

Getting Started

Students have a lot to take care of before the first day of class

By JOHN SALERNO
THE BATTALION

With the first beginning of Fall 2001 classes just a few days away, many students will find this week to be one of the most hectic of the semester. For upperclassmen, returning from a three-month vacation will be hard enough, but for incoming freshmen, adjusting to a college lifestyle can be a little overwhelming. That is why it is important to get many of their day-to-day tasks organized early, and it is equally important to get involved with other students.

"Right now, it's important that new students feel like they belong here at A&M," said Cheyne Stepanski, a junior international studies major and peer counselor at the Study Abroad Programs Office.

Stepanski is helping some of the new international students adjust to their living situations.

"Since many of the students don't have transportation, I use the study-abroad van and take them where they need to go, like to the store so that they can get what they need for their dorms to feel more at home," she said.

Stepanski also is helping new students settle in to their new apartments before classes begin. But the aid offered by the Study Abroad Office is not for only international students.

"Although what I'm doing involves foreign exchange students, I think most of the help I'm giving is also good advice for any incoming freshman," Stepanski said. "It's important that they get situated in their dorms early, get to

know the people they are living with and do all their shopping before school starts. That way, they can focus on their classes during the first week without having to worry about not being done moving in yet."

Lorenzo Gonzalez, a senior environmental design major, said, "Talk to your roommate before school starts about your expectations on everything from noise to your personality. Don't hold back — get things out in the open beforehand."

While it is important to be comfortable with one's living situation, it is equally important to focus on the things that will help make your first week more manageable, such as figuring out how to get to your classes.

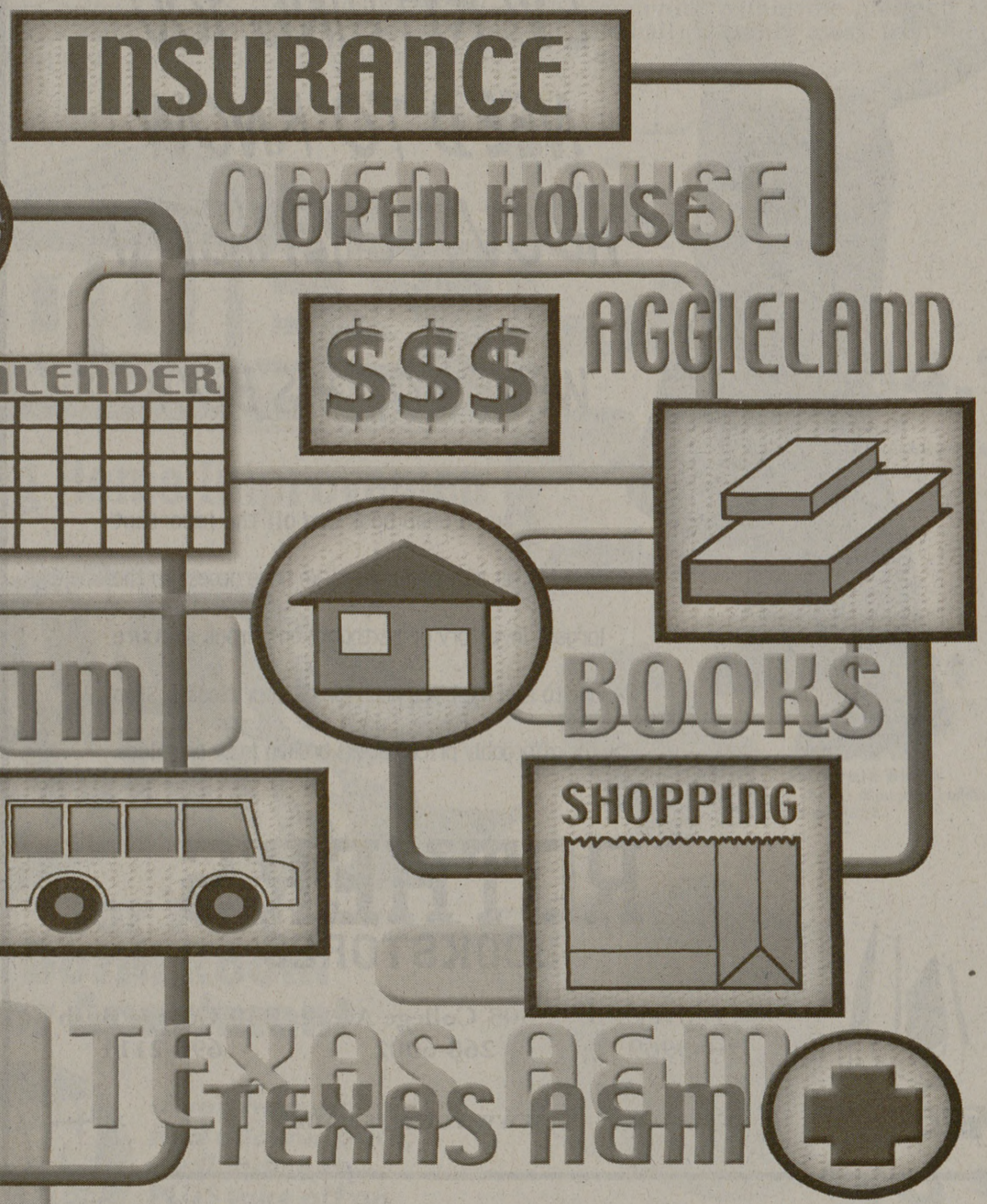
"In the commotion of the first day, it can be easy to get lost," Gonzalez said. "Practice your bike route or walking route to class. Go online, and discover the on-campus bus system — it is a great time-saver to get from one end of the campus to the other."

It is a good idea for students to walk around campus Sunday afternoon and learn where the main buildings are so they know where they are going Monday. Often, Fish Camp groups do this together the day before classes so new students will feel more comfortable heading off to class the next day.

In addition to mapping out class schedules, students also will want to be able to manage their free time.

"Plan ahead what you want to do with your free time in between classes," Gonzalez said. "You'll be more

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Moving?

Tips for getting into a new home successfully

By MELISSA SOROLA-BILANO
THE BATTALION

This semester marks the first time away from home for many Aggies, and not knowing what and how much to bring can cause problems for some.

To help with the move-in process, the Department of Residence Life is hosting Freshman Welcome Day today. Volunteers will be located outside of the residence halls to welcome new students and help them move into their new homes for the upcoming semester.

Ron Sasse, director of Residence Life, suggests freshmen come on that day to utilize the

help of the volunteers.

Sasse also recommends starting early in the morning because it will be much cooler.

"Take advantage of cool places, and drink a lot of water," Sasse said.

Moving also means there will be a lot of cardboard boxes. Instead of packing the boxes in the trash, there will be several locations set up to recycle the cardboard.

Sasse said the recycling locations will be available all week and he encourages students to recycle to help improve the environment and appearance of the campus.

Inevitably, students think they need to bring almost everything from home, and often arrive with more than they need.

Jorge Barrera, president of Residence Hall Association (RHA) and a senior electrical engineering major, said to bring only necessities, like bedding and toiletries.

"People forget how small their rooms are and bring too much stuff," Barrera said.

In addition to avoiding the heat, Barrera said early morning it also is a good time to find park-

ing. If there is not enough parking in the morning, Barrera said coming later in the day also may be a good idea to avoid congestion.

In the past, parking tickets have been issued during move-in time. Barrera reminds people to park in designated areas and not to park in bike lanes or drive up onto the pavement.

To avoid having two refrigerators in a small room, Resident Advisor Christina Ramirez, a junior biomedical science major, suggests roommates talk about what they are going to bring before they move.

"It's a good idea to contact your roommate, so they can know who is going to bring what," Ramirez said.

Like Sasse, Ramirez said it is good to move in during those main move-in days and to bring parents and extra help, if possible.

A dolly can also be useful for heavy boxes, but Ramirez said to try and pack boxes so they are easy to carry.

"A lot of people bring heavy stuff, and they realize (when they get here) they don't have elevators (in the residence halls)," Ramirez said.

Bringing winter clothes also is a mistake some people make when making the transition from home to dorm, Ramirez said.

Ramirez suggests leaving most of the winter wardrobe at home and then gradually bringing it back later in the semester. However, an extra blanket and a light sweater or jacket are musts for a cold residence hall room or classroom, Ramirez said.

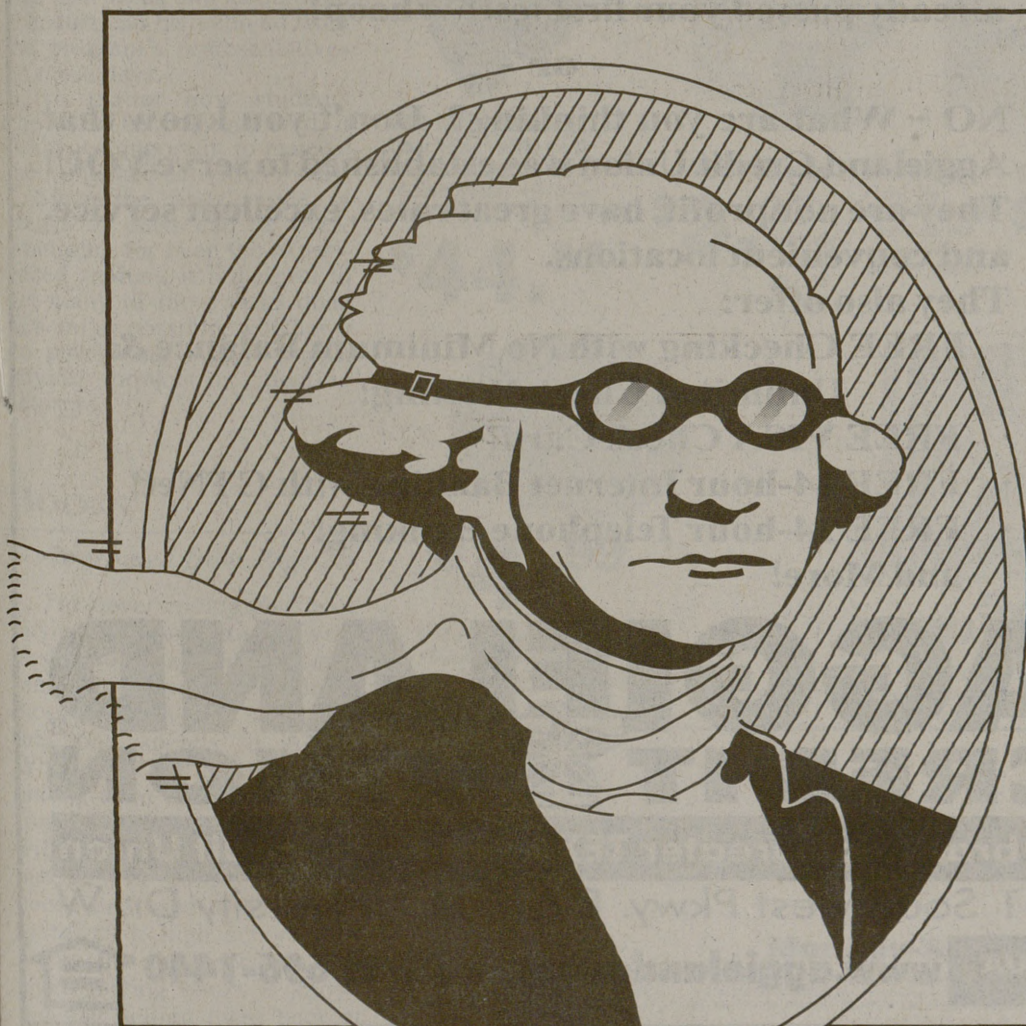
Unfortunately, theft can be a problem during move-in time, and Ramirez suggests having someone monitor items that are left outside so they will not be stolen.

Electrical appliances like toasters and George Foreman grills often find their way to the dorms, but Ramirez said they are prohibited and should be left at home.

Not only do new students have to deal with a new room, they also have to adjust to having a roommate.

Communication is key to getting along with a roommate, Ramirez said.

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