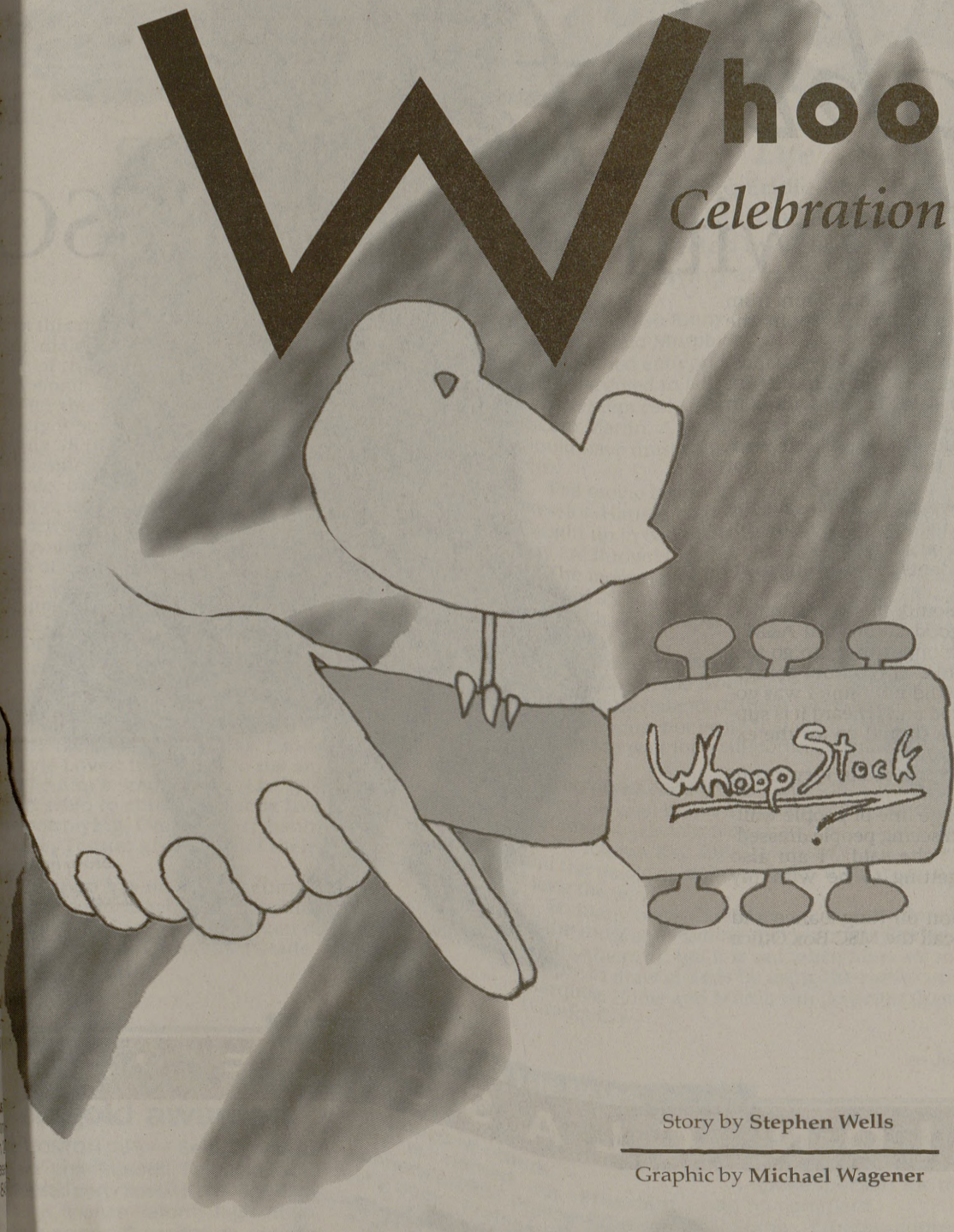


Whoopstock

Celebration of cultural diversity to be held at Simpson Field



Story by Stephen Wells

Graphic by Michael Wagener

Many Aggies accept multicultural programs in the same manner as a child going to the doctor's office to get a flu shot — they know it will be good for them, but they would rather it not be a pain in the, well, arm.

This Saturday on Simpson Drill Field, Whoopstock will be dishing up courses of culture combined with a spoonful of contests and activities to help the multiculturalism go down.

Whoopstock is a relatively new tradition. Holly Doughty, a senior entomology and agricultural development major and chair of Whoopstock, said the first Whoopstock was arranged quickly in response to a rally held by the Ku Klux Klan.

"The first Whoopstock was in 1993," Doughty said. "We started it because there was going to be a KKK rally in the Bryan-College Station area that the organizers thought would bring negative attention to the community. The organizers didn't want a whole lot of people to go to the rally, so they started Whoopstock as an alternative place to go and spend time away from the KKK rally."

In the years since its debut, Whoopstock has grown in popularity.

"In the first year, it got started with just a few people," Doughty said. "The [KKK] rally doesn't have anything to do with it now, but we still see the need to continue to expose the diversity of the students on this campus. The first year was just a really quick get-together with a few people and musical groups. Now it takes a year and a lot of people to plan."

For those who have questions to ask about another culture or simply want to experience another culture, Whoopstock creates a relaxed atmos-

phere.

"Attitudes on campus have gotten much better," Doughty said. "I've been involved with Whoopstock since I was a sophomore and I'm a fifth year senior now, but I've really seen it grow. I think more people realize the need to see another culture, but they are afraid to ask a question because they are nervous they might offend somebody or look dumb. This is a chance for people to come and ask those questions without being afraid of those things."

Students will not suffer from a lack of things to do during the festival. Throughout the day, students will be entertained by musical acts, step routines, acts from 'Magination Station, the High Youth Group of Bryan and demonstrations from various A&M student organizations.

In between acts, students can enter a six man volleyball tournament or create a wax sculpture. There will also be a coloring contest for children, mehndi art from the Hindu Student Association and a cricket spitting contest put on by the Entomology Club.

Hungry students can sample foods from around the globe as well as the standard festival fare like cotton candy.

Ryan Searight, activities director for Whoopstock and a sophomore agricultural journalism major, said the day's activities will be light on the pocketbook.

"Most of the stuff people can do and the contests they can enter are free," Searight said. "Except for the face painting and concessions, students can have a day of activities for no money at all. Even for the stuff you pay for, nothing will be more than \$1.50."

Students have found Whoopstock a relaxing way to pass the time dur-

ing the most stressful period of the school year. Jamal Walsh, a junior electrical engineering major, said students should attend Whoopstock to eliminate pre-finals stress.

"Last year, we stumbled across Whoopstock on the way to the library to finish up on a project," Walsh said. "So, on the way back from doing the work, we decided we needed to spend some time relaxing. We asked the people at Whoopstock what was going on, and could we come in. We just sat there on the grass drinking Coke and listened to music for a couple of hours forgetting about the stress of that final project. It helped me relax a lot."

In addition to the volleyball tournament, strength tests and face painting will go on all day. There will also be a japapeno eating contest. Other possibilities for entertainment include a suitcase race, a three-legged race a joust and a bunjee run. Two autographed Big 12 footballs will also be given away.

"Most people just walking by from their dorms, see the festival and decide to stay and enjoy it," Doughty said. "They can set out some beach towels or chairs and just take in the sun while they listen to good music all day. We're not here to press our thoughts on anybody. We want people to come and experience another culture on their own and enjoy themselves."

Students may just make a new friend by attending Whoopstock.

"We need more events like this," Searight said. "My roommate got me involved and I've liked meeting new people so much I've stayed with it. We need to interact with each other more, especially with people who we might not get to talk to every day. I've met the coolest people from the coolest places at Whoopstock."

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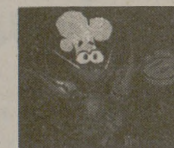
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