

The Hall's occupancy load under fire

Dance hall to count patrons after complaint that the club was overcrowded

BY BRADY CREEL
The Battalion

The Texas Hall of Fame dance hall has been reprimanded and monitored by the Bryan fire marshal after Jan. 18 fire code violation.

Jay Socol, public information officer for the city of Bryan, said the fire marshal received a complaint Jan. 18 concerning the number of people in the establishment.

"What the inspector found on that initial visit was that things were way out of control, that there were far too many people in there," Socol said.

The Texas Hall of Fame, dubbed "the Hall" by its patrons, is in Bryan

on FM 2818.

The Bryan Police Department (BPD) sent officers to the Hall Jan. 18 to prevent more customers from entering and to keep count of those leaving.

Nathan Sivils, Bryan fire marshal, said the Hall has an occupancy of 1,400 people but was "overcrowded and in direct violation of the fire code."

No one from the Hall was available for comment Monday.

"When we first go through the design process, we set an occupancy for that structure," Sivils said. "We can't really deviate from that."

Sivils said, when establishments

admit people beyond their occupancy, it is the fire marshal's duty to

"They want to do the same thing we do — they want the kids to be out there and be safe."

— Mike Donoho
Bryan assistant fire chief

decrease the number of people in the building.

"They should do that on their own," Sivils said.

But Sivils said local establishments, like the Hall, that cater to college students are not always proactive.

"They don't do as good of a job as I would want them to do," he said. "Most of the businesses really try to do a good job, but we have to stay on top of it, too."

Sivils said fire-code violations can result in a citation, which is handled in municipal court. An inspector is sent only when a complaint about an establishment is received. Sivils said the building's occupancy level should be posted at the entrance.

"We just wanted [the Hall] to get back to what we felt was a safe level," Sivils said.

John Mies, fire marshal for the city of College Station, said no problems with College Station bars and clubs have been reported.

Mike Donoho, assistant fire chief for the city of Bryan, said the fire inspectors visited the Hall Jan. 25 and Feb. 1 to monitor its compliance progress, and a citation was not issued.

"[The inspectors] went back the second week, and [the Hall] had instituted the ideas the fire marshal had given," Donoho said.

Socol said, before Jan. 18, man-

agement at the Hall had no method for monitoring the number of people entering the building. As a result, the staff had no way of knowing how many people were in the building.

The Hall has placed employees at the doors with clickers, counting customers as they come and go. If there are 1,400 people in the building, no additional customers can be admitted.

Donoho said the Bryan Fire Department was pleased with the attitude of the Hall's management.

"They have been more than cooperative," he said. "They want to do the same thing we do — they want the kids to be out there and be safe."

BAC showcases African culture

Harambee has dancing, poetry

BY ROB MUNSON
The Battalion

In honor of Black History Month, the MSC Black Awareness Committee (BAC) hosted Harambee 2001, an event showcasing African-American history, poetry and dancing.

Harambee means "a call to unity" in Swahili. Although it was sponsored by an African-American organization, students of other ethnicities filled Rudder Theater for the program.

Brandon Hepburn, BAC co-director in charge of advertising and a sophomore architecture major, said Harambee was a great way to kick off Black History Month.

"Harambee brings many black organizations together and demonstrates what they are capable of," he said.

The premier performance of Harambee was the "Unity Step." With deep roots in Africa, the Unity Step was used as an alternative to war and violence. Tribal disputes were resolved by rhythmic performances of stepping, instead of fighting.

Twelve students from seven black fraternities and sororities performed this year's PanHellenic Unity Step.

Metria Simpson, BAC chairwoman and a senior information systems major, said Harambee's purpose is to celebrate cultural diversity.

"Basically, we want all students to gain some insight from our speaker and performers," she said. "This program is a great way to show multiculturalism at its best."

Harambee 2001's guest speaker, the Rev. Robert Muhammed of Houston, delivered a lecture on apathy, political empowerment and unity. Muhammed is the Southwest regional representative for the Nation of Islam. He was flanked by bodyguards sporting the trademark Nation of Islam suit and bow tie.

Muhammed has counseled former death row inmates Odell Barnes and Shaka Sankofa and has been a spiritual adviser to prominent black leaders such as the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton.

Students from Prairie View A&M University joined Aggies for Harambee 2001. The Alkebulan Liberation Drummers from Prairie View A&M performed cadenced beats on stage.

Alkebulan drummer Eric Blaylock

See HARAMBEE on Page 2.

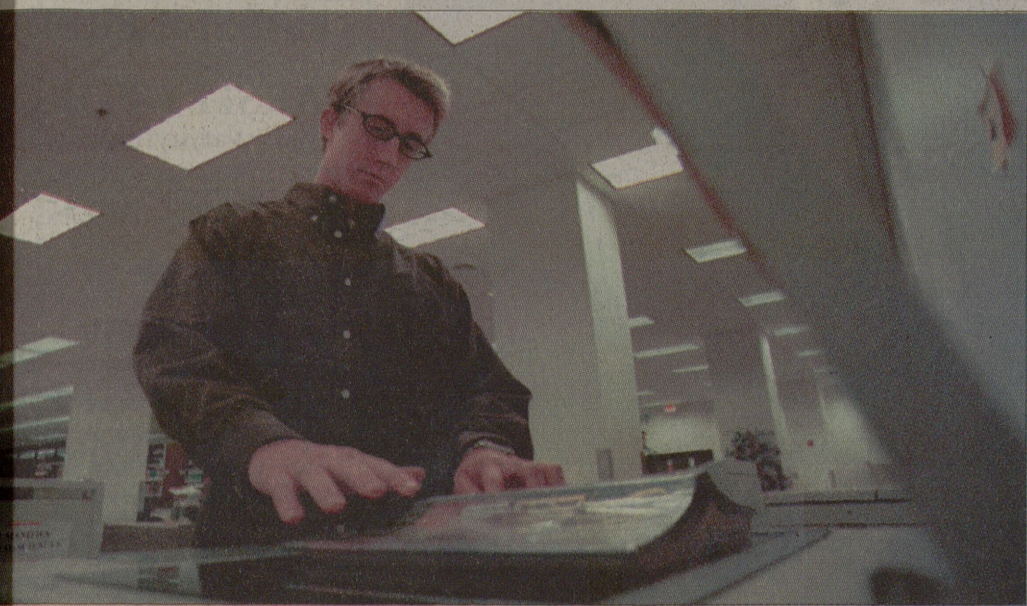
Smash hit



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Aiji and Equality, students in Prairie View A&M's traditional West African percussion ensemble, play at the Harambee

festival sponsored by the MSC Black Awareness Committee to promote black unity.



SUSAN REDDING/THE BATTALION

David Penuel, a senior exercise physiology major, make copies for his aerobic dance class using the new copy machines in Sterling C. Evans Library.

A&M gets new machines

Ikon will honor remaining Copico cards until July

BY HEATHER BARBER
The Battalion

Ikon is now the provider of copy machine services at Texas A&M after the termination of the University's contract with Copico.

The three-year contract was ended in a mutual agreement, said Anne Janne, the business operations contact in Sterling C. Evans Library. Although Copico was doing an excellent job, the firm was losing money, Janne said.

Copico's profits were hurt by the free printing available from Computing and Information Services (CIS). It also lost business as databases and resources once available only in the libraries be-

came accessible in students' homes via the Internet.

The new contract is University-wide, covering all of the libraries on campus. The contract covers other locations, including Blocker Building, Heldenfels Hall, the Memorial Student Center and Zachry Engineering Center.

A number of companies, including Copico, bid last fall for the three-year contract.

Charles Gilreath, associate University librarian for advanced studies, said the University's goal was solid, plain copying, and Ikon was able to meet these standards. Under the contract, Ikon will provide its own equipment, service and

maintenance in exchange for the University's feedback on its services.

Janne said students can use their Copico cards until July.

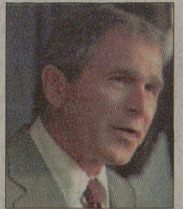
The transition from Copico to Ikon was smooth, and copy-machine users will not notice most changes, Janne said. One benefit of the new provider is the lower price for the microfiche copies, from 25 cents to 10 cents.

Janne said she expects to see a rise in the use of microform prints as a result of the lowered price.

Christy Van Husen, a junior nutritional science major, said she uses the copy services on campus often and was relieved to learn that her copy card will still be valid.

Bush seeks support for his tax cut plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush asked Americans on Monday to back his push in Congress for massive tax cuts that he wants to make retroactive to Jan. 1. "Everybody who pays taxes will get some relief," the president promised.



BUSH

After wooing lawmakers for two weeks, Bush opened a tightly scripted public-relations campaign for his \$1.6 trillion, 10-year plan to lower income tax rates across the board. He invited to a White House press appearance families representing three of the four lower tax brackets that would be created under the plan he sends to Congress this week.

"No American should pay more than a

third of his income to the federal government," said Bush, standing before a jumbo check payable to "U.S. Taxpayer" in the amount of \$1,600 — the average tax cut for a family of four under his plan, according to White House estimates.

Bush would reduce the five tax brackets under current law — 15 percent, 28 percent, 31 percent, 36 percent and 39.6 percent — to 10 percent, 15 percent, 25 percent and 33 percent.

In a back-and-forth with reporters in the White House diplomatic room, Bush addressed Democratic criticism that the wealthiest Americans in those top two brackets would reap the biggest benefits.

"I've heard all the talk about class warfare and this only benefiting the rich. I think when people take a good hard look at the rate reduction and who benefits and

the fact that our plan ... eases inequities in the tax code and that the bottom end of the economic ladder receives the biggest percentage cuts, people will come to realize it — I think it's important to cut all tax rates."

He warned those lawmakers who might want to "load up" his tax legislation with their own giveaways that his is "the right-sized plan. It is the right approach and I'm going to defend it mightily."

Bush said he would ask that the cuts be made retroactive to Jan. 1 in order "to expedite money to the pockets of the American people."

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer acknowledged that absent among the everyday Americans invited to Bush's ceremony on Monday was someone in the highest income bracket who would see

their top rate slashed from 39.6 percent to 33 percent.

Asked about the conspicuous omission, Bush, the former Texas governor, laughed and said he was representing that group himself. "I got a little pay raise coming to Washington from Austin. I'll be in the top bracket."

Later Monday, Bush scheduled a private lunch with Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, aides said. Greenspan gave Bush's tax cut proposal a boost last month when he said surplus estimates had grown so large that he believed there was enough money to both pay down the national debt and provide tax relief.

Bush also attended the formal swearing-in of Commerce Secretary Don Evans before dining Monday night with visiting Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

The following student will be honored:

SILVER TAPS

Shannon Trae Alston
Plant Breeding Graduate Student

The Silver Taps ceremony will be held tonight at 10:30 in front of the Academic Building. The ceremony is to honor those students who have passed away while enrolled.

SELSO GARCIA/THE BATTALION