

Local

Residence halls fight money loss, 'dorm apathy'

By DIANE FLETCHER
Battalion Reporter
Unlike most university dorms, Texas A&M University's residence halls provide educational, social and recreational activities for their residents — 11,000 on-campus Aggies.

But not everyone is taking advantage of these opportunities. Optional activity fees and competing interest groups have led some students to shop elsewhere. The fear here is that this new environment may be becoming an ideal breeding ground for what many call dorm apathy.

Before the 1979-1980 school year, activity fees within the halls were mandatory. These activity fees, which are now about \$15 per semester, were collected before a student was given the key to his room. The fee entitled him to all hall-sponsored activities such as mixers, formals, barbecues, ice cream parties and contests.

Roger Ferguson, former assistant coordinator for the North Area, explained why the fee became optional.

"It was brought to our attention that to require everyone to pay an activity fee was unethical and possibly even illegal," he said.

"The policy was changed not so much for the legal aspect as the ethical aspect. We were trying to allow for different strokes for different folks."

One effect of the optional activity fee is that it has decreased the amount of money the halls have to work with.

Dana Kirkhofer, 1981-82 president of Fowler Hall, described the optional activity fee as "less revenue and more apathy."

Dunn Hall resident Jay Clingman said, "A lot of dollars are lost by the people who don't pay, therefore, decreasing the amount of money which can be used in various activities."

Some residents believe the optional activity fee has also hurt participation in hall activities.

David Davis, a resident adviser in Moore Hall, said apathy is a real problem. "I think it cuts down on participation," he said, "because for some, the only incentive to participate is to get a return on their investment — which they don't have to make in the first place now."

The effect of the optional activity fee on hall participation varies as do the individual personalities of the residence hall councils.

"It (the optional activity fee) has only hurt the residence halls that do not have a program," Moses Hall resident adviser Glenn Starr said.

However, optional activity fees do have one advantage: they provide an extra incentive to hall councils, the individual programming bodies within each dorm, to

provide better programs for the number of residents paying activity fees.

Jim Avioli, 1980-81 treasurer of Moses Hall, said the percentage of students paying activity fees in Moses Hall dropped from 100 percent (when optional fees were mandatory) to 80 percent during the past school year.

"The hall councils now realize they must sell their programs," Ferguson said.

Many on-campus students believe that growth of sororities and fraternities, although not officially recognized by the University, has hurt dorm participation.

Ken Roberts, a 1980-81 Residence Hall Association delegate from Dunn Hall, said sororities and fraternities definitely have hurt hall activities and RHA participation.

"They take away manpower, unity and participation from hall activities," he said. "They also take up time, time that might ordinarily be directed to the dorm."

1980-81 Hart Hall President Mike Echols said: "Sororities and fraternities take residents from dorm activities, put them in a closer circle of people and have their own events."

John Aven, a member of a fraternity and a resident adviser for Moses Hall, disagrees. "If you think about it, dorms in actuality are a large fraternal organization," he said.

"Many distinct similarities exist between the dorm and my fraternity, therefore, making participation in both enjoyable."

Fraternity member Robert Thompson said: "Being in a fraternity has made me more aware of the importance of dorm activities."

"Many Greeks that I know have become more involved in their dorms after going Greek."

Many students believe the key to increasing dorm participation is finding a way to motivate and inform residents.

Sally Sandlin of Briggs Hall said involving as many people as possible in planning hall activities might increase participation. Cindy Heep, a resident of Fowler Hall, said a phone committee could keep residents informed of upcoming activities.

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| Day | Activity | Dates | Time | Price |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|
| MONDAY | Beg. Cross Stitch | Sept. 21 - Oct. 12 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$12.00 |
| | Bike Repair | Sept. 28 - Oct. 5 | 6:30 - 9:30 | \$ 9.00 |
| | Cake Decorating | Oct. 19 - Nov. 16 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Matting & Framing | Sept. 28 - Oct. 12 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$ 9.00 |
| | Off Loom Weaving | Oct. 19 - Nov. 16 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Quilting | Sept. 21 - Oct. 12 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$12.00 |
| | Silkscreen | Nov. 2 - Nov. 23 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$12.00 |
| TUESDAY | Stained Glass Suncatchers | Sept. 21 - Oct. 12 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$12.00 |
| | Beg. Calligraphy | Nov. 10 - Dec. 8 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Glass Etching | Oct. 13 - Oct. 27 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$ 9.00 |
| | *Glaze Making Seminar | Oct. 27 & Nov. 10 | 7:pm - 10:pm | \$ 7.50 |
| | Stained Glass Panels (A) | Sept. 22 - Oct. 20 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Stained Glass Panels (B) | Oct. 27 - Nov. 24 | 7:pm - 10:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Watercolor Painting | Sept. 22 - Nov. 24 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$30.00 |
| WEDNESDAY | Landscape Painting with Acrylics | Sept. 30 - Nov. 18 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$24.00 |
| | Macrame | Sept. 23 - Oct. 21 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Macrame Hanging Tables | Oct. 28 - Nov. 18 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$12.00 |
| | Pinecone Wreaths | Nov. 4 - Nov. 18 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$ 9.00 |
| | Intro. Watercolor Painting | Sept. 23 - Oct. 28 | 7:30 - 10:pm | \$27.00 |
| THURSDAY | Basic Woodworking | Sept. 24 - Oct. 29 | 6:pm - 8:pm | \$15.00 |
| | Glass Etching | Sept. 24 - Oct. 1 | 6:30 - 9:30 | \$ 9.00 |
| | Intro. Pottery | Sept. 24 - Nov. 12 | 7:30 - 9:30 | \$24.00 |
| | Pencil Sketching | Sept. 24 - Nov. 12 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$24.00 |
| | Silkflower Arrg. | Sept. 24 - Oct. 8 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$ 9.00 |
| | Silkflower Wallhangings | Oct. 15 - Oct. 29 | 7:pm - 9:pm | \$ 9.00 |
| | Stained Glass Suncatchers | Nov. 5 - Dec. 3 | 7:30 - 9:30 | \$12.00 |
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