

Some may boast...

Students should take advantage of all that A&M has to offer

Texas A&M is a unique place. Some, especially those 90 miles to the West, might find it odd. That's fine, because Aggies certainly are different. A deep sense of school pride and a respect for tradition has developed since the founding of Texas' first public institution of higher learning on Oct. 4, 1876.



JONATHAN JONES

Much has changed since then, but those fortunate enough to be associated with the school share a sense of belonging with their fellow students and those who came before them — the Aggie bond is very real. This was abundantly clear when A&M was thrust into the national spotlight after the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. The people that make up this institution are special because they care so much about their own.

A&M has much to offer. Compared to private institutions, the quality of education comes at a bargain price. In addition, the "other education" offers exciting opportunities to be a part of something larger. Take advantage, because this stage of life passes all too fast.

A&M is one of the few schools to hold federal land grant, sea grant and space grant designations. It is the fourth largest in the nation, with more than 44,000 students. The school also has a large amount of open land that allows for new buildings and development.

This is a luxury most land-locked colleges do not have, including the University of Texas-Austin. The \$3.7 billion endowment ranks among the top ten of all universities in the United States, and the resources and opportunities here are among the best in the nation.

The chance to develop leadership skills should not be overlooked. A&M has the largest student-union program in the nation, with more than 700 clubs and organizations. Memorial Student Center Open House, held the first Sunday after school starts, showcases the wealth of opportunity for involvement.

A&M is also one of the few schools in the nation to have the prestigious honor of affiliation with a president. The George Bush Library and Presidential Center on campus allows for the occasion to host events and programs that other schools can only dream of, including former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev last spring.

Many of the traditions at A&M foster the sense of camaraderie. Silver Taps dates from 1898, with the death of former A&M President and Texas Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross.

When a current student passes away, their final tribute is held on the first Tuesday of the following month. The lights of campus dim, hymns chime from Albritton Tower and people silently fill the area by Ross' statue. Buglers play "Taps" three times from the dome of the Academic Building but not to the East as the sun will never rise on that Aggie again.

Muster, held every April, is celebrated in more than four hundred places around the world wherever Aggies gather to remember their own. Roll is called, and a member of the Aggie family answers "here" for the absent. The largest Muster ceremony, held in College Station, is a moving event that embodies commitment, dedication and friendship — the Aggie Spirit.

The March 1923 issue of Texas Aggie magazine encouraged, "If there is an A&M man in 100 miles of you, you are expected to get together, eat a little and live over the days you spent at the A&M College of Texas."

Take advantage of the leadership

opportunities, chances to get involved, meeting new people and participating in the rich traditions of the school. The 12th Man, for example, unites students and makes Kyle Field a very intimidating place to play.

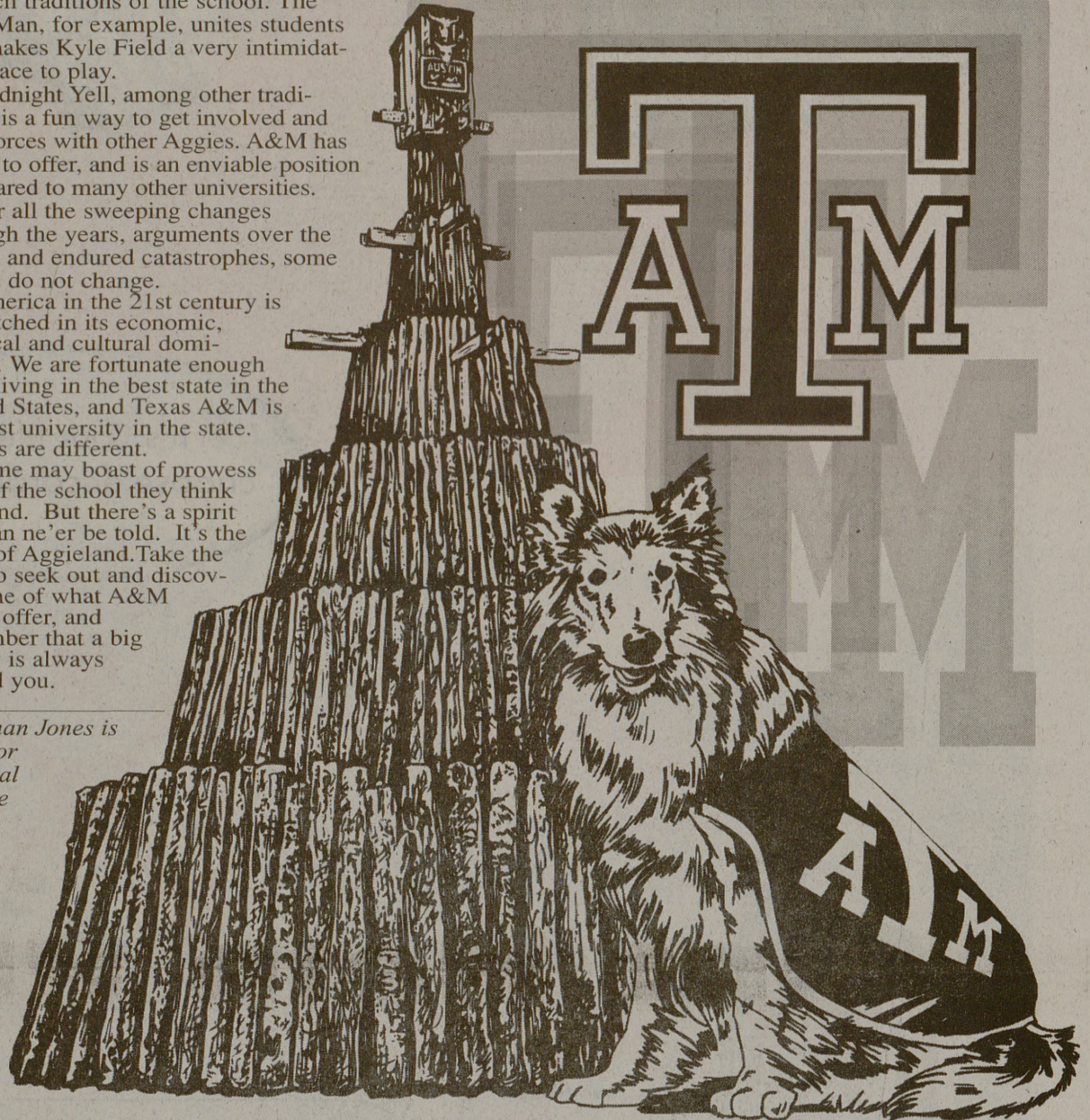
Midnight Yell, among other traditions, is a fun way to get involved and join forces with other Aggies. A&M has much to offer, and is an enviable position compared to many other universities.

For all the sweeping changes through the years, arguments over the future and endured catastrophes, some things do not change.

America in the 21st century is unmatched in its economic, political and cultural dominance. We are fortunate enough to be living in the best state in the United States, and Texas A&M is the best university in the state. Aggies are different.

Some may boast of prowess bold of the school they think so grand. But there's a spirit that can ne'er be told. It's the spirit of Aggieland. Take the time to seek out and discover some of what A&M has to offer, and remember that a big family is always behind you.

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NO MORE TICKET AND TOW

Official move-in day must change

The Department of Resident Life (ResLife) and Transportation Services (PTTS) initiatives to assist parents and students during "probably better move-in are well-intentioned but fall short of student needs considering ongoing campus construction projects. As thousands of freshmen and returning students arrive on campus to move to their residence halls, ResLife and PTTS are making life tougher than necessary.

The official freshman move-in day is today, but this one day is not enough. Today, parking service officers direct traffic, provide information and implement programs designed to ease the transition. But many parents and students have chosen to arrive earlier this week, and are unfairly paying for it. Some have been subjected to parking tickets and towing. It is necessary for parents who are helping

their children move in to be able to park in areas that normally would be ticketed after school has started. Some must come on Sunday, the first day campus dorms open, because work schedules make taking time off during the week difficult. To ticket and tow the cars of parents and students who are moving into campus housing is not the proper way to welcome Aggies back to school.

Unfortunately, one could easily get the impression that PTTS targets vehicles in an effort to increase revenue and fill its coffers. With construction of the West Campus Parking Garage, traveling around campus has been made more difficult and time-consuming. Wellborn Road has been narrowed to two lanes, and some roads are closed.

It is understandable if some wish to get a head start and arrive as soon as the dorms are available.

ResLife should encourage parents and students to move into campus housing beginning on Sunday and continue through this Wednesday or perhaps until the end of the week. And PTTS should not target those vehicles illegally parked near residence halls. The official move-in day should, in fact, last at least half-a-week. This way, coordinated efforts to introduce and assist parents and new students to residence hall life is extended beyond just one day. In light of the construction around A&M and the large number of on-campus residents, student needs must be the top priority of future initiatives for official move-in periods.

This time should extend beyond just one day in the middle of the week and should begin on Sunday. Aggieland is a friendly place, but this week has been unfairly and unnecessarily unwelcoming to some parents and students.

Lost Parental Control

About 15 years ago, the media industry entered into new territory when the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, a non-profit coalition of communication professionals, addressed the issue of drug tolerance across the nation. Other organizations jumped on the bandwagon as they aired commercials about a variety of issues including sex, peer pressure and smoking.

Now, the media industry has taken on new responsibility. They have taken on the task of raising children. Partnership for a Drug-Free America currently airs a commercial where children criticize their parents' rules and then ends with a "Thanks." Words such as, "I snuck out, and you caught me," have monopolized the air waves. The media is redefining parents' role as the disciplinarian. The commercial has a good motive, but it should not be necessary to reaffirm the parental role and urge parents to take responsibility for their children's actions. This commercial is not necessary to spark parental initiative.

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Leonard Pitts, a columnist from the Miami Herald, explains that these commercials are an attempt to redefine a parent's job description by encouraging them to snoop, police and interrogate their children. He suggests children have a "misplaced sense of entitlement," and the parents are to blame. This, he explains, began with the "War" Generation raising the Baby Boomers.

Pitts explains, "Where our folks were restrictive, we were permissive; where they judged, we were nonjudgmental and where they gave orders, we negotiated."

Now the effects are being seen, and parents have lost control. Baby Boomers are now parents, and as children, they promised themselves they would not be as overbearing as their parents were to them. Instead they have strived to be co-equals and being a co-equal leaves little room for discipline.

Financial discomfort has dictated parents' roles.



CAYLA CARR

Parents have become consumed with keeping up with the wealth of society and have lost sight of their children's needs. They have indulged their children with material things to pacify concerns.

A Time-CNN poll found that 80 percent of people think kids today are more spoiled than kids of 10 or 15 years ago. Divorce, peer pressure and career responsibilities have contributed to this materialism. Time reports that today's prosperity is a result of parents working longer hours than they ever have. Parents who are so involved in careers tend to have less time to spend with their children and resolve to buy things to take their place.

Divorced parents are likely to compete with the other spouse and indulge children. A lot of parents are oblivious to how to deal with peer pressure and end up buying their child whatever it takes for them to "fit in." Time emphasizes that "advertising targets children as never before. These days, \$3 billion is spent annually on advertisement that is directed at kids." Time also reports that in 1984, children were responsible for \$50 billion of parent purchases. The figure is expected to be \$300 billion by next year.

The advancement in technology also has been a large factor in the loss of parental censorship. Talking computer games can teach children to read and write. Nintendo 64 and Sony Playstation develop hand-eye coordination and reasoning, and the Internet and television can serve as entertainment.

Parents have succumbed to these luxuries and allowed toys to take their place, while they do other things. Children have grown accustomed to technology while parents feel inferior to technology as knowledgeable learning resources. But technology will not teach children values.

Parents who do not take the initiative as disciplinarians are only setting themselves up for failure in the future. Children cannot be given adequate attention by material possessions. The parental figure is a vital part of a child's life and without a good example they will not learn the wisdom that only parents can teach.

Pitts sums up the role of a parent, "If they earned our scorn, our impatience and our criticism, maybe we should admit that they also earned one thing we never truly gave. Our gratitude."

This may be the motive of the Partnership for a Drug Free America's commercial, but parents should not have to be reassured of their instinctive parental obligation to discipline.

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