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Student Senate members are challenged

By JEFF L. BRADY
Staff Writer

New student legislators were welcomed into office at Wednesday night's Student Senate meeting and were challenged to tackle the responsibilities of student leadership.

"I don't think there's any student body anywhere in the country that does as much or is as effective as the one here at A&M," said Student Senate Advisor Dr. Carolyn Adair.

"I can tell you it is really a tremendous body," she said.

The Senate gathering this week served as more of an informal welcome session than a business meeting. Senators introduced themselves and heard short speeches by each of the new executive vice presidents.

Student Body President Sean Royall congratulated the new senators and a reminder of what is expected of them.

"In the future you will have the opportunity to take responsibility," he said. "But no one is going to force you to do anything."

Royall outlined two fundamental challenges he would like to see next year's Senate accept — one internal and one external.

Within the Senate, he challenged senators to get to know one another better now in order to work smoothly and effectively next year.

Outside the Senate, Royall said senators have their work cut out for them in proving Student Government's capabilities.

"Student Government has an image problem," he said. "I think we need to prove to the students that we can be effective."

The only business conducted was the approval of a bill advocating that apartment complex landlords protect tenants' security deposits.

The bill, rushed through on emergency status, supports state legislation requiring landlords to put deposits in a special escrow account.

This would keep the funds from being lost in cases of bankruptcy.

Royall also reminded senators that elections for speaker of the senate and speaker pro tem will be held at the next general meeting, April 24.

Around town

Spirit award presented Sunday

The Buck Weirus Spirit Award presentation ceremony will be held at the Rudder Auditorium on Sunday at 9 a.m. Applicants for Spirit Awards will not be notified that they have been selected and must be present at the ceremony.

Roadrunners schedule run to Austin

The Texas A&M Roadrunner's Club will be holding a Relay Run to Austin on Saturday. Donations or pledges per mile will be accepted to support the Village of Hope in Colombia. For information and details, call Joe Willcox at 696-2417.

Business fraternity presents speaker

Alpha Kappa Psi, a national and professional business fraternity presents Dr. Tom Cannon from the Department of Business Studies at the University of Stirling, Stirling Scotland, to speak on International Business at 8:30 p.m. in 342 Zachry. Business attire is required and anyone interested is welcome.

Sailing club holds regatta

If you need something to do this weekend while your parents are visiting or if they are not visiting and everyone has left you stranded, come to Lake Somerville on Saturday. The TAMU Sailing Club is holding a windsurfing regatta at Yegua Park beginning at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome to come and cheer them on.

Townhall applications due soon

MSC Townhall applications for committee membership for the 1985-86 season are now available at 216 MSC and are due by 5 p.m. on April 19. Those applying should plan to attend an informational meeting on April 16 at 8:30 p.m. in 301 Rudder.

City of Bryan offers classes and jobs

The Bryan Parks and Recreation Department is offering the following classes: Water Safety Instructor on April 20, 9 a.m.-noon; Advanced Life Saving on April 15, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. and SCUBA on April 22, 6:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Also, applications are now being accepted for the following positions: lifeguard, water safety monitor, pool supervisor and cashier. Applications may be picked up at the Bryan Aquatic Center behind Bryan High School. For more information concerning the classes and jobs, call 779-3341.

Mothers' clubs hold craft sale

The Federations of Mothers' Clubs Boutique will be held on Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and on Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., in Rudder Exhibit Hall. Mothers' clubs from around the state will be selling various crafts and homemade items.

**Girl shares experiences
reason for killing family**

By WADE WILSON
Reporter

She is young, attractive, intelligent and currently serving two counts of murder with the Texas Youth Commission.

Except for her direct, penetrating stare, she might be one of hundreds of young women at the local high school, the proverbial girl-next-door.

But hers is not the stare of a 16-year-old.

"I killed my parents, my real father and stepmother, because of sexual, physical and mental abuse," she said after introducing herself.

Only at this point does that unwavering stare break momentarily from her audience and fasten on her tightly clasped hands. However, her voice remains steady.

"How I killed them I don't know, because I had never used a handgun before in my life," Shawna (not her real name) said. "It was my stepmother's. I had seen her use it and I knew she kept it loaded a lot of times."

Shawna, along with four other juvenile offenders, spoke to Texas A&M students in three sociology classes March 25.

"The time I went to do it I knew that if I missed, it would be me," she said with a slight shake of her shoulder length blonde hair. "So either way it went, one of us would end up dead. So it didn't matter."

All five of the youths are serving sentences at Giddings State School, a state institution that houses only violent offender youths.

Violent offender youths are juveniles who commit violent crimes against other people, the accompanying community services director explained.

Even though Shawna has served 18 months at Giddings and has at least seven months more to go before it's possible for her to be released, she said she is satisfied with her sentence, and even asked for it.

"They had no proof that I did kill them," she said. "All they had was

my confession saying I did it. They had no weapon, no witness or anything."

But Shawna maintains that she should be punished.

"No one has the right to take another person's life," she said.

Her hand moved constantly as she spoke and her stare softened, indicating that her earlier calm had been nervousness and not the coldness that it had seemed at first.

Shawna said that she had been severely beaten by her father and stepmother the night of the shooting.

"I was pretty close to dead the night I was arrested for killing them," she said. "I had lost a lot of blood."

"The police officer who picked me up thought I had been in some kind of gang fight or something. It was either them or me."

Shawna was first raped by her father when she was 2 years old. Her parents divorced when Shawna was 7 years old, after it was discovered that her father had sexually abused her and two other sisters.

However, her family problems did not end at that point. At age 9 she ran away from her mother and was missing for several months.

"My sisters and I gave her a lot of pressure and she started drinking and became alcoholic," she said, explaining why she ran away.

Several months later, authorities found Shawna and sent her to live with her father. The sexual abuse began again, she said. But now, her stepmother participated in the physical and mental, if not sexual, abuse, Shawna said.

Shawna ran away from her father twice instead of telling anyone about the abuse because she was afraid someone would accuse her of seducing him, or that he would fulfill his threat to hurt someone she loved, Shawna said. But she no longer hesitates to tell people about her childhood problems.

Shawna not only talks about her childhood, but seems eager to discuss her past, present and future. Talking appears to be a release valve

for her now, but it was not that way.

"One time all the fingers on my hand were broken," she said.

"People would ask me what was wrong but I would try so hard to tell them but I couldn't get it out."

She did tell her school's social worker, but was turned away.

"I started to tell her about it but she got all pale-faced in there. 'Oh, God, this little girl is hurting me,'" she said. "She sent me to the principal thinking I was playing head games with her."

Shawna admitted that she did have a problem telling the truth.

"I became sort of like a habit liar," she said. "It was easier for me to lie than tell the truth about anything. Once you start telling truth, people can be real hard on you."

For the most part, Shawna is positive about where she is now. And she believes she has learned something at Giddings.

"The main thing I have learned since I've been here is how to live with things," she said. "Instead of running from problems, I stay to face them and talk about them and get them out in the open. People can help me with them. I had had someone to talk to before I knew the things I know now. If I did it, I would not have killed them."

Her voice shakes slightly as she speaks of her need to talk about her problems. It is clear that she has learned from other high school students mainly in the circumstances surrounding her upbringing, not her personality.

When speaking of the present, she is no different than those of the girl-next-door. Considering the problems currently surfacing in the areas of child abuse and molestation, Shawna is one of the many girls-next-door.

But she is confident that her future will be better than her past.

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ONLY ELVIS
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THEY'LL NEVER
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