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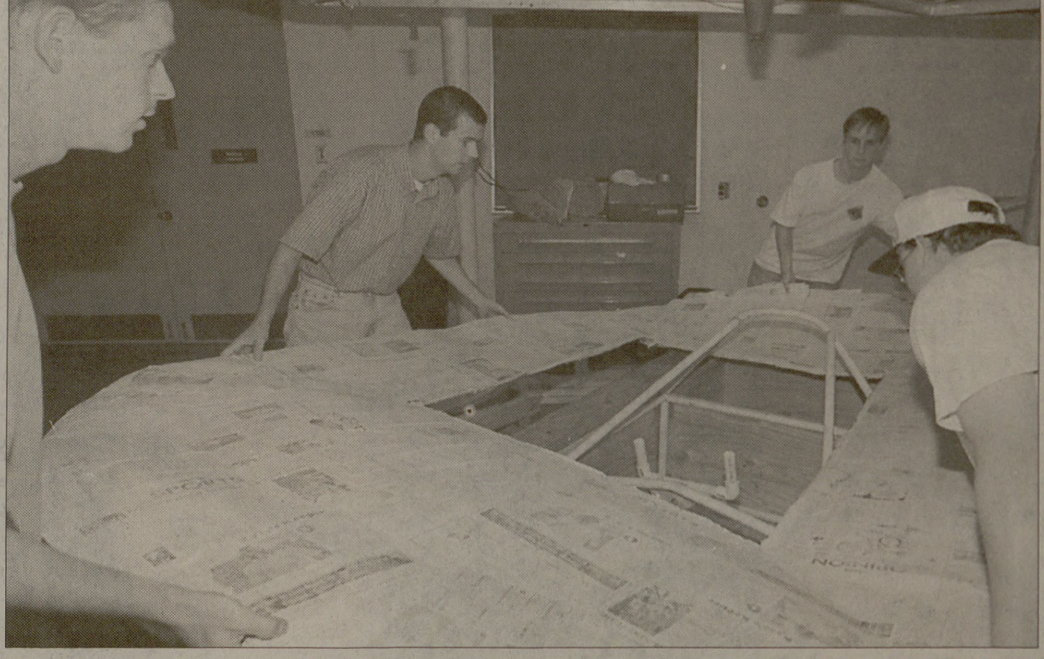
**Students give Sunraycer new look**

BY COURTNEY WALKER  
THE BATTALION

It's shaped like a fish, has four wheels and runs on solar energy.  
The Mach V Sunraycer, a solar powered vehicle designed by 40 Texas A&M students, will compete in a 1,200-mile cross-country race from Indianapolis to Colorado Springs, Colo., in the Summer of 1997.  
The vehicle, driven by one person, uses solar energy. The energy is converted to electricity using silicon photovoltaic cells that charge the car's batteries.  
Steve Deel, a Sunraycer team member and a senior mechanical engineering technology major, said a typical day's drive in the race is 120 miles. He said driving involves a lot of strategy.

"It is just so much more demanding than regular driving because there is no air conditioning or insulation and you have to concentrate on what you're doing," Deel said.  
One problem team members hope they will not have is a lack of sunshine. If there is no sun, the car will not run.  
Dennis Waugaman, Sunraycer team adviser and an associate professor of engineering, said a fully-charged battery provides enough power for two hours without the sun. But if it rains or is cloudy all day the car will run out of energy and stop.  
The Sunraycer team will compete, for the second time, in the biannual Sunraycer Solar Vehicle Challenge. But this time the team's vehicle, the Mach V, will have a new look.  
Odetta Murray, a team member and a

senior mechanical engineering technology major, said rebuilding the vehicle gives students a chance to put their knowledge to test and work as a team.  
"To do this project we have to work together and there is no room for excuses and helping," Murray said.  
Waugaman said teams must have the vehicle ready for competition by April 25. He did not foresee any delays unless funding does not come through.  
"The University is not paying for any of this so students are having to get donations from companies to pay for equipment and parts," Waugaman said. "We hope to build the vehicle under a \$100,000 budget, but we only have \$30,000 so far."  
From replacing BMX bicycle tires that wear off every 30 miles, team members are completely redesigning and rebuilding the vehicle. The tires are being replaced with high-performance electric vehicle wheels.  
Waugaman said the old vehicle was plain old-fashioned.  
"It was our first try and the technology more advanced now so we are using the most advanced technology possible," he said.  
One of the main changes to the vehicle is the design of the solar collective plates.  
In the new vehicle, the plates are integrated into the skin of the car, unlike last year's when the plates were on a flat panel over top of the car.  
"Instead of having the paint on top of the new car, there will be solar collective plates," Waugaman said. "The plates are the skin instead of the paint."  
Deel said the new vehicle is completely different and will be made of composite, lightweight material.  
"A lightweight frame is important for efficiency and to keep any resistance off the car," Deel said. "The frame of the old car was made from aluminum tubing so it was a lot heavier."  
Although the team has not built the fiberglass frame, the team has completed a mock-up of vehicle's frame and has the materials to build it.



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION  
Sunraycer officers adjust a papier-maché mold of the 'skin' of the vehicle onto the frame.

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**University considers dorm improvements**

BY CARLA RENE MARSH  
THE BATTALION

Field inspection work on the status of Texas A&M residence halls and University-owned apartments, part of a long-range plan to improve campus housing facilities, is nearing completion.  
The goal of the evaluation, which began July 15, is to develop cost estimates, time lines and priorities for needed service and repair projects.  
Half Associates, an architectural engineering firm in Dallas, and R.G. Vandervall of Boston are performing the analysis of the 2.6 million square feet of campus residence hall and apartment space.  
The Department of Residence Life and Housing is looking at ways to improve the housing facilities for students who live on campus.  
Ron E. Sasse, director of the Department of Residence Life and Housing, said it is more practical to

improve the housing facilities rather than spend nearly \$6 million to build a new modular dorm.  
"We're looking at putting

**"We're looking at putting Ethernet [connections] in all the dorms in the next four years."**

Ron E. Sasse  
Director, Department of Residence Life and Housing

Ethernet [connections] in all the dorms in the next four years," Sasse said.  
In order to improve the housing facilities, Residence Life and Housing will continue to increase housing fees in future semesters.

In a previous interview, Kim Walter, an assistant to the director of Residence Life and Housing, said the increased fees will net more conveniences for residents.  
"The rent increase will be used to fund cable TV for the dorms," she said. "The study will let us know how we can get cable to the halls."  
In the next few semesters, Residence Life and Housing will compete with off-campus rates and costs.  
Sasse said current housing fees are still less expensive than off-campus apartments.  
Although some students disagree, there are others who say that nothing compares to the experience of living on campus.  
Jesse Czelusta, Residence Hall Association president, said on-campus living offers many advantages.  
"Off-campus [housing] does not provide the convenience and the community that on-campus living does," Czelusta said.

**A&M visitor dies Tuesday**

BY WES SWIFT  
THE BATTALION

A man visiting Texas A&M to attend a conference died Tuesday after suffering heart complications, University police officials said.  
UPD officers received a call for assistance around 1 p.m. from emergency medical officers who were helping a man suffering from heart problems in the lobby of Rudder Tower, reports said.  
The man was transported to Columbia Medical Center, College Station, where he died.  
Police and hospital officials would not release the man's name pending notification of the next of kin. Police would only identify the man was not a student.  
Hospital officials also declined to give the official cause of death to protect the victim's privacy.

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