

Fraternities conduct rush week activities

By Jackie Vratil
 THE BATTALION

Spring fraternity rush kicked off Wednesday with information booths in the Memorial Student Center and a concert featuring World Tribe.

Individual fraternities will host activities during rush, which ends with bid day, Jan. 24.

Christen Springs, a sophomore business major and IFC rush chairman, said the two-day delay in starting classes prevented IFC from advertising spring rush as they would have liked.

"Obviously it didn't help," he said, "but the guys can participate whenever they want to. The sooner, the better."

Spings said participation in spring rush has traditionally been lower than that in fall rush, but in general the numbers continue to rise.

"With every semester, we [IFC] have noticed the numbers climbing," he said. "There was an explosion in numbers this past fall, so we are expecting to see the same thing this spring."

As a result of a similar increase in sorority rush participation, Panhellenic has invited another sorority, Delta Gamma, to charter on



Amy Dunlap, THE BATTALION

Michael Sedlack, a freshman electrical engineering major, takes part in the Rush signing in the MSC Wednesday.

the A&M campus. Delta Gamma plans to hold rush from Feb. 5 to Feb. 8.

Jennifer Burns, a junior nutrition sciences major and president of Panhellenic, said Delta Gamma hopes for a large spring rush turnout.

"They are hoping to have a good turnout, and will also participate in formal fall rush this coming season," Burns said.

Two other sororities, Alpha Gamma Delta and Alpha Phi, will also hold a spring rush. Alpha Phi's rush begins Jan. 22 at the College Station Conference Center. Alpha Gamma

Delta begins its rush Jan. 20 at the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority house.

Burns said spring rush is a good way to increase a sorority's membership.

"Spring rush is a good idea because numbers increase so that come fall time all the houses can participate in rush," she said.

Kristi Pearson, secretary of Panhellenic and a junior business major, said having spring rush benefits all Greeks.

"[Spring rush] gets Greeks out and visible on campus so as to improve the whole look of the Greek system," Pearson said.

Clubs to welcome students MSC Open House anticipates large crowd

By Laura Oliveira
 THE BATTALION

Students will be swamped with fliers and pamphlets Sunday as over 200 organizations participate in the Spring 1997 MSC Open House.

Chris Williams, MSC council president and a senior political science major, said strong participation is not unusual, despite it being the second open house of this year.

"It does not surprise me," he said. "Any time you have an opportunity to reach out to the student body, it would be silly not to jump on it."

Sponsored by MSC public relations, Open House is available to all student organizations.

Daxa Patel, a senior genetics major, will work at the Political Forum table. She said though the attendance in the spring is predictably lower than in the fall, Open House participants will continue to recruit heavily.

"It [attendance] is usually a little smaller than the fall, because a lot of people are already involved in something," she said, "but we do not do anything less. In fact, we probably do more because the more members we can get, the more we can actually accomplish."

Fall Open House welcomed a record-high attendance of 22,000 students, causing overcrowding problems.

Leslie New, director of MSC external public relations and a senior journalism major, said the committee has tried to

alleviate overcrowding.

"If you're with an organization, you cannot have more than five representatives at your table at one time," she said.

New said even with preparations, the event may still become chaotic.

"Once 2 o'clock roles around, Open House has a mind of its own," she said.

Open House will begin at 2 p.m. and end at 6 p.m.

Students will be entertained by Silver Spurs, Ballet Folklorico and other Texas A&M student groups.

Williams said Open House will be useful for all students.

"I would love to see 100 percent of the student body come to this," he said. "I do not think there is anyone who would not benefit from this."

BAC programs aim to educate campus

By Benjamin Cheng
 THE BATTALION

The Memorial Student Center Black Awareness Committee brings programs to Texas A&M University which educate the student body about African-American culture and heritage.

Last year, the BAC attracted prominent African-American writer Terry McMillian, actor James Amos and former Black Panther Bobby Seale. The BAC also held a forum discussing affirmative action last year.

Eric Curley, BAC chair and a junior biochemistry major, describes the BAC's goal as being an outlet to enjoy the contributions of African Americans to A&M and the world.

"Our theme this year is enhancing the lives of African Americans, enriching the minds of all," he said.

The BAC was established at A&M in 1969 as the first committee to handle the concerns of African-American students.

Although most BAC members are African-Americans, some non-African Americans have been members in the past. The BAC seeks to recruit a diverse committee, Curley said.

Although the BAC attempts to educate a broad audience, most students who attend their programs are African Americans, Curley said.

"Unfortunately, there are still people there who see Black Awareness Committee and say, 'Well, that's for the black people,'" he said. "Then they don't come out to our program."

To alleviate the attendance problem, the BAC has co-programmed with the MSC and other



student organizations to diversify their crowd. The BAC co-programmed with MSC Political Forum and MSC OPAS last semester.

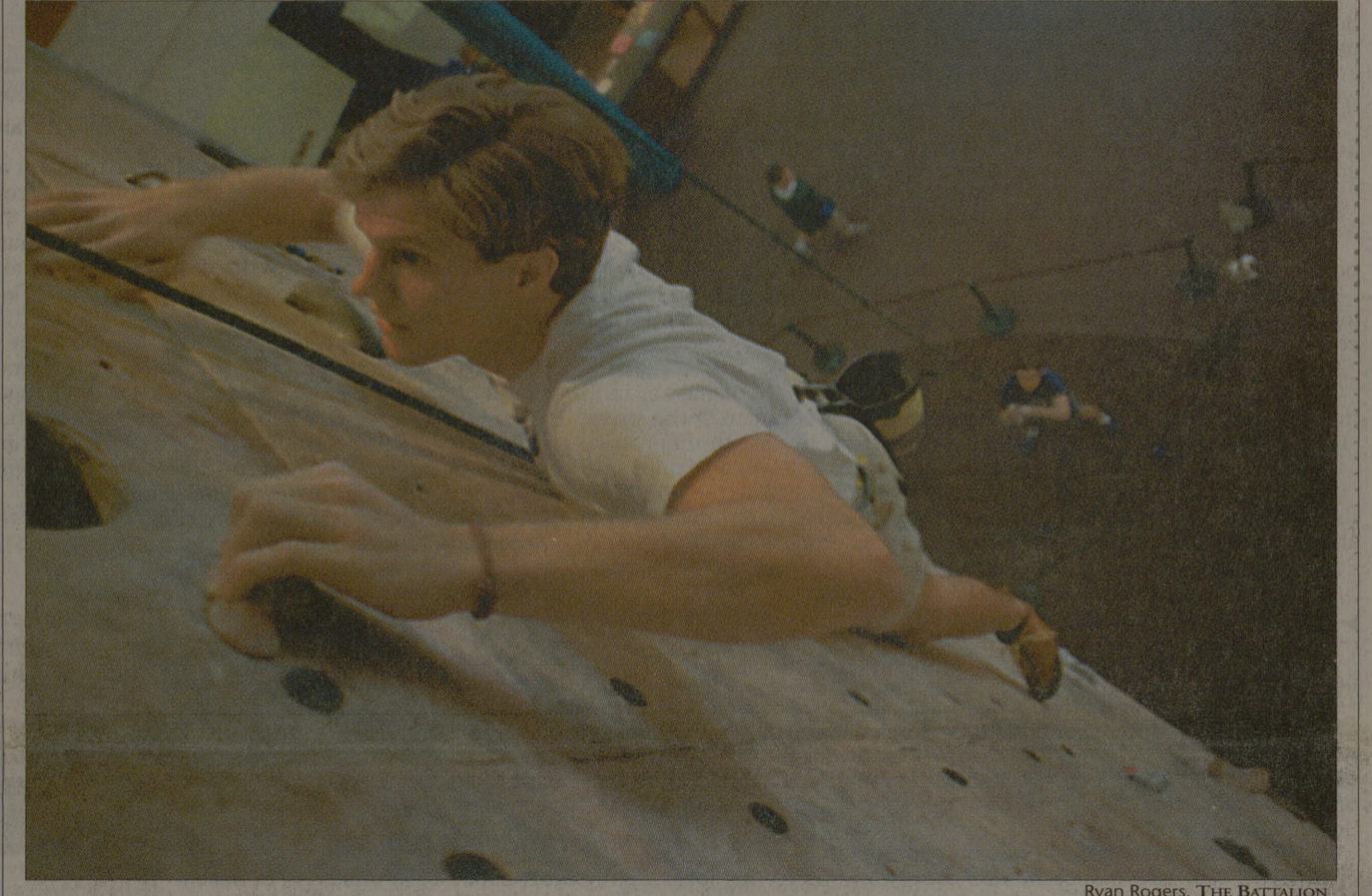
Curley said he would most like to dispel the frequently-held misconception that African Americans on campus are at A&M either on athletic scholarships or through affirmative action.

"They think we have this chip on our shoulders," he said, "like we're going to attack every white person that walks by."

One of the largest obstacles African Americans face at A&M, Curley said, is to find their place in a university with so few African-Americans. In the fall of 1996, African Americans composed only 3 percent of the A&M student population.

Curley said the BAC also serves as social support for African Americans.

In February, the BAC will hold the "Texas Black Business Leaders" program to honor three of the top African-American business leaders in Texas. Other events in February include the Unity festival Harambee and a presentation of the movie *Sankofa*.



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Hanging On Ben Perschau, a freshman bioengineering major, climbs the rock wall in the Student Recreation Center Thursday afternoon.

Business booms with school in session

By Erica Roy
 THE BATTALION

Bryan-College Station businesses often lose the majority of their customers and some temporarily close down when Texas A&M students leave town during the winter break.

Copasetic Cafe, a coffeehouse in the Northgate area, shut down for three weeks while A&M was not in school.

Stacey Yates, the day manager of Copasetic Cafe, said it is not profitable for the cafe to stay open while the students are not in College Station because most of the cafe's customers are students.

"Most of our business is the student population," Yates said. "When they're gone, we're completely dead."

Partner's Food Delivery also closed for a week.

Jon Ogden, a manager at Partner's, said their business relies entirely on students.

"Food delivery is based solely on the campus," Ogden said. "We have to close when they're not in session."

Three of the nine local Subway sandwich shops closed during the break.

Brad Marek, a manager at the Northgate Subway, said their shop did not have much business when students left.

"Once the students are gone, it wasn't worth staying open," Marek said.

Other businesses in Bryan-College Station remained open despite losing a large part of their customer base.

Bullwinkle's Grill and Bar stayed open during much of the break.

Trey Smith, a manager at Bullwinkle's, said Bullwinkle's

suffered a drop in sales during the break, but remained busy.

Smith said Bullwinkle's used different types of pro-

at Bullwinkle's drew a different crowd of participants than usual, Smith said.

Bullwinkle's had a 50 percent decrease in customers, he said. Bullwinkle's also cut staff in half over the break because it was economically sound and a majority of the staff are students.

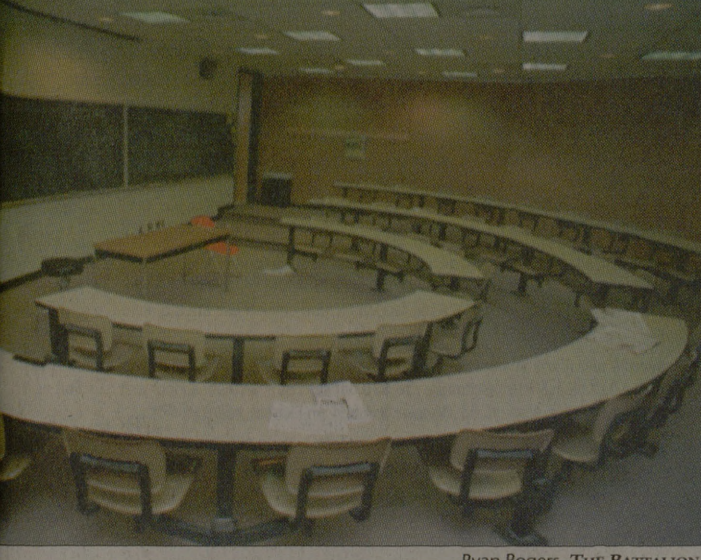
"You lose revenue, but at the same time your cost goes down," Smith said.

The Tap and J.D. Wells closed down over the holidays, but Hurricane Harry's and the Barracuda Bar remained open.

Jack McGregor, the general manager of the Tap, J.D. Wells, Barracuda Bar and Hurricane Harry's, said Hurricane Harry's and Barracuda Bar did not consider closing down over the break.

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A&M classrooms benefit from renovation project



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

A classroom in Blocker benefits from the renovation project with new carpet, ceiling tiles and paint.

By Marissa Alanis
 THE BATTALION

Texas A&M classrooms received a makeover during the winter break thanks to a two-year project overseen by the Classroom Renovation Committee.

Eight classrooms in Blocker, two in Heep and one in Kleberg got new carpet, ceiling tiles and paint jobs, bringing the number of rooms to be renovated from 197 down to 186.

Richard Williams, an associate director for facilities and Classroom Renovation Committee member, said the committee is trying to recondition rooms most used by students.

"What we are trying to do is increase your (the students) learning ability as well as the professor's teaching abilities," Williams said.

The renovation project, implemented by University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen, began during the break between the 1996 summer

and fall semesters with the modification of eight rooms in Blocker.

Williams said to reach all rooms in need of repair, some will have to be taken out of service while school is still in session rather than waiting for semester breaks.

"We're trying to make it (renovations) as transparent as possible," Williams said. "There will be some disruptions, but they will be held to a minimum."

To decide which classrooms need to be closed for the semester, the renovation committee is working closely with the Registrar's office and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research.

"Now they are working on what classrooms they can give us and will have a limited effect on the academic community," Williams said.

The guidelines by which rooms are selected for renovation are whether or not rooms have been renovated in the last ten years and

if they are more than ten years old. A total of 205 on-campus rooms fell under the guidelines.

After deciding upon rooms to be renovated, the Physical Plant planning division and construction division determine what materials need to be ordered to carry out the renovations.

Frank Cox, superintendent of construction and renovations, said when renovating rooms he tries to impress upon craftsmen that a diverse group of students will notice their results.

"This is a world-class institution," Cox said. "We have people here from all over the world. They are going to see your work."

A shortened winter break caused renovations that would normally take 15 working days to be compressed into eight for Cox and his construction crew of 90 workers.

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