

National Lampoon's TAMU Vacation '98

To hillsides far and wide, mountains grand and small, students begin Spring Break vacation

BY TRAVIS HOPPER
Staff writer

Finally. The longest eight weeks of school have come to an end and that holy of all holy rituals is now upon us: Spring Break. It may seem that lately professors have not been concerned with teaching students anything, but rather making sure that students really appreciate their 10 days of pure, unadulterated freedom. Honestly, how many people have had at least two or three tests this past week, not to mention a speech and a midterm project due that they did not start until Monday night? Now that students' brains are completely fried, what should they do for the next week? Are you lacking inspiration? Motivation? Have you spent countless hours pouring over the ins and outs of the Murray State and Iona College basketball statistics, trying to come up with the perfect NCAA tournament predictions that will win \$50 in the betting pool among a few friends? Are you looking to continue the sinful ways of Mardi Gras in a different setting? Or maybe you just want to relax.

Well, as I sat at home thinking of how funny it would be to glue a live snake belly-down to the floor and watch it scare people, even though it could never bite them, I decided that maybe I needed to "spice up my life," so to say, and have a wild Spring Break.

I set out to find what Aggies like to do for Spring Break, or more importantly, what they can afford to do, and I came up with a pretty diverse set of options. So, turn off "Saved by the Bell" (unless it's the murder-mystery episode), throw some clothes in a bag and go out and have some fun. If you don't have plans already, here is a sample of what some fellow Ags are doing that students can use for their own personal inspiration.

• **Fun in the Sun**

For D'Wayne Gerald, a sophomore marketing major, there is only one place to be when March 16th rolls around.

"My roommate, three girls from my dorm and I are going to South Padre Island," Gerald said. "We got a hotel room, and we are going to meet some other friends from Fish Camp there."

Padre, as it's commonly known by us Texans, provides a warm alternative to the chilly winds of Colorado and New Mexico.

"Actually, I decided to go to Padre because I'm tired of snow skiing," Gerald said. "I wanted to go somewhere where I could have a lot of fun, and this just seemed like the place to go. I went there this summer and had a great time at the beach, shopping and going to Mexico, so I figured 'Why not do it again?'"

"There are also a lot of men without many clothes on," Gerald said jokingly. "That really doesn't happen too much when you go skiing, so it's a definite bonus for Padre."

Like Chevy Chase and *Vacation* showed us, getting there is usually half the fun.

"One of the girls I'm going with has a Mustang convertible, and we are going to pile our stuff into it, throw the top down and road trip all the way there," Gerald said. "I can't think of a better way to get to Padre than that."

Willie Nelson once sang, "The night life ain't no good life." Obviously, he has never been to South Padre Island for Spring Break.

"When we get there, I plan on just laying out, relaxing in the hot tub and going to the clubs at night," Gerald said. "Like I said before, the clubs were a lot of fun this summer, so I can only imagine how good they will be at this time of year."

Though snow skiing may not be the vacation of choice for Gerald this year, she said it's not for a lack of memorable events in the past.

"Last year, a bunch of my friends and I went snow skiing," Gerald said. "We had about fifty people in a condo built for eight, our car broke down on the way there and I remember waking up under a table one morning and not knowing how I got there."

"Hopefully none of that bad stuff will happen this year," Gerald said, "but I bet we'll still have a good time."

• **Hitting the Slopes**

It happens every time. Students go to the beach for the weekend, come home and then spend the next three days trying to get all the sand that they inadvertently carried home out of their beds and clothes. Marci Holland, a freshman management major, said she is hoping to avoid that this Spring Break.

"I am going snow skiing in Ruidoso, New Mexico, with about thirty other people in Fish Aides, the freshman organization I'm involved in," Holland said. "We've rented two condos, and we plan on skiing for three or four days. Then, on the way home, we're going to spend an afternoon in White Sands, New Mexico, just hanging out and playing in the sand."



Gerald



Holland

For Holland, she said it was easy to pick the cold winds of the mountains over the hot Texas heat.

"I love to ski," she said, "and my friends and I have been planning this trip since the beginning of the year. In high school, I always had tennis tournaments where we had to travel around Texas to places like San Antonio, Houston and Amarillo. They were pretty fun, but I never had an opportunity to go skiing. Now I do, and I'm not about to let this chance pass me by."

There's nothing quite like flying first class, leaning the chair all the way back, propping tired feet up on the tray in front and asking the stewardess to constantly refill a glass just because you can. There is only one problem with this scenario: it usually happens once a student has graduated and actually have some money. For now, the legendary and infamous "road trip" is the way to travel for most college students.

"Since there are so many of us going on this trip, we are going to caravan up there in a bunch of cars," Holland said. "I have a car, but I got lucky and I'm not going to have to drive. It's a little more responsibility than I want to take. I'm just going to sit back and enjoy the ride."

When she gets to Ruidoso, Holland said she doesn't plan on wasting any time.

"I'm not really planning on doing a lot of shopping or hanging out in the hot tubs," she said. "I'm really anxious to go out and hit the slopes. Maybe if I'm brave enough I'll try snow boarding this time, but I doubt that will happen."

Once that dreaded Monday rolls around in so few days and the grind of school has begun once again, Holland said she hopes to look back as fondly on this trip as she does on many trips in her past.

"The best Spring Break I've ever had was when I went with a bunch of friends to Las Colinas, Mexico, for a mission trip with my church," Holland said. "We got to teach vacation Bible school and help out around the town. It was a real eye opener to see how they lived and led their everyday lives. This trip will be a little different, but I hope I can spend some quality time with my friends and have a lot of fun."

• **"Playin' with the boys ..."**

The beach or the mountains? The mountains or the beach? It's a tough question that drives some people crazy when they are trying to plan out the ultimate Spring Break.

Not Jim Palmer.

"For the first weekend of Spring Break I'm driving to Galveston with my roommate and about ten or fifteen people," Palmer, a sophomore biology major, said. "Then, after that, my roommate, two close friends and I are going to road trip out to Ruidoso, New Mexico, and camp out. It should be a lot of fun."

All this driving around the Southwestern United States could be a potentially costly way to spend Spring Break.

Palmer said he has an answer for that one too.

"When we go to Galveston, we are going to go to the beach and build a little campfire at night," Palmer said. "During the day we probably will just bum around the beach, maybe catch some rays or play football in the sand or something. I'm a big sand fan, and at night, instead of trying to get a few hotel rooms for all of us, we are just going to sleep in our cars on the beach."

"I've actually done a little bit more planning on the Ruidoso portion of the trip, which isn't saying much," said Palmer. "When we get to New Mexico, we are going to find some campgrounds around the mountains where we can set up our tents. If it's too cold at night, the four of us will just pitch in and get a cabin or something, but hopefully it won't be too cold."

The bustling night life of South Padre and the little Mexican border towns draw many college kids who are looking to have a good time and not remember any of it. Trying to find drunk people around the clubs is easy. Ducks in a barrel, baby. Ducks in a barrel. This is precisely the thing that Palmer said he wants to avoid this year.

"I'm kind of sick of Padre and that 'all-alcohol,' 'chain drinking' thing," Palmer said. "I want to spend some quality time with my best friends, just relax and not have to worry about anything important. I just want to have some good, guy bonding time. That's what's so great about camping out around Ruidoso. It's away from everything, and we can go fishing during the day and hike up to the highest point we can find. No repelling or anything like that, just hiking and enjoying the outdoors."

• **There's no place like home**

Sometimes students say they have been there, done that. Last year they hit the beaches at Padre or Florida and all they have to show for it is a

lousy T-shirt. Two years ago, the trip to Colorado left him like some mutant, red-and-white faced raccoon. You've slept in your car just to say you've done it, and you realize that's about the only reason to do it. There is one more thing to do for Spring Break that some students probably haven't done since they ate Reese's Pieces while watching Drew Barrymore in her pre-drug addicted, *E.T.* days: phone home.

For Mike Dillard, a sophomore marketing major, home is where his heart is.

"I plan on going fishing in Galveston for a day or two this first weekend, but then I am heading back home to San Antonio for the rest of the time," Dillard probably camp out on the beach somewhere, get up in the morning, mess around during the day and then fish with a few of my friends for a night. After that, though, home. I just feel like I need to get away from all of the Spring Break stuff for a while."

While work will be the last thing on most people's minds this week, Dillard said he could not imagine it any other way.

"I've never really had a Spring Break before because I've been working," he said. "I just started a new business, Industries, and I have to find some entrepreneurial-type people who are looking for a way to make money without sitting at a desk all day. It's a hard thing to do, especially when I have to keep my grades up. So, having a week where I don't worry about school at all is a blessing for me."

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Those of us who are looking for a way to make money without sitting at a desk all day. It's a hard thing to do, especially when I have to keep my grades up. So, having a week where I don't worry about school at all is a blessing for me."

Dillard said. "Some days I'll probably just load up my truck and go fishing."

This may sound pretty harmless, but this scenario is the funniest Spring Break memory Dillard said he can remember.

"One time, back in high school, me and some guys were going around San Antonio for Spring Break," he said. "One of the guys decided to go fishing out at Bud Lake. So we went out there with a few friends, and we were just hanging out. Of course, one of the friends gets the bright idea that his big 4X4 truck can be used on the peninsula real bad. Little does he know that the lake drops steep on the sides. Well, needless to say, he sunk his truck in the mud. We had to hook three trucks up together just to pull him out. It's pretty funny now, but I'm sure he wasn't laughing too much at the time."

All things told, soon Spring Break '98 will be one of the best in our minds. Whether it be a day in the sun on the beach, a day in the snow, a day with friends, or a day with family, these are the things that make up the greatest memories. Live it up, and don't let it go. You only get one chance.



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