

News in Brief

TAPSS creates mentor program

The Texas A&M Association of Professional Staff (TAPSS) mentor program will host Staff Helping Staff Networking Event in 206 Memorial Student Center at noon Thursday.

The program, in its first year, is trying to create the first mentor program for new A&M staff and faculty.

Mentors help new staff and faculty members adjust to the TAMU culture and offer advice. Laura Ampol-Hall, co-chairman of the TAPSS mentor program and the administrative assistant for the Academy for Advanced Telecommunications Learning Technologies, said the meeting will include a mentor/mentee relationship among staff members, the importance of the mentoring program and the goals for the organization.

All mentors are TAPSS members, but mentees are not initially required to be a part of the group.

Multicultural Services Dept. hosts awareness week

The Multicultural Services Department is hosting an Awareness Week Sept. 18-22 to educate students about the different services and programs offered by the department. The week will be highlighted by an open house and a silent auction Friday in the Memorial Student Center.

Resource tables will be set up at the Rudder Fountain and the Lehner College of Business Building this week. Trivia games and the auction will be held at the open house.

Information on several student organizations associated with the Multicultural Services Department, including Minority Enrichment and Development through Academic and Leadership Skills (MEDALS) and the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference (SBLC), will be available at the open house.

The organizations associated with the department are trying to attract as many visitors to the open house as possible. The organization that attracts the most visitors will win a prize from the department.

Southwest Parkway partially closed today

Southwest Parkway in College Station will be partially closed today as city crews apply seal coat to the road. Crews will apply a new layer of asphalt and stone material from Welsh Road to Welsh Avenue.

Beginning at 9 a.m., one eastbound and one westbound lane of Southwest Parkway will be closed while the seal is applied. About noon, the crew will switch sides and seal the remaining lanes.

The repairs are expected to be finished by 4 p.m., and all lanes will be reopened. Drivers are asked to be cautious around the work area, obey all traffic signs and watch out for workers.

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AGGIElife

THE BATTALION

Something wicked this way comes

Halloween-loving patrons and stores dress up early for the most ghoulish night of the year

By STUART HUTSON
 The Battalion

*All winds mark its fearsome flight
 and often branches creek with fright
 and by the pricking of my thumbs,
 something wicked this way comes.*
 - Anonymous

A cold, shrill wind blew into AggieLand a few days ago, ushering in the crisp air of fall to bring relief from the fierce, blazing sun of summer.

The air is now permeated with a smell unique to the season. The odor brings an expectation of the books and tests of the fall semester to many, but to others, it fosters anticipation of something much more wicked.

Soon, jack-o'-lanterns will begin to manifest on doorsteps and spider webs will accumulate in the most apparent of places.

These webs will not be spun by big, hairy spiders of the kind that haunt an arachnophobe's nightmares; they will instead be strewn by devotees of the one night a year that the veil between evil and good is lifted — the halloweenie.

These members of the darker side anticipate Halloween like a 5-year-old anticipates his or her birthday. It is for them that stores around the country began to stock shelves with plastic skeletons and sugary pumpkin candy almost a month ago.

"On the first day we opened, we had people waiting to get at all the Halloween items they had been waiting a year to see," said Adam Artho, an assistant manager at the Halloween Boutique, a specialty Halloween store that opened Aug. 26. "There is something about this holiday that gives people a feeling that no other holiday can provide.

"It gives them a chance to dress up and be someone else that they otherwise wouldn't be, and it allows them to do things that they otherwise couldn't do. Christmas is about family and giving. Thanksgiving is about being thankful for all that you have, but Halloween is about indulging yourself."

It is a feeling some people want to hold onto as long as they can. They start celebrating the holiday as soon as possible, because on Nov. 1, the party is over.

"We get people from all walks of life — bikers, goths, sorority girls, older men ... you name it," Artho said. "Some don't even wait

to put on their costumes; they buy them so that they can wear them out to the bar or club the next night."

Artho said he has seen a continuous increase in interest in Halloween celebrations over the past few years.

"Just judging from sales, we have seen a steady 10 percent increase yearly, but you can also tell by the number and attitude of the people coming in here," he said. "More organizations are giving parties or hosting haunted houses — that contributes to early interest because you have to prepare for those things."

Brandy Vacante, a sales supervisor at Spencer Gifts, said many halloweenies have been investing early in decorations.

"Most people are buying decorations like spider webs and black lights right now and are just picking and choosing on costumes," Vacante said. "I guess they are trying to build that atmosphere that only really comes with Halloween. It's the only time of the year where you can walk around in an outrageous costume and have people tell you, 'Hey, that's a cool costume,' instead of just looking at you like you are stupid."

Artho said that a large number of early sales result from college students investing in black lights and black-light-reactive materials to give an eerie effect that can only be projected by a properly lit residence hall room.

The avid halloweenie will be satisfied only with the perfect costume. To attain such a lofty goal, the halloweenie must begin well in advance of the ghoulish date.

"Probably the biggest reason we get people in early is so that they can get the right stuff for their costume before it gets sold out," said Jeff Lowther, a sales associate for the Halloween Boutique. "People learn that some of the more popular items are not going to be around in late October."

Those popular items may not be the dark shrouds that one expects. Artho said the biggest sellers so far are scary only if one has a phobia of the '50s or '70s.

"Poodle skirts are a big favorite for the gals, and some of the guys," he said. "Pimp outfits are also popular."

If one must go toward the gruesome side of the wardrobe, Artho said movie monsters slaughter stereotypical zombies and vampires.

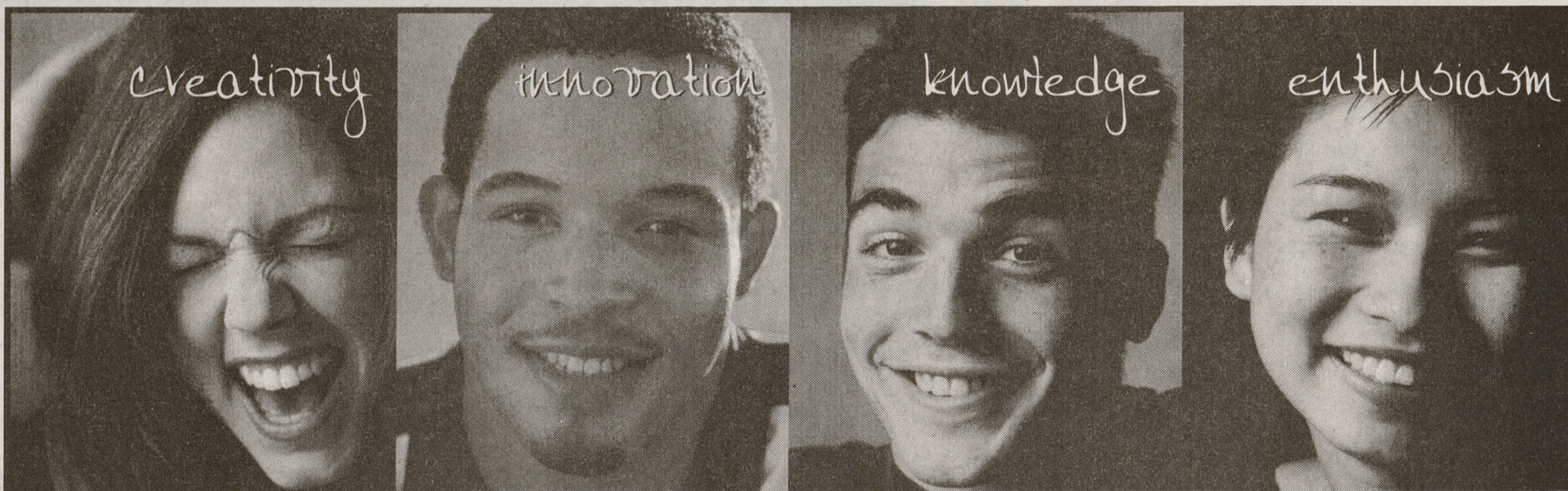
"We get a lot of people asking for Jason, Freddy Krueger or Michael Myers, and we have a whole section dedicated to the Scream movies," he said. "But one of the scariest was a guy who worked months to perfect his Richard Simmons costume."

Whatever costumed is donned, Artho said, a witch rather than a warlock will get to it first.

"We find that the majority of people who buy costumes and other things early are women," he said. "I'm not sure why, but they tend to be the most prepared when it comes to preparing for Halloween night. Maybe it is because it lets them be a little more revealing than usual — whether it is a vampire or just a sexy nun."



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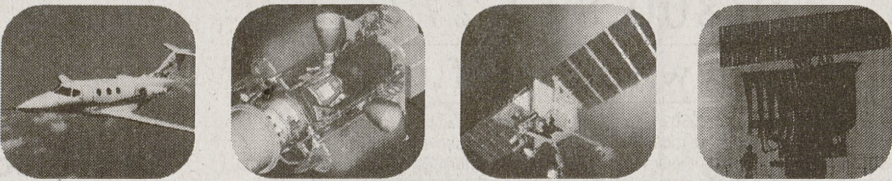
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