretty."

Actor James van der Beek, star of "Dawson's Creek," has also been spotted around campus, under the guise of Carl Modesette, a sophomore mechanical engineering major.

"People started telling me I looked like him last summer when the show was getting popular," Modesette said. "It's my eyes and my forehead and my hair before I cut it."

Modesette said being mistaken for van der Beek is sometimes a questionable compliment.

"I'm usually flattered; it depends on what people think of the show," Modesette said. "People come up to me and say 'Hey, do you know who you look like?' and I'll be like, 'Is that a good or bad thing?'"

Alicia Williams, a junior mechanical engineering major, said she has been mistaken for a well-known celebrity — Mariah Carey.

"About once a week someone comes up and tells me that I look like her," Williams said. "I don't know why. Maybe my eyes and my forehead."

Carey, the biggest selling female recording artist

of the '90s, is known for her remarkable voice.

Although Williams is not a die-hard fan of Carey, she said she does enjoy singing.

"I like to sing, but I can't," Williams said. "She's a lot more talented than me."

Williams said many people recognize her resemblance to a celebrity, but cannot always remember exactly who.

"They'll walk up to me and say, 'You really look like somebody famous,'" Williams said. "I'll say 'Mariah Carey,' and they'll be like, 'Yeah! Exactly!'"

Regardless of who they are being mistaken for, all students agree being mistaken for someone famous is a bit surprising.

"I was more shocked than flattered," Ferguson said. "But since then, four or five people have told me that I look like him (Van der Beek)."

Although being mistaken for a celebrity may be complimentary, said Ferguson, it has not enhanced his social life.

"Well, being a Mark McGwire look-alike hasn't won me any dates," Ferguson said.

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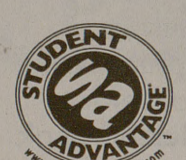
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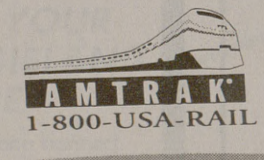
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