

Interhouse Dance

Each year about this time, the Student Houses turn into jungles, rivers, overseas countries, and comic strips. Preparations for the Interhouse Dance begin anywhere from four weeks to six days before the big night. By four weeks before the dance, most of the Houses have already decided on a "theme." (This year's themes ranged from "Aztec Exotica" to "Arabian Nights" and "Ruin.")

About this time, too, there is some concern about how much all this is going to cost. Estimates have varied from a low of \$250 to a high of over \$750 for each House, and the total spent by the seven Houses usually amounts to about \$3500.

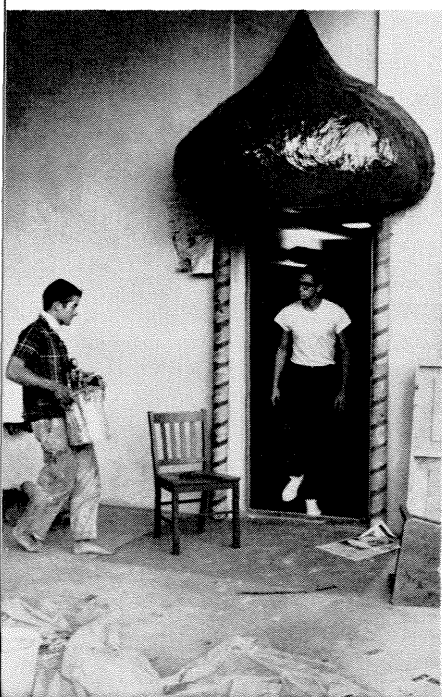
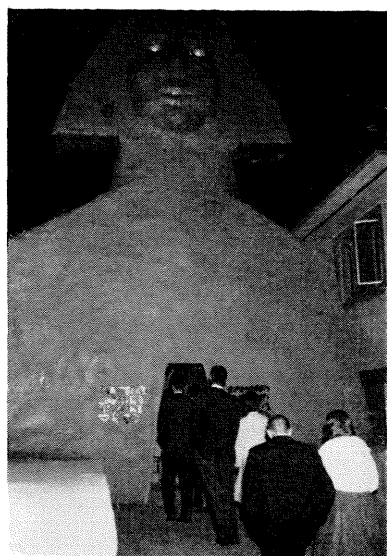
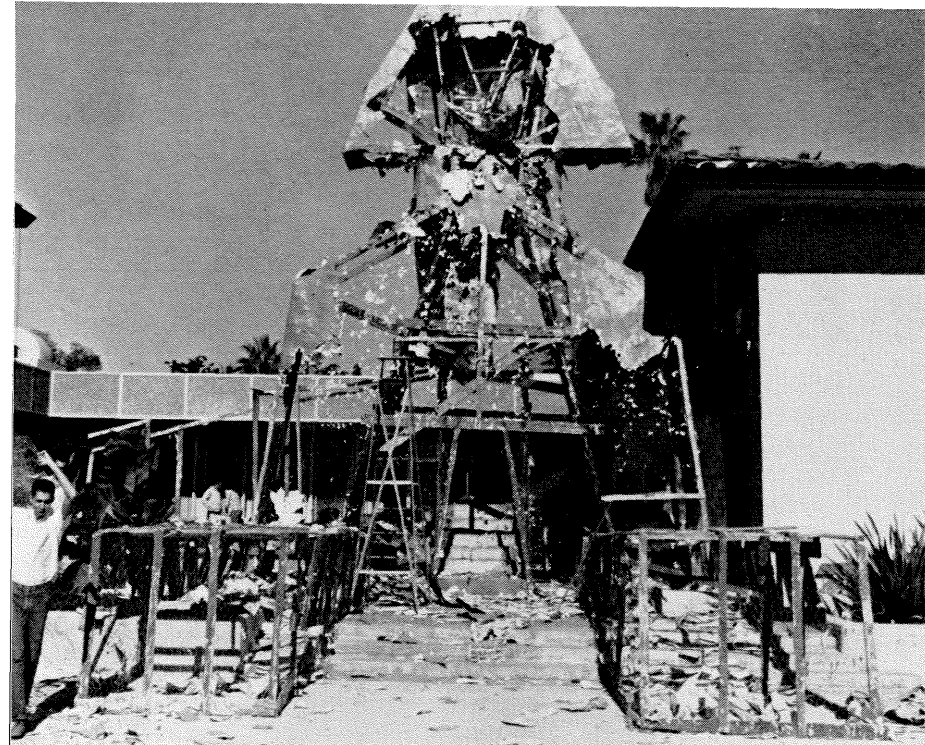
Then construction begins. Interhouse construction finds some of the most unlikely people out in their House courtyard, putting up untold amounts of papier-maché, lumber, chicken wire, and paint. Quiet members of the House become suddenly gung-ho and decide on all sorts of ambitious projects, like, "Hey, guys, how about putting up a mechanized whale? We can have him forty feet long and spouting water, while his tail moves in time to some nautical music!"

"But where will we put him? Between the 45-foot Alaskan seal and the triple-life-size statue of Walt Disney?"

"Well, look. If we move the seal to 35 feet above the roof, instead of 20 feet, and then we . . ."

Some of the grandiose schemes are quickly junked, but enough remain so that Interhouse is usually a contest to see who can get the most the highest and paint it the fanciest.

As a result, there is a great need for assorted lumber and other interesting items. Typical items



collected this year in just one House included a female mannikin head with long, black, Egyptian hair; a 1300 rpm $\frac{3}{4}$ horsepower motor geared down to 2 rpm; assorted pulleys and governors; and liquid latex to manufacture artificial skin for an automated but life-sized belly-dancer.

Although there is no formal judging of which House has the "best" display; as in the Olympic games, there is much discussion on which House is "best." Opinions vary, depending on which House the person voicing them is from. But different Houses are remembered for different things.

Fleming House, for example, traditionally begins construction as late as possible. As a result, Fleming tends to rely heavily upon painted wrapping paper stretched across the second floor and lounge entrances. Fleming broke all records this year with their early construction start (five days before the dance).

Dabney tries to have many small, ingenious items as part of their display, and this year experimented with a rock-and-roll band, whose volume was exceeded only by the colors of their coats.

Blacker invariably floods their courtyard because a flooded courtyard requires less construction. This year was no exception as a smallish river wended its way through the courtyard and visitors entered into a lounge converted into a castle.

Lloyd features a general slowness of construction in the weeks prior to Interhouse, followed by a mass flurry in the last few days. This year, Lloyd didn't quite make it, and early visitors found a foundation of chicken wire and a broom supporting the entrance to the "Arabian Nights."

Page, Ricketts, and Ruddock are best remembered for the Trojan Horse fiasco of two years ago, when all three Houses joined together to build a gigantic city of Troy complete with a Trojan horse more than 40 feet high. A heavy rain the day before the dance caused the stomach of the horse to dissolve away, however, creating an impressively hollow display.

The day after the dance everything must be torn down and courtyards returned to normal. A week later, a Buildings and Grounds crew assesses the damage, determined to find at least \$100 worth per House. Shortly thereafter, courtyards and lounges finally *are* cleaned up and nothing remains of the year's biggest dance — except the mountain of miscellaneous material that is stored away under the old Student Houses in preparation for next year.

— Richard Karp '64

