

AGGIELIFE

Around the world in 5 days

International Week kicks off today with cultural displays in the MSC

By Lauren Romero & Molly Cain
THE BATTALION

Monish Tandale, president of the India Association Board, wants to send one message to students during International Week. "The India Association Board's theme for this year is 'Science and Technology,'" he said. "We feel that we need to get this aspect in front of the international community to clear up people's misconceptions and tell them there is more to India than just rope tricks, elephants and the Taj Mahal."

What started out 25 years ago as International Day soon became International Week. Sponsored by the International Student Association, I-Week is a week-long cultural celebration with organizations representing countries around the world. For many, it eliminates stereotypes and encourages awareness of the many cultures alive on the Texas A&M campus.

I-Week is an important Aggie tradition because more than 3,000 international students attend A&M, said Suzanne Droleskey, executive director of International Programs for Students.

"I will never forget my first International Week," she said. "It was a whirlwind of activi-



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ty, a blur of color, aroma and sounds."

Droleskey, who has been working with I-Week since 1989, said it is stimulating to work with such dedicated student leaders and be part of such a special tradition.

"This week provides opportunities for both U.S. and international students to engage in discussions about their cultural differences, and perhaps more importantly, their similarities," she said. "We share a world where being able to work successfully with individuals from different cultural backgrounds is critically important to our mutual stability and overall future. At Texas A&M, one of the few activities focused entirely on this goal is International Week."

Droleskey said that during I-week, she never fails to learn something new about other cultures—and about herself.

"I have discovered that I am not so very different from other people in the world. I have realized that my perspective isn't the only one or even the best one," she said.

This year's I-week is dedicated to Tina Watkins, the former director of International Student Services. Watkins, who passed away on Jan. 6, helped create ISA and, according to the International Program's Web site, was known



as a second mother to many international students.

I-Week, themed "The Global Neighborhood," will feature cultural displays and an international buffet among other events. A portion of ticket proceeds will contribute to the Tina Watkins Scholarship Fund and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

"It's a big cultural awareness event, basically," said Laurence de Rosamel, a senior finance major and the vice-president of finance for ISA. "It's a good opportunity for consuls to meet some of the students from their country."

Last year, former President Bush attended, along with other officials and leaders from the B-CS community.

While de Rosamel said I-week is a big endeavor, she looks forward to educating others about different cultures.

"The main target is American students and the American community," she said. "The way it's going now, it's going to be very successful."

David Kaiser, a sophomore business administration major, said I-Week provides a good experience for acquainting students with other



cultures.

"I think it's awesome because there's so many international students," he said. "I-Week breaks the barrier between them (and American students)."

Students and community members can learn a lot by attending to I-Week because it provides the A&M community with a chance to explore different cultures.

For Kyle Maxwell, a senior political science major, I-Week is a chance to explore unfamiliar territory. "Americans in general, especially Aggies, are sheltered," he said. "This is a good way to participate and learn about other cultures."

Dini Sudari, the Sister's Coordinator for the Muslim Student Association, agrees.

"I think I-Week has a positive impact on students at A&M," Sudari said. "It's like a little tour to different countries and getting a little taste of each country without actually going there, but having it in your backyard instead."

For more information about I-Week, visit ISA's Web site at www.tamu.edu/isa. Tickets for the international buffet are \$10 and can be purchased at the Rudder Box Office.

International Week schedule of events

- Geared for students to experience the many cultures of international students

Monday
- Cultural displays in MSC 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday
- Cultural displays in MSC 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wednesday
- International buffet in MSC 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- Tickets are \$10 and available at the Rudder Box Office

Thursday
- Consuls General Luncheon

Friday
- Talent show and dress parade in Rudder Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

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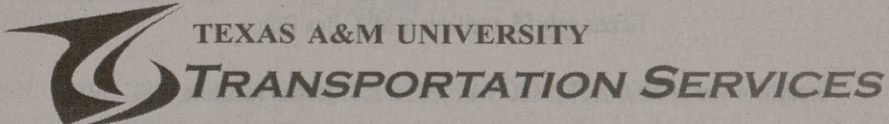
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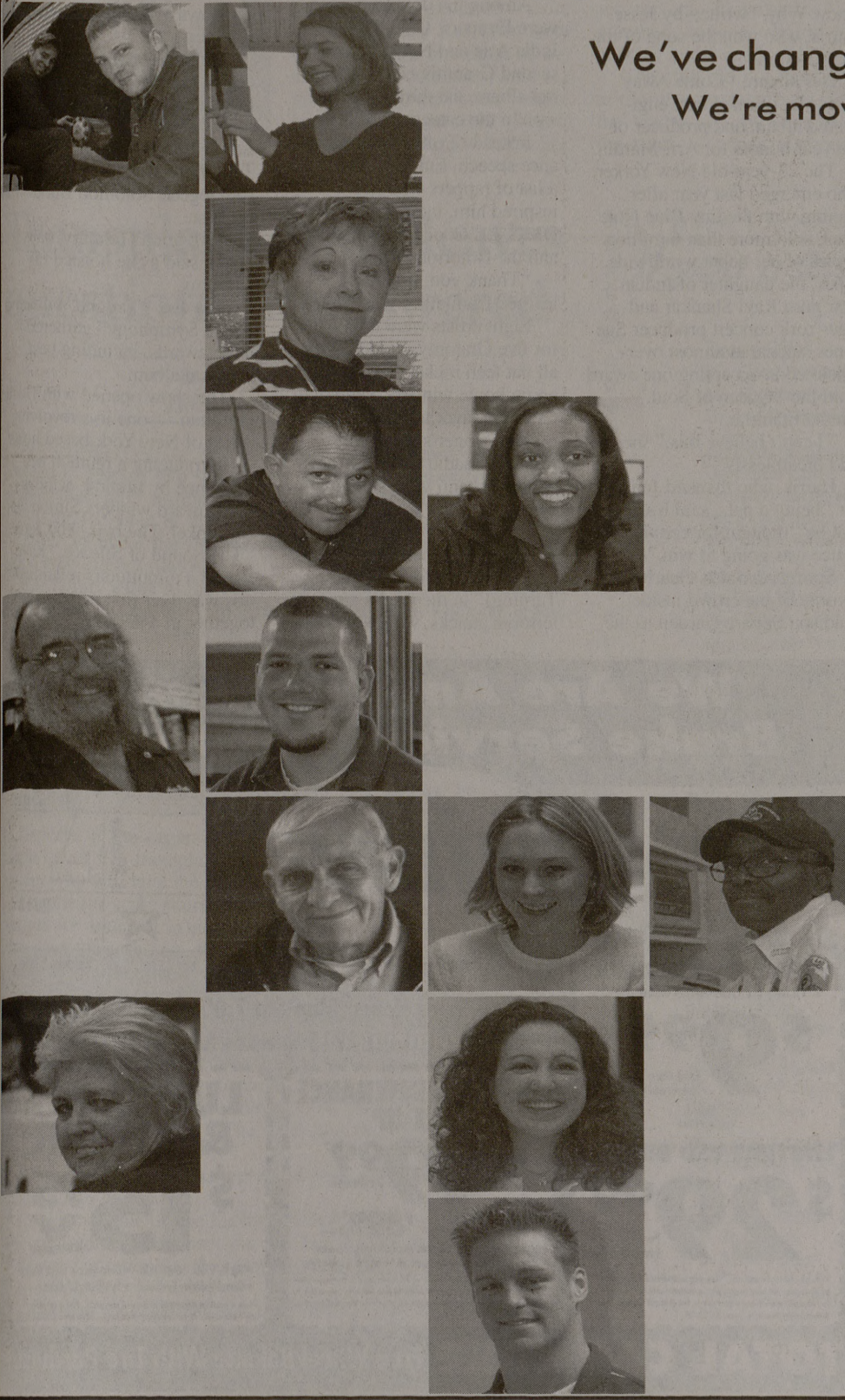
Keep watching . . . And we'll keep listening.

UPDATE:
PA 33 near North Area Residence Halls is now open with more than 350 new spaces for Red Permits.

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