

Polynesian parties add punch

By GWEN HAM

Battalion Reporter

"Come on and go Hawaiian" sounds like a Donny and Marie fruit punch commercial ... not a trend. Maybe it's both.

Bulletin boards, dorm halls and other sources of social information are papered this fall with notices and invitations of luaus, Polynesian parties and other fraternizations-of-the-South Seas.

Fraternities seem to be of the opinion that rush without the luau is worse than owning a shirt without the alligator. Even though they seem to be in vogue, most sorority and fraternity rush chairmen are quick to refute any claim that Hawaiian parties are the new fad.

"I don't think there is a trend in luaus this fall with us," Charlie Weber of Kappa Alpha said. "We had one last year and we've had a couple before that. It's just that they're so easy to do. Everyone has a Hawaiian shirt and a pair of shorts."

"This is our third luau — we haven't noticed any trend. They've been around for a couple of years," Billy Howard of Delta Tau Delta said.

Maybe things are different for sororities. Robin Resslering of Alpha Delti Pi said there was a definite trend.

"I think maybe the bright Hawaiian print clothes that came out this summer had an influence," she said. "We planned our rush with a Spanish theme but realized how much easier a Hawaiian party would be since everybody had the appropriate clothes. Maybe the revival in the Beach Boys had something to do with it too."

The goal in planning rush parties is not to have a luau, but to have the luau. Some go all out trying to have the biggest and the best.

"Every year gets better and better," Sigma Phi Epsilon member Britt Harris said about their fourth annual luau held Saturday. A

week's worth of work seemed to impress the almost 500 guests.

One could almost picture Don Ho could serenading from the windows of the house as guests pulled into the driveway. Passing under an archway of bamboo, visitors stepped through the door to be presented with a lei as they viewed a Hawaiian scene painted on a king size sheet by member Jay Ervin.

Making their way into the backyard, a bar serving luau punch in coconuts and a bamboo hut were illuminated by tiki torches.

What's Hawaii without a blue lagoon? Sig Eps filled a lagoon with dyed-blue water and hauled in truck loads of sand to be spread around to form a beach. A pier was constructed leading halfway over the water.

Roasted pig, pineapples and girls in grass skirts help make the Delta luau an unforgettable event, Howard said.

Donny and Marie were lacking at the Alpha Delta luau in body but not

in spirit. Making their own lyrics to the punch commercial, Resslering said everyone sang to make the atmosphere more Hawaiian. Stuffed parrots, tropical fruits and flowers, a Hawaiian slide show and palm trees made of burlap adorned the house.

Pineapple sales seem to have picked up this year according to local supermarkets. Produce managers said, though, that the sale of other tropical fruits has remained about the same as always.

Where there is a fad, if it is a fad, there is usually a profit to be made somewhere. That's where clothiers carrying Hawaiian beach-look wear got lucky this summer.

Whether the sale of Hawaiian clothes went up because of luaus or whether luaus increased due to the

current fashion trend of Hawaiian clothes is a difficult question to answer.

"The doors have just been blown off with these things (print shirts!)" said Tim Jones of Top Drawer. "We've just had people coming in all summer asking what kind of beach-look clothes we had. A lot of them said they were going to Hawaiian parties."

"We had to place three back orders for the print shirts because we just hadn't anticipated this big of a trend," Jones continued.

Several fraternity spokesmen said if there is a trend in parties, it is probably South of the Border gatherings complete with livestock and hay bales. The question is, will Donny and Marie change from fruit punch to tequila commercials?



Photo by Dave Einsel

Russ Milam and Cheryl Tielke having a good time at the Sigma Phi Epsilon rush party.

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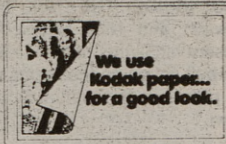
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