from 6:00 - 9:00 PM.

p.m. For immediate consideration, contact Dell Bomnskie in O11A (basement)

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F.A.C.T. (First-time Aggie Contact Team) is a program where faculty,

staff and student leaders contact new Aggies to welcome them to the

University and ask about their experiences at A&M. F.A.C.T. will be

conducted Mondays through Thursdays, September 29-October 16

Please volunteer your time to help our new Aggies feel at home. You

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Game addicts hit the dance pa

By Jenee Osterheldt KRT CAMPUS

Forget the fascination with the eye-dazzling graphics of the Xbox and

Many sit-and-play video game addicts are getting up and out, heading for the nearest arcade to jump on the interactive rhythm game "Dance Dance Revolution." They've traded their tired fingers for crazy legs in an eye-ear-foot coordination challenge.

The video game-dance union started in Japan a few years ago and is turning America's video gamers into a rhythm nation of sorts. The "DDR" craze has ignited the creation of clubs everywhere, from California to a club in Kansas City known as

DDRKC isn't a traditional club with meetings and officers and minutes and dues. This organization is strictly for the sport of rhythm games. At the meetings, gamers swap techniques while playing the games.

Ryan Edwards, a 27-year-old software engineer, founded DDRKC in April because he wanted to generate some interest in the area. Edwards even owns his own "DDR" arcade machines in Play Central Station, an arcade in the suburb of Overland Park, Kan. DDRKC helps encourage new players and provides a forum to address local game issues, Edwards said.

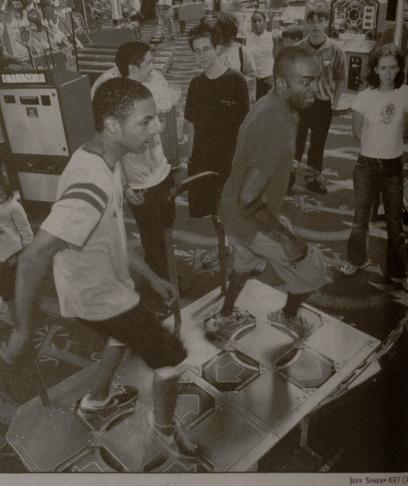
"It generally adds to the following of such games in the U.S. and worldwide," he said. "Besides, it's more fun to play with friends than alone.

'DDR" friends gather in groups as large as 20 every Thursday at Play Central Station to take turns playing and watching. "DDR" is fun for the players, but to the spectator it looks as serious as a boxing match. There are three levels based on speed, beat and precision: Basic, Trick and Maniac. Players keep a straight face, they barely move their arms, and it's all about precision. Feet on arrows on beat for four songs straight.

It's hyper-aerobic. By the fourth and final song in a game, the dance maniac is wearing a sweat-soaked shirt. The first move they make as they step off the machine is toward the concession stand where they guzzle water so fast it gushes out of their mouths and down their chins.

"It's incredibly fun and a great workout," says T.J. Vehlewald, 17. "I am in better shape than I used to be and before I started playing this. I sat around doing nothing.'

Bud Crittenden, a "DDR" maniac, and some of his co-workers at Sprint in Kansas City, Kan., enjoy a game of "DDR" during lunch breaks. In addition to his lunch-hour fun, Crittenden says he comes out on Thursday nights for a little fun exercise that's cheaper than a membership at Bally's.



Matthew Davis, 16, and his brother, Josh, 23, dance on a Dance Dance Revolution machine of arcade in Concord, North Carolina.

Since I've been doing it, I've been slowly losing weight, and I'm toning up," says Crittenden, 33, who's been playing for more

For others, the beat's the thing.

"These games are fun because everybody likes music. It's not like using a controller; it's about using your body," said Duncan Oliver, a senior at Blue Valley Northwest in Overland Park, Kan. "It's pretty addictive. People who like it should probably get the home version because once you start you'll end up using lots of tokens," said Oliver, 17.

Each player gets four songs for \$1, but eventually this adds up. Which is why many "DDR" fanatics have the home version of the game on PlayStation (\$30). Some play with their fingers by controller, others buy the pad set (\$50). A PC version is available as well, and some dance fiends even have the actual arcade version at home.

Like Jon Effertz, 15, who got the actual arcade machine for his birthday earlier this

"My mom sees it as really good exercise,

and it's so much fun," Jon said. "My mona actually getting good at it. The whole far ly plays, and it's good entertainment it company.'

The next step for DDRKC freaks competition.

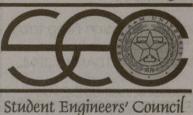
"It's seemed like you had to trawlo farther west to get some solid competition so we decided to hold our own tour ments here," said Vehlewald, a high school

Tournaments are divided into technic and performance. Performance compe tion is about freestyle dancing; technic competition is based on precision. An there are competitions for basics, tricks and maniacs.

"Competing in a tournament would be about seeing how I rank," said Drew Miller, a 21-year-old "DDR" freak There's a challenge about it."

'There really is no preparation for tour naments other than practice," Effertz said 'The hardest part of the game is getting exactly on beat."

Texas A&M University



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