

Student leaders discuss social segregation

BY MEREDITH HIGHT & APRIL YOUNG
The Battalion

Question #1: Are people socially segregated at A&M? (Do all white people sit together, and do all the Hispanics sit together?)

James: I guess the first thing you have to do is stop and ask yourself, "Who exactly is the one saying why are all the black kids sitting in the cafeteria together?" Even if I am in the majority, and that majority is a white person — that white person sees that those black people are always sitting together. They are never coming to realize that maybe we, being the majority are not sitting with them. I think it all depends on whose

perspective you are looking at.

Jenkins: It doesn't have to be racial. Generally, as people we tend to spend our time with people who are like us, just like Christians fellowship with other Christians and athletes with other athletes, so it's not just the race issue. I think that's where that comes from. I think what we have to do is kinda of get past that comfort zone, so to speak, and try to really branch out and try to do that.

James: You try to be with someone who you can identify with; and, for black people, the most obvious way to identify with someone is the color of your skin Meredith, though you are white, I would never know what interests we share with me just looking at you. I'm sure if I get to know you, I

will find out that we have a lot of common interests; and, in that case, we will break that barrier. But you first go with someone you can identify with.

Figaro: Another thing I found out

"... they were talking about the Aggie community, the ring and the star ... and when you get here, it is a hostile place — you see Confederate flags all over the place."

— Kendall Davis
president of Omega Psi Phi

even at this school is that a lot of people — white, I'll tell you right now — have a fear of coming to sit with people who are not of their color. I am

more comfortable; I can sit with anybody my freshman year, black people had like three or four rows of table I asked other people to come sit with us, and it was like "No, no thank you, I'd rather sit somewhere else I mean, what's the fear with talking to the students here? I just like to say "hi" just to say hi why don't you say "hi" back to me? It's true, it is a comfort zone because I do feel comfortable around my black people; but I feel comfortable around everybody else because that's what I am used to, but not everybody else feels comfortable around you.

Young: Is that a problem here at A&M in particular or is that universal?

Figaro: I think it's a problem everywhere, but one thing I've found ... is that you can see it a lot more here because it's

like 80-something percent white and they say, 2 percent black, so you see it more here because every 50 people, I may see one black ... you can see it more here.

Hight: Do you feel like there's a silent expectation by the majority that you stay in your comfort zone and not step out of that?

O'Bryant: Sometimes I think it's the other way I remember back in high school, I used to hang out with everybody, but I would always get made fun of for hanging out with the white people — and this would be by my black friends. So sometimes it's just that we segregate ourselves from other people because we are afraid of what our people will say about us.

Jenkins: I don't see it as much here as probably somewhere else. And I think that's just because of the whole

See ROUND TABLE on Page 2.

This is the first in a three-part series examining issues facing African-American students at Texas A&M University. Leaders of various African-American student organizations were asked to participate in a round table discussion on the state of racial relations at A&M. The Battalion formulated several questions to facilitate discussion and encouraged open and honest dialogue among the participants.

- Adrienne Ballare: president of National Association of Black Journalists
- B.J. Brown: representative from Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity
- Kendall Davis: president of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity
- Stacie Figaro: president of NAACP
- Tammy Henry: president of Black Awareness Committee
- Rashad James: president of Gamma Phi Delta Christian Fraternity
- Prison Jenkins: president of Pan-Hellenic Council and president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
- Joe O'Bryant: representative from the National Society of Black Engineers
- Samuel Ogunghomu: president of African Students Association
- Curtis Pete: president of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity
- Wilmetta Simpson: vice-chair of Black Awareness Committee
- Tair Upshaw: president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Week to showcase cultures

BY DANA JAMUS
The Battalion

Belly dancing, international cuisine and cultural awareness are coming to Texas A&M as a part of International Week, sponsored by the International Students Association (ISA). "International Week is a very big event, especially for international students," said Gustavo de Sousa, president of ISA and a senior agricultural engineering major. "But also for Americans, because they don't have to go outside the U.S. to visit the other countries." "It is a way for them to teach people about where they come from. And [it is] a celebration of all the different cultures." De Sousa said A&M has 3,000 international students from 115 different countries. The top five countries that compose the international student body at A&M, in random order, are India, China, Korea, Mexico and Turkey. International Week kicks off Monday with an opening

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Steppin' with Soul



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Greek participants display stepping talent during Greek Olympiad 2000. From top left clockwise, Prairie View A&M University-Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Texas A&M University-Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, University of Texas-Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Greeks compete for cash prizes

BY APRIL YOUNG
The Battalion

Over 4,000 spectators gathered at G. Rollie White Coliseum Saturday night to participate in the 11th annual Kappa Alpha Psi Greek Olympiad step show.

A moment of silence was held at the beginning of the show in remembrance of the students who were killed and injured in the Prairie View car crash and the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

The step show featured fraternity and sorority acts from the University of Texas-Austin, Sam Houston State University, Prairie View A&M University and Texas A&M University,

each competing for a grand prize of \$1,500 and a second place prize of \$500.

The University of Texas walked away with the \$1,500 grand prize for first place fraternity and first place sorority.

Both organizations said they were surprised to win but they put in long practice hours in order to prepare for the show.

"I didn't know how good our show was in comparison to everyone else," said Raushanah Seals, step master for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority at UT. "For five out of nine of us, it was our first step show so we were all very surprised to win."

Seals said her team's performance stood out because of its length and the amount of

actual stepping.

"I saw some other acts, and ours wasn't very long compared to the others but we did a lot more stepping than dancing," Seals said. "Our steps were short and effective and most of our steps were executed efficiently."

Rodney Waites, step master for Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity at UT, said the uniqueness of the team's performance helped them win the show.

"We had an original, entertaining show that included difficult steps," Waites said. "We also had interaction with the audience which helped us break down the rivalry."

Both organizations plan to use the money to fund scholarships for minority students at UT.

"The program was a huge success considering the amount of stress that was involved in making the show a reality," said Alvin Nelson III, Greek Olympiad chairperson and a senior management information systems major. "The hard work of Kappa Alpha Psi paid off tremendously to produce the largest turn-out we have ever had for Greek Olympiad."

Curtis Pete, president of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity at Texas A&M and a senior computer engineering major, said he expects Greek Olympiad to continue in the future because of its contributions in the community as well as on campus.

"I think Greek Olympiad will continue in the future because it brings college students from throughout the region to be exposed to A&M as well as the Greek community," Pete said.

INTERNATIONAL WEEK



- OPENING CEREMONY**
Monday, February 28
11:30 a.m. MSC Flagroom
- INTERNATIONAL BUFFET**
Wednesday, March 1
7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Second Floor MSC
- INTERNATIONAL TALENT SHOW**
Friday, March 3
7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Rudder Auditorium
- AWARD CEREMONY**
Friday, March 3
10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.
MSC 201

ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Military Weekend spotlights Corps of Cadets

BY ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

Texas A&M played host to 40 cadets from military academies and ROTC programs nationwide, who came to compare notes and exchange ideas as part of A&M's 17th annual Military Weekend.

Cadets from schools such as the Air Force Academy, Virginia Military Institute and Virginia Tech met with students from Texas A&M's Corps of Cadets for round table discussions addressing common issues and concerns in officer training programs.

"It was a great opportunity to get together ideas on topics of mutual concern, and to also show some good Aggie hospitality," Corps Commandant Gen. Ted Hoggood said.

Cadets also attended lectures on military history, leadership and ethics in public service, as well as a formal banquet Friday evening where the keynote speaker was Lt.

Gen. Don Holder, Jr. (Ret.), Class of '66, Hoggood added. Visitors were also given tours of the campus and the George Bush Presidential Library complex.

Forrest Lane, a senior political science major and commander of the Corps, said the visiting cadets were interested in maintaining a large cadet corps in a non-military academy environment.

"Very few schools have a corps the size we do, and they wanted to know how you run an organization that large," Lane said.

Visitors also learned of the leadership opportunities and the aura and traditions associated with the University that draws so many students into the Corps, even though most don't plan enter the military, he added.

"It's a very unique atmosphere with very special opportunities, and they were cu-

rious to know what it is that we're doing," Lane said.

The round table discussions were casual conversations and allowed students from different schools to freely address issues of mutual concern and exchange ideas, Lane said.

"Every year several of these types of conferences are held at different schools, and they're great because they allow us to get together and learn from other programs," Lane said.

For example, the schools discussed the different approaches they take to training subordinates, Kathryn Jones, a senior history major and chairperson of Military Weekend, said.

"That issue came up a lot. At the military academies, only the upperclassmen train freshmen, while at A&M, the sophomores do the training while the juniors and seniors serve in mentoring roles," Jones said. "Also, some of the schools had a rank system instead of a class system."



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Corps members from Parsons Mounted Calvary 9 (from front to back), Kevin Hebert, Jeff Robertson, Brad Abraham and Jason Bell participated in the Military Weekend Review on Friday.

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Batt Radio

- Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for details on Enterprise Car Rental's scholarships

Batt Online

- Check out *The Battalion* online at battalion.tamu.edu.