

Fancy Fitness

STORY BY TRAVIS IRBY

Photo By Brandon Bollom



The Student Recreation Center, opened in 1995, was recently voted No. 1 in the nation by the National Intramural and Recreation Sports Association.

Student Recreation Center earns envy of other universities, admiration of campus

Almost 6,000 students go through its doors on a daily basis. In the three years since it opened, it has become one of the most frequented buildings on campus and the envy of other universities. The Student Recreation Center is Texas A&M's most fitness.

It provides a variety of physical activities in a unique facility. Rock climbing, weight lifting and aerobic exercise are just a small sample of choices available for students seeking fitness.

The luxury of having so many exercise choices in one place was not always an option at A&M. Students used to seek exercise in the Read Building and DeWare Field House. These places were maintained, but could not meet the needs of a growing student body. The facilities were small and spread out across campus.

The Department of Recreational Sports asked students what could be done to improve the situation, and student surveys were given out to ensure the need for a new recreation complex. Dennis Corrington, director of Rec Sports, said old facilities were not enough.

At the time, we only had 50 percent of the space needed to meet the demand," Corrington said. After a student referendum was passed in 1993 authorizing a fee increase to help fund the project, construction followed.

Harmon Mok was chosen to help design and build the Student Recreation Center.

Greg Houston, the project manager for the Student Recreation Center, said the design process included many different perspectives.

We worked with users of the Department of Recreational Sports and A&M faculty to generate a design," Houston said.

Houston said the design staff came to A&M for three-day work sessions.

"We were brainstorming," Houston said. "The sessions were graphic, as we did a lot of drawing." The design team also visited recreation facilities at other schools such as Tulane University and the University of Texas.

Houston said a unique design was at hand. "It was developed with input from the Recreation Sports staff and helped define student wishes for activities," Houston said.

Construction took 22 months at a cost of \$30 million. The complex, opened in Fall '95, boasts 286,000 square feet of indoor space and 90,000 square feet of outdoor space.

When it first opened, the building contained many features not found anywhere else.

lots of activities going on," Corrington said. "The designers did well in displaying the busiest parts, like the weight room and the natatorium."

When students enter the glass doors, they have a clear view of most of the activities available to them — the 3-D rock climbing wall, racquetball courts, indoor track, Time Out Deli, weight room and natatorium can all be seen from the lobby.

Houston said the interior is what entices students to use the center.

"It is like a visual menu for the students," Houston said. "There is a lot going on, but it is very open."

Corrington said many other recreation centers do not offer students such a view.

"In most other places, you can't get in the door without an ID," Corrington said. "Here there is open space, so you can come in and look around."

The 3-D rock climbing wall is one of the most noticeable and original attractions in the Rec Center. The free-standing wall allows for 360-degree inverted climbing.

Corrington said the wall was a new concept. "We had seen several rock-climbing walls in magazines," Corrington said. "But ours is free-standing."

The texture of the wall is also specialized. It was chosen to mimic the feel and look of Enchanted Rock in Austin.

The weight room also uses some creative architectural design — indirect lighting and a graded ceiling.

Houston said this allows for a more pleasant visual effect for users.

"It doesn't look like a large expanse," he said. "The lighting and ceiling break the room up."

"It has been done before, but I think it is the first time it has been applied to a weight room."

"It (the entrance) is like a visual menu for the students. There is a lot going on, but it is very open."

— Greg Houston
Recreation Center project manager

The Rec Center's exterior is one of the many features that give the structure its flair.

The building is surrounded by Olsen and Kyle Fields, and the roof of the Rec Center is sloped resembling the slopes in the stands of the respective stadiums.

The front of the building has many large windows, allowing visitors to catch a glimpse of the natatorium and weight room.

Corrington said the building's exterior leaves an impression.

"We wanted a dynamic, exciting building with

Nagle Hall holds honor of oldest building on campus

BY BETH FOCHT
The Battalion

While walking towards Evans Library, students can find the oldest building on campus tucked between Hart Hall and the Academic Building.

Nagle Hall, originally the Civil Engineering Building, was completed in 1909.

On the building dedication plaque, there are names such as Legett, Fermier, Milner, Puryear and Frances — famous men who helped Texas A&M grow and whose names grace other buildings on campus.

Nagle Hall originally housed the civil engineering, architectural engineering, drawing and physics departments.

It originally contained nine lecture rooms, five miscellaneous rooms, and several offices and storerooms.

The building, composed of a basement and three stories, is 125 feet wide and 72 feet deep. The original cost to build Nagle was \$65,000, and it was designed by F.E. Giesecke, the College's architect at the time, and built by J.S. Harrison.

Nagle Hall was the first reinforced concrete structure on campus, and the first building to be "fire-proofed."

In his book *Here We'll Build a College*, Ernest Langford said Nagle Hall was different from the handful of buildings that existed on campus in 1909.

"Nagle Hall was the first building that had extensive use of cast stone for belt courses, columns, cornices, balusters and balustrades," Langford said.

"With this combination of brick and cast stone used for the building materials, it failed to give this structure the 'sparkle' of earlier campus buildings."

Throughout its existence, Nagle Hall has seen its share of

changes, repairs and different building occupants.

The first major change Nagle Hall encountered was in 1929, when its name changed from the Civil Engineering Building to Nagle Hall.

The building was named Nagle Hall in memory of James C. Nagle the same year of his death.

Nagle joined the Texas A&M faculty as an assistant professor of engineering and physics in 1890 and became the first dean of the College of Engineering when it was formed in 1911.

In 1957, air conditioning was added to the facilities, and more air-conditioning repairs and additions occurred in 1962.

The major interior renovation of the building occurred in 1973 when a handicap ramp was built and the west entrance was added.

The last major building renovation happened in 1977 when the exterior was restored and water proofed.

It is the same standing structure as when it was built, and not much has changed to the outside appearance.

After the engineering departments moved out of the building, Nagle housed a variety of departments including economics, geography, history, government and journalism.

Chris Lang, academic business administrator for the wildlife and fisheries sciences department, said after the last major renovation occurred in 1974, the department moved into Nagle Hall.

"Nagle Hall is the main building for this department," Lang said.

"We have over 50 faculty and staff members and anywhere from 200 to 600 students going through the building everyday."



SEE NAGLE ON PAGE 4.

SEE REC ON PAGE 4.

On sale this week at the
MSC Rudder Box Office
Lobby of Rudder Tower

- Official TAMU Personalized Graduation Announcements on sale through Friday, Oct. 9
- MSC Film Society — **Braveheart** Fri, Oct. 2, 7 p.m.
- Magination Station — **The Unsinkable Molly Brown** Fri. - Sun., Oct. 2 - 4, and Oct. 9-10, 7 p.m.
- MSC OPAS Jr. — **Ramona Quimby** Sun, Oct. 11, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- BVSO — **Letters from the Old World** Sun, Oct. 11, 4 p.m.
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WHO'S WHO AMONG STUDENTS
IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
1998 - 99
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Who's Who applications are now available for both undergraduate and graduate students in the following locations:

- Commandant's Office (Military Sciences Building)
- Student Programs Office (2nd floor MSC)
- Student Activities Office (125 John J. Koldus Building)
- Sterling C. Evans Library
- Office of Graduate Studies (125 Teague)
- Office of the Dean of each College
- Office of Graduate Studies (128 Teague)
- Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (10th floor Rudder)

Completed applications must be received by the Student Activities Office no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, October, 2 1998. They may be hand-carried to the Student Activities Office, sent through Campus Mail, or sent through U.S. Mail. (See application for addresses.) Questions may be addressed to Sandy Briers in Student Activities at 845-1133.

Mock GRE

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