



Basement begins new concert season

By LEIGH-ELLEN CLARK
Staff Writer

Time: Friday night, September 7, 1984. About 7 p.m.

Place: Rumours, fun spot behind the MSC Post Office with dance floor and munchies.

Cast of Characters: Four Hams on Rye, a rockabilly band.

The Enthusiastic Crowd, who paid only \$3 cover.

MSC Basement Committee, who made all of this possible.

The work behind the fun of a Basement Committee-sponsored concert at Texas A&M starts months before the lights are dimmed and the crowd wakes up.

The purpose of the Basement Committee is to bring entertainment to campus and give Committee members training in organizing concerts and other types of productions. Students are involved from beginning to end and sometimes even play talent scout.

The Committee members are a varied group of music and entertainment enthusiasts who go to clubs in Bryan/College Station, Houston and Austin and keep their eyes and ears open for groups that would please an Aggie crowd.

"Sometimes they go right up to the band members at the club and tell them what the committee does and see if they (the band) might be interested in playing here on campus," Tom Reinarts, student chairman of the Basement Committee says.

The member comes back to the Basement cubicle in the Student Programs Office to spread the word about the group. Phone calls are made to "officially" contact the band and request a demo tape, album or single. When the demo arrives, it's passed around among members or played at a committee meeting for the general consensus of the group. This is the first of a line of approvals that will be met before the band ever sees the campus.

"If everyone agrees, then we talk money and concert date with the band — that's the hardest part," Reinarts says. The Basement is funded by approximately \$5,000 from student service fees and \$24,000 generated from ticket sales.

"We're here to provide entertainment that the students can afford to see without the ridiculous cover prices off-campus," Reinart says.

An oral agreement is reached

and work begins on a contract. "Usually the standard fill-in-the-blank contract is used but occasionally groups or artists, especially the bigger ones, have their own contract or an addendum to ours."

Jim Reynolds, director of the Memorial Student Center, puts the final approval on the contract. "This is usually a rubber stamp process for the smaller groups that use our contract form," Reinarts says. "The approval is necessary to protect the University just in case there is a problem."

Now the show is under contract and on the schedule.

About 25 students directly are involved in the production of each show. A producer is selected from the committee; he's in charge of making everything click. Public relations gets rolling with posters, advertisement placement and "getting the word out." Although a chairman is selected for this job, everyone gets in on the act.

A hospitality chairman is selected to make the band members comfortable once they arrive on campus.

"The hospitality person takes care of directions to the campus. Most of the groups get lost anyway. But after they do get here, he plays host and feeds them snacks and drinks in the dressing room — if it's in the contract," Reinarts says.

Students set up the sound and light equipment on the day of the concert. "This is good training ground for those interested in this kind of work," Reinarts says. They can just show up at the Basement cubicle in the Student Programs Office in the MSC and say, "I want to help." There is no fee and no interview to be a member of Basement.

"We have a varied membership, bounded by a common interest in music and other kinds of entertainment. It's a fun bunch of people and everyone can fit in," Reinarts says.

Finally, assuming all has gone well and the band isn't lost, the house lights go down and the volume is cranked up.

"All concert preparations have goof-ups because we're students and not professionals — but that's how we learn," Reinarts said. "But once the show starts and problems are behind us, it's time to sit and enjoy."

Chances are, the committee members are the happiest on the dance floor.