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A&M students celebrate Dia de los Muertos

Mexican 'Day of the Dead' used to honor the souls of departed loved ones

By Stephanie Dube
THE BATTALION

Mexican American students honored the souls of the dead as part of the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration on Wednesday.

The Committee for Awareness of Mexican American Culture (CAMAC), sponsored a Dia de los Muertos program to discuss the Mexican holiday.

The program included a speech concerning the celebration's significance, slides commemorating the day, and concluded with a small reception of cultural food and punch. The meeting attracted over 200 visitors.

David Hamada, a member of CAMAC, explained the significance of Dia de los Muertos. "The Mexican perception of death is different from what we're used to," Hamada said. "The day is a union of the fiesta and death, honoring the souls of the departed

with a celebration."

Dia de los Muertos is celebrated on Nov. 2 and is a national holiday in Mexico, Hamada said. The holiday is a cross between Catholic's All Saint's Day and Aztec rituals, he said.

"This day gives us an opportunity to mock something that is usually dreaded," Hamada said.

The holiday provides an opportunity for people to avoid taking life too seriously and avoid taking death too harshly. During this celebration, people may bring flowers, food and candles to cemeteries for a picnic, present offerings to the dead and eat food honoring the holiday, such as dead bread.

CAMAC offered dead bread at the program, which is bread baked into the shape of humans, Hamada said.

Christine Vasquez, chair of CAMAC, said CAMAC the Dia de los Muertos is only one of the many programs the organization has planned for the upcoming year.

On Nov. 30, CAMAC will hold Las Posadas, Vasquez said. Las Posadas is a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, she said.

"It will begin at All Faiths Chapel and end at the Grove, provided it doesn't rain," Vasquez said.

CAMAC will also have Fall and Spring cookouts and a conference in the Spring, she said.

The conference, which is ex-

pected to attract at least 400 people, will focus on issues of the Latino community, Vasquez said.

Vasquez said CAMAC's theme for this year is "Unidos Tru. Foremos: Making Tomorrow Today" or "United Will Triumph."

Anthony Martinez, vice-chair for CAMAC, said this theme focuses on the various issues the Latino community faces.

"This day gives us an opportunity to mock something that is usually dreaded."
— David Hamada, CAMAC member

Corrections

An incorrect date for the Texas A&M Muslim Students' Association's panel discussion appeared in Wednesday's Battalion. The discussion on American Muslim experiences will be held Friday in MSC 201 from 7 to 10 p.m.

In Tuesday's AggieLife section the Koran was misquoted. The quote should have said Jesus was the son of Mary.

Flags

Continued from Page 1

students could be charged with a class three felony, which carries two to 10 years imprisonment and up to \$10,000 in fines.

The flags, valued at \$3,500, represent old companies and organizations from the Corps of Cadets.

Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, said the University of Texas' University Relations wants to try to keep the punishment within the University.

"It is our preference that the University take care of their sanctions," Southerland said.

The students told the University of Texas' newspaper, The Daily Texan, that they took the flags from the MSC without being noticed around 12 a.m. Sun-

day. When they returned to Austin, they gave one of the flags to The Daily Texan and another to an Austin television station, KXAN.

Wiatt said the University Police Department was unaware of the theft when media began calling them Sunday night. The calls prompted them to check the MSC Flag Room, he said, and they found the flags had been stolen.

The University of Texas Police Department received a tip about the identities of the students and found the flags at one of the student's off campus residence on Wednesday.

Wiatt said he thinks the stu-

dents stole the flags to get attention from the media.

"They may have gotten some of the media attention they wanted," he said, "but I don't think that's worth the criminal charges they could face."

One member of the group, who calls himself "Calvin," said the group did not mean for the incident to get out of hand.

"The whole point is that it was a prank," he said. "We never intended to be malicious."

Southerland said he does not consider theft to be a prank.

"What starts out to be a prank and ends up bringing criminal charges is not a prank anymore,"

he said. "It serves no useful purpose to have these kinds of interactions between our universities."

Southerland said he is pleased that A&M students did not retaliate when Reveille was kidnapped or this incident.

Matt Segrest, commander of the Corps of Cadets, said these pranks are childish games.

"What do you expect from a t.u. student?" he said.

Grant Smith, commander of Company E-2, the outfit responsible for guarding Reveille, said he does not think very highly of "The Rustlers."

"Obviously that group of students does not hold itself to the high standards that we have here at A&M," he said.

Wiatt said the flags will be returned by a University of Texas police officer today.

Southerland said that the University of Texas Police Department reported that none of the flags have been damaged.

"What do you expect from a t.u. student?"
— Matt Segrest, commander of the Corps of Cadets

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The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publication, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. E-mail: BATT@TAMVM1.TAMU.EDU. Newsroom phone number is 845-3313. Fax: 845-2647.

Advertising: Publication of advertising does not imply sponsorship or endorsement by The Battalion. For campus, local and national display advertising, call 845-2696. For classified advertising, call 845-0569. Advertising offices are in 015 Reed McDonald and office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fax: 845-2678.

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