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# Spring Break '98

A special supplement from The Columbia Chronicle

March 30, 1998

## Study Finds Students Drink More, Have More Sex On Spring Break

By Colleen DeBaise  
College Press Service

MENOMONIE, Wis.—Students drink more, use more drugs and engage in riskier sex while on spring break than at their own campuses.

That's what two University of Wisconsin-Stout professors discovered after surveying 800 spring breakers on a Florida beach in 1995.

Three out of four men and two out of five women reported being drunk every day, while a third of the students said they used marijuana while on spring break, the professors said. Also, men told the professors that they had more unprotected sex with new partners during break than they typically had at home.

"Our findings are quite startling," said the survey authors, tourism professor Bharath Josiam and psychology professor Gorge L. Smeaton.

Well... maybe to them. Students, on the other hand, say the survey results are a pretty accurate reflection of fun-in-the-sun.

"It doesn't surprise me at all," said Howard Kalin, an Ohio State University senior. "The idea of spring break is based on partying. It makes a lot of sense."

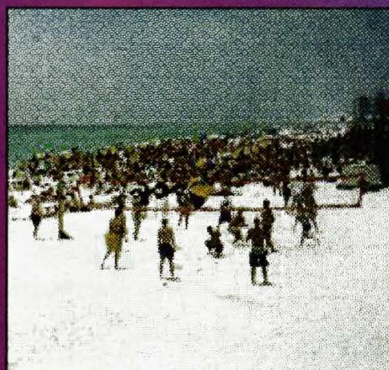
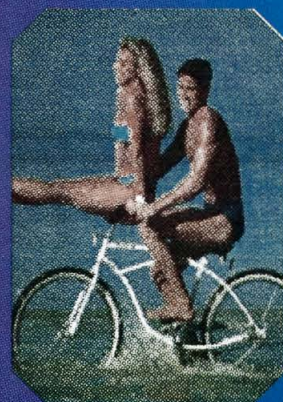
Kalin spent his spring break on the beach in Jamaica. "I know me and my friends drank more than we normally do and used more drugs than we normally do," he said.

In their survey, the professors noted that alcohol and drug use are linked to a variety of negative consequences, from severe sunburn to car accidents to unwanted pregnancies.

And, "with hundreds of thousands of people vacationing in one location, there is also a strong possibility of bringing back sexually transmitted diseases," Smeaton said.

But Kalin says that most students really aren't thinking about the consequences when they're away from campus.

"You don't have to worry about working. You have more free time," he said. "You can indulge a little bit more."



## A little Spring Break Advice

By Rich Goldberg  
Humor Columnist

Spring Break is coming up and, as college students, it is our job to make sure that the incessant drinking and random sex continues this year. But enough about the plane trip.

When you pick your destination, you have several things to consider. First, you want to make sure that wherever you are planning to go will have either a lot of sand or a lot of snow. This is actually an unimportant aspect, as you can take 30 of your closest friends and two mini vans full of Molsen and have a good time almost anywhere.

But remember, if you plan on starting the party before you reach your intended destination, you might end up in Cleveland, Ohio. So bring a map.

This leads me to the second part: beverages. This is something worth mentioning. Spring Break is no Rochester party. You don't need an "alternative beverage." And you're not going to want to be walking around carrying anything labeled "Light." This year, go for something with "Ice" in the name (not ice in the bottle — that could be anything).

Third, no matter where you go, you'll want to bring shorts. Although you might not think so now, even if you go skiing, you will end up wearing them. If you bring them, you won't have to worry about going to jail for trying to beat a pair out of the Dominoes delivery boy.

You will also need a camera. No Spring Break is complete without the requisite pictures to stare at a week later and moan, "I can't believe I DID that... what was her name?"

And now, my last piece of advice. Protect yourself. They come in packs of threes, so decide how lucky you are and plan ahead. You've got to be around next year to do this all over again.

So remember, pick your friends (about 30), your drink (not Koolaid), your map (AAA), your film (Kodak), and your appropriate dress (a pair of shorts and a raincoat). This Spring Break, have the best time of your life and live to tell about it... the parts you remember, anyway.

(C)1996, Richard P. Goldberg



## Top Spring Break locations

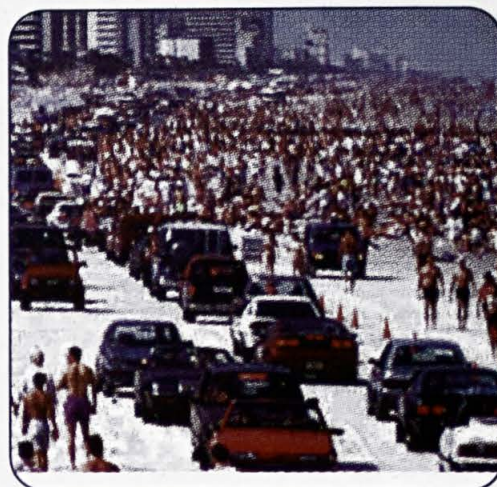
### 1 Cancun (Local Bar)



### 2 South Padre, Texas



### 3 Daytona Beach



## Bring the beach to your living room this Spring Break

By Colleen DeBaise  
College Press Service

OK, so you're not going to the beach this spring break. It's highly possible that you're not alone. Although millions of students will enjoy spring paradises such as Daytona Beach and Cancun, others will use their days off to work at part-time jobs, spend time with their families or go on a job hunt.

Some students simply can't afford the price of a dream vacation; after all, the costs of airplane tickets, hotel rooms, food and well, beverages, can really rack up. But that doesn't mean there isn't "fun in the sun" to be had.

With a little help from your VCR and a well-stocked video store, the sand and sunny skies of the beach can come to you. Here's a list of "beach movies"—from Frankie and Annette to "Surf Nazis Must Die"—that takes the edge off a break when your mind has gone south and you haven't.

Widely considered the first-ever spring break flick is "Where The Boys Are," which stars the man of the eternal tan, George Hamilton. This silly musical, which hit the beach in 1960, is all about college girls searching for Mr. Right in Fort Lauderdale.

As one critic put it, "this movie never pretends to be anything other than what it is—a teen-age beach movie." Of course "From Here to Eternity" isn't really a beach movie (in fact, it won an Academy Award for best picture in 1953), but there is that famous beach scene involving Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr rolling passionately in the Hawaiian sand. Heavy stuff for the 1950s, and well worth a trip to the video store.

"Beach Party" (1963), with Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, kicked off a series of flicks that can best be described as "quintessential beach movies," for lack of a plot to summarize. Others that followed are: "Muscle Beach Party" (1964), "Pajama Party" (1964), "Beach Blanket Bingo" (1965), "How to Stuff a Wild Bikini" (1965) and "Ghost in the Invisible Bikini" (1966). The titles say it all.

Other not-to-be-missed beach movies from this era include the entire "Gidget" series, which started out in 1959 with Sandra Dee as the title character making goo-goo eyes at a surfer. "Gidget Goes Hawaiian" is considered the series' "piece de resistance" and features a character named "Moondoggie."

"The Endless Summer" (1966) has some historical significance, if you will, in that it popularized the sport of



surfing. It also led to numerous remakes and a sequel in 1994, "The Endless Summer II," which not only proved the search for the perfect wave never ends.

Unfortunately for 1970s fans, beach movies seemed to hit a dry spell in an era that favored platform shoes and disco over navel-covering bikinis and surfboard wax.

However, the classic "Jaws," which might not exactly fit under the label "beach movie," was released in 1975. This Steven Spielberg flick features not only a killer shark harassing a small New England beach town, but also that famous "shark approaching" music.

The film "Malibu Beach" (1978) takes a slightly more risque spin on the 1960s beach-blanket movies, and stars a dog trained to snatch the tops of girls' bathing suits. Brief nudity ensues, as does fist-fighting, car-racing and pot-smoking in this empty-headed movie.

But the 1980s introduced a new breed of beach movies, starting with tough high school guy Matt Dillon playing a cabana boy in "The Flamingo Kid" (1983). His

character, a Brooklyn teen-ager, falls for the good life and decides that selling Porsches is better than going to college.

"The Sure Thing" (1985) is another coming-of-age flick about two mismatched college students (John Cusack and pre-"Melrose Place" Daphne Zuniga) who fall in love while on a cross-country road trip to L.A. over spring break. "It tops everyone's list of great break movies," says one critic.

They're back! Somehow, Frankie and Annette made a comeback, albeit unsuccessful, in 1987 with "Back to the Beach." He's still singing, and she's still wearing polka-dot dresses, but this silly beach movie deserves to be buried in the sand.

Call it coincidence, but the cult favorite "Surf Nazis Must Die" also surfaced in 1987. This low-budget Troma film plugs itself with the words, "The beaches have become battlefields, the waves are a war zone . . ." and features the usual beach movie essentials and a twist: sand, sun, nuclear radiation. No polka-dot dresses in this flick.

You may be bleary-eyed, but there's still more beach-related fare. The year 1989 saw two new beach movies, "Weekend at Bernie's," with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman cavorting on the beach with a stiff, and "Shag—The Movie," which stars Phoebe Cates and others reveling in the fun of beachside beauty pageants and dance

contests.

Enter the 1990s and even more chic beach movies, a la "Beverly Hills 90210." Patrick Swayze stars with Keanu Reeves as the ultimate surfer dude in "Point Break." Like, it's his karma to find the perfect wave, dude.

That brings the list almost up-to-date, except for yet another atypical beach movie, Kevin Costner's "Waterworld," currently number one on the "Top Video Releases" list. There may be no beach in this flick (in fact, the entire world is submerged), but there's still sun, waves and beautiful people. It cost nearly \$200 million to make, but its only a few dollars to rent.

So as you wave goodbye to your classmates, don't despair. Sunny skies, beachballs and great ocean waves are only a video store away. And if you don't have a VCR, don't worry. There's always "Baywatch."

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# Take a Spring Break, but don't get taken

By Mindy Charski  
College Press Service

Ruth Berkowitz and five of her friends spent the cold winter of their sophomore year at Washington University in St. Louis with warm thoughts of a spring break in South Padre Island.

Berkowitz spent the months after the trip arguing with a hotel manager who accused her group of breaking the room's sleeper sofa.

"We called them several times and argued with them," Berkowitz said. "They were saying that we completely destroyed the sofa, that we must have had a party and jumped up and down on the bed." Despite their efforts, the group never got their \$250 deposit back.

Every spring, as school lets out for a week, students pack their bags looking for a place to get away from it all. But too often scam artists are looking to get away with students' hard-earned money. Most commonly students fall victim to travel scams by companies selling dream vacations at amazingly low prices.

"Students and seniors are the most targeted groups to be taken advantage of," said Steve Loucks, the spokesperson for the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA). "Students are wrongly perceived to be a little wet behind the ears in terms of travel planning."

"Usually what you find is some unscrupulous tour operator who's going directly to students on campuses with all sorts of flowery offers," Loucks said. "The bulk of those offers are not legitimate. What we tell people is anytime you see an offer that's too good to be true it usually is."

Tammy, an Indiana University student, says both a company offering a boat tour in Puerto Vallarta and the people she booked her package through misrepresented themselves.

"We paid for a boat cruise separate from the package, and then when we went to get the tickets there was another charge they hadn't told us about," said Tammy, not wishing to be identified by her last name. "On this cruise boat there wasn't a place for us to sit. They had snorkeling, but you're snorkeling in a place where there's nothing to look at."

The hotel wasn't a "dumpy" hotel, she says, but they did have to change rooms after they found cockroaches in the first one. "That wasn't good," she said.

The charter flight had its problems as well. On the way back the plane was so crowded "people's luggage was left behind," she said. "It was one of these 'Let's fit as many people as we can' things."

And the meals that were included? "They were disgusting," she said. "In Puerto Vallarta where you would think you would get Mexican food I think I had more Italian food. But they provided free drinks that was a bonus."

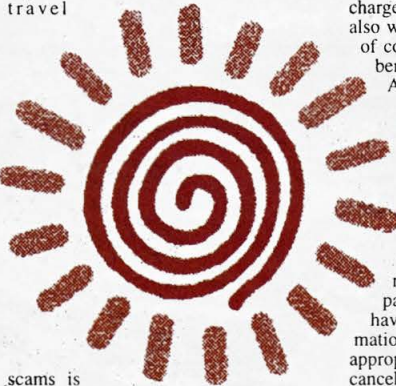
The cost of a spring break trip usually depends on the price of the hotel room, said Leslie Carroll, branch manager of STA Chicago. The cheaper the price of the trip, the less amenities one can expect in a hotel room, she says.

"It sometimes sounds like a \$299

round-trip with eight nights at a hotel seems like an amazing price that's too good to be true, but it actually does exist," she said. "You have to remember that's a quad rate for four people, and it's usually a downtown hotel... and it will be a one-star hotel with no extras whatsoever. They have been known to be unsafe."

Staying downtown in popular Spring Break destinations such as Cancun, the Bahamas and Jamaica means you should expect the hidden costs of cab rides to the beach, Carroll adds.

Carroll and other travel agents say the best way students can protect themselves against travel



scams is to book the trip through reputable travel agencies. Agents have the same access to Spring Break tour operators as the people who advertise packages in college newspapers and on flashy posters. The difference is that most established travel agencies know which operators are legitimate and trustworthy; people targeting students do not always know or care.

And, when you book through a travel agent everything about the trip, including the hotel room and flight, are confirmed and you know exactly how much the trip will cost. One popular scam that surfaces about this time is a \$199 per person cruise package departing out of Orlando or Fort Lauderdale to the Bahamas.

"The cruise they're talking about is like a day ferry," said Sharon Jackson, publisher of the online K.L. Smith's Cruise Letter (<http://www.chevychase.com/cruise>). The price does not include air fare to Florida, port charges or food and the motels included in the package are fleabags, Jackson said.

As if those details were not bad enough, people purchasing the package are actually only buying certificates for a trip. Ninety-nine times out of 100 the purchaser cannot even redeem the coupons during the spring's high travel weeks. "Families have booked their vacations a long time ago. While there may be a cancellation, you can't expect a good deal because they've sold at a high price," Jackson said.

"The best advice I can give to students is if they are online, go to the travel newsgroups like the ones about Caribbean vacations, Las Vegas vacations," she said. "These are regular chat groups and you can ask questions like 'I

got this price on this,' and experienced travelers will tell you about these kinds of things."

The main piece of advice of Student & Budget Travel's Webmaster Lara Friedman is: "Don't trust everything you see on the Internet. Do some double-checking and get confirmation in writing whenever possible." Friedman's site (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/chdocs/travel/travel-guide.html>) helps locate travel-related resources on the Internet.

Always pay by credit card, advises Mark Kantrowitz of the Air Traveler's Handbook. That way if you don't receive the service or the service wasn't what you expected, you can dispute the charge with the credit card company. He also warns that students should be wary of companies with no telephone number and no listing with Directory Assistance.

When considering Spring Break tour packages, ASTA recommends the following guidelines to ensure you are not being scammed:

Before paying, get all the details in writing, including total cost, restrictions that apply, cancellation penalties, and the exact names of the airlines and hotels the package includes. You should never have to pay up front just to get information about a travel package. Purchase appropriate insurance in case you must cancel.

When you are getting an evaluation of the offer from a reputable travel agent, among the questions you should be asking are: Does the tour operator belong to a consumer protection plan that would protect your payment in the case of the tour company closed? Has the agency ever sent a client on a tour with the company? Also, make sure you are informed of what additional taxes or surcharges are involved, such as airport and port taxes (when going on a cruise). Also, ask what the customary or expected gratuities are on the tour.

If speaking with a local travel agent is not convenient, consult directly with ASTA's Consumer Affairs Department at 703-706-0387 as well as the Better Business Bureau or Consumer Protection Agencies in your state.

If a charter flight is involved, ask for the charter operator's name and address and check their registration with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Consumer Affairs, I-25, Washington, D.C. 20590. Make sure your check is made payable to an escrow account which federal law requires for charters. You can call the bank handling the escrow account to make sure it is valid.

If you're paying with a credit card, don't give your information to a company you have not yet researched.

Be cautious with companies that require you wait at least 60 days to take your trip or require that you select several dates of departure for your trip.

Ruth's advice to avoid scams like the one pulled on her group is simple: "Be really careful inspecting the condominium/hotel that you are staying in as soon as you arrive. Report anything broken, torn or stained. Take Polaroids of it. Make sure they can't pin it on you."

## Tales from the Dull Side: Spring Break as spent by boing students

By Alana Merritt-Mahaffey

With tans so dark their race is called into question, UCA students have returned from a sunny spring break. There are about 8,500 students attending UCA and about 8,498 went on some sort of exciting spring break adventure to some far-off shoreline state.

The two left stranded in Arkansas were myself and my husband.

Oh sure, our spring break was filled with adventure and excitement the Arkansas way. We

basked under the sun in tall grass. Of course, we were doing yardwork at the time, but no matter.

We spent the days browsing through street-side shops (more commonly known as garage sales)

and took brunches on springtime patios (more commonly known as the spider-infested front porch).

At night we took in a highly-rated show and sipped on good wine (okay, it was Welch's grape juice-on-sale-and "Real Stories of the Highway Patrol"). We visited family we'd not seen in ages (my brothers who can burp the Pledge of Allegiance in harmony.) I played with the semester-long neglected dog. (The husband held her down and I picked ticks off her.)

All in all, it was a spring break not unlike other spring breaks of yore. Hassle-reduced. Quiet. Nice. Uneventful. -akmm

## Spring Break accidents and more

By Holly Kurtz

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — A college student on spring break was critically injured Saturday when she fell from a third-floor hotel balcony, crashed through a plexiglass roof and landed in the hotel pool.

Danielle Augustus, 22, who attends Kent State University in Ohio, fell at about 4 p.m., just five minutes after checking in at the Desert Inn Resort Motel and Health Club at 900 N. Atlantic Ave.

She was taken to Halifax Medical Center, where she was listed in critical condition Saturday night, according to a hospital spokeswoman.

Police said they believe the fall was an accident. Attempts to contact a hotel representative about the incident were unsuccessful.

There have been several recent hotel balcony falls in Florida.

A Dallas high school student was in stable condition Saturday at Orlando Regional Medical Center with injuries sustained when he fell Thursday from a seventh-floor balcony at Disney's Wilderness Lodge.

Nathan McCollum, 17, was trying to visit classmates in the next room when he fell to the ground, collapsing his lung and possibly rupturing his spleen, officials said. He was part of a dance troupe slated to perform this weekend at Universal Studios.

Charles Pierson, 31, of Fort Lauderdale, was in satisfactory condition Saturday at Halifax Medical Center with injuries he suffered when he fell from the fifth floor of the Holiday Inn at 3209 S. Atlantic Ave. in Daytona Beach Shores.

The March 13 fall fractured Pierson's knees, ankles and legs. Pierson has been arguing with his girlfriend before he fell, according to police.

A college student on spring break in Panama City Beach was badly hurt last week when he fell eight stories from the balcony of his beachfront hotel.

**Editor's Note:** Some of these incidents happened prior to the publication of this article in this supplement.

## Places to sleep (if you plan to) while you're in Daytona Beach

Accommodations Information  
Just in case you plan to sleep.

Of the more than 300 hotels, motels and inns in the Daytona Beach area, the following properties are offering special Spring Break packages.

Hotels in the Daytona area

**Beach House Oceanfront Motel**  
3221 S. Atlantic Avenue  
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118  
(800) 647-3448  
(904) 788-7107

**Cabana Motel Oceanfront**  
816 N. Atlantic Avenue  
Daytona Beach, FL 32118  
(800) 327-1481  
(904) 255-1481  
Fax: (904) 258-7425

**Daytona Inn - Broadway**  
219 S. Atlantic Avenue  
Daytona Beach, FL 32118  
(800) 874-1822  
(904) 252-3626

**Flamingo Inn**  
2011 S. Atlantic Avenue  
Daytona Beach, FL 32118

(800) 682-0919  
(904) 252-1412

**Inn on the Beach**  
1615 S. Atlantic Avenue  
Daytona Beach, FL 32118  
(800) 874-0975  
(904) 255-0921

**Oceans Eleven Resorts**  
2025 S. Atlantic Avenue  
(904) 255-0921

**Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118**  
A family of five great hotels all located directly on beautiful Daytona Beach.



## Drinking, no laughing matter

By Wide Area Communications  
via Kaplan Educational Centers

We all like a laugh. And you can't have a laugh on a night out without having a bit of a drink, can you? After all, what's the point of going out if you're not going to have a drink or several to keep up with your mates.

But what's such a laugh about throwing your guts up and speaking to the porcelain telephone all night? Drinking's alright as far as it goes, but there comes a point when falling over, getting into fights and getting off with Mr or Miss Personality Bypass loses its appeal.

Getting so wrecked you can barely walk, never mind walk straight, means you're putting yourself at risk of more than a sore head the next day.

If you've had too many, you're much more likely to have an accident on the way home - or when you get there. Around half of all pedestrians aged 16-60 who are killed in road accidents have more booze in their blood stream than the legal drink-drive limit.

### Still feeling good about getting trashed?

#### Think about it.

Around 40 per cent of household fires are linked with people who have been drinking and alcohol is a factor in at least seven per cent of drownings. People who have sex after drinking are much less likely to use condoms - increasing the risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease

#### Have another one...

About 1,000 children aged under-15 are admitted to hospital each year with acute alcohol poisoning. All need emergency treatment. You can also get a criminal record. In 1994, 57,900 people were found guilty or cautioned for offences of drunkenness. The peak age of offenders was 18.

Hundreds of thousands of other offences, including criminal damage and violence, are drink-related. If you get completely wasted by bingeing on alcohol, you put a great strain on your liver and other parts of your body. It also makes you dehydrated.

If you're into sport, heavy bouts of booing damages the red muscle fibres you need for endurance, so you'll find it hard to keep it up in more ways than one. Regularly drinking too much increases the risk of damaging the white muscle fibres that are needed for sprinting and jumping. More of a step, stagger and fall than hop, step and jump.

If you do get really drunk, it's best to lay off alcohol altogether for the next two days to give your body tissues time to recover. Forget the myths of coffee, more coffee and a fry-up. The only cure for a heavy session is time.

If you get drunk on a regular basis, it may be worth asking your GP for help. If you carry on drinking too much over the years, there are all sorts of long-term risks to your health - to say nothing of your bank balance.

You'll probably put on weight - if your idea of attractive is a spare tyre around your belly, then keep it up. Alcohol is high on calories with no real food value. Your blood pressure will also go up, increasing the chance of having a heart attack and some kinds of stroke. You'll also risk liver damage.

Other risks faced by long-term, heavy drinkers are cancer, especially cancers of the mouth and throat. If you drink heavily and smoke, you're 150 times more likely to develop throat cancer than people who don't. Women also risk having problems if they want to become pregnant, while men and women can develop psychological and emotional problems, including depression.

And that's nothing to laugh about.

## Spring Break goes international: Jamaica, Canun and The Bahamas

By Scott Gold  
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

NEGRIL, Jamaica - Nestled in a peridot-green harbor and a choir of tree frogs, movie star Errol Flynn once declared this place "more beautiful than any woman I've ever seen."

It was the site of the Jamaica Mistaica, when police shot at singer Jimmy Buffett's sea-plane, mistaking it for a cocaine operation. You couldn't blame them - hallucinogenic mushrooms are considered omelet ingredients here.

So this is where the boys are.

Spring Break, that venerable, beer-drenched slice of Americana, has gone international. College students have always have targeted off-shore sites for their weeklong bash. But this year, for the first time, three of the top four Spring Break destinations - Cancun, Jamaica and the Bahamas - are outside the United States, according to executives of several travel companies who cater to college students.

It is a noticeable shift in a lucrative industry. Traditional U.S. hotspots, including several in Florida, now duke it out with not just their mainland counterparts, but with unprecedented competition overseas. By the end of March, as many as 1 million students might have spent their Spring Break overseas, including destinations in Mexico, the Bahamas and the Caribbean, according to travel companies.

"It's a whole new world," said Charles Azoulay, president of Student Adventure Tours Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The companies attribute the trend, in part, to cheap travel packages in places such as Mexico, where the peso has fallen sharply, low fares caused by a boon in charter flights and a robust U.S. economy that has generated new disposable income.

Students are lured by the prospect of an overseas Spring Break that can cost less than \$800, only \$200 more than some comparable domestic travel packages.

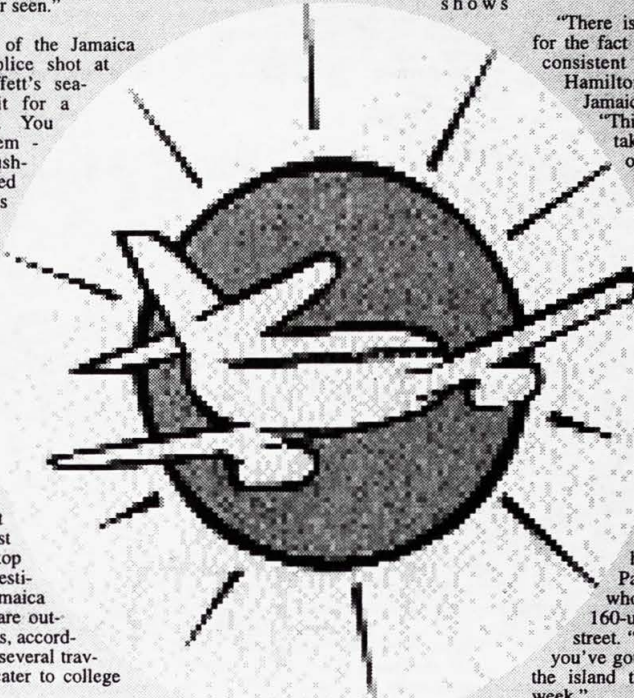
They seem to be reaching for the exotic, choosing drum jerk chicken over Kentucky Fried, Appleton rum punches over cheap, smuggled beer, cliff diving over hotel balcony diving. They do not have those in Daytona Beach, either. Explained Brian Mullins, a Bowling Green University junior: "There are no rules here."

"I was served marijuana tea this morning," said one Georgetown University student, who asked not to be identified because of his choice of breakfast beverage. "I don't think that's on the menu in Daytona Beach."

One resort, called Hedonism II, features what it calls "nudes-versus-prudes" volleyball matches. They do not have those in Daytona Beach, either. Explained Brian Mullins, a Bowling Green University junior: "There are no rules here."

Jamaica's motto is "out of many, one people," and there were many, many people at the sold-out Samsara resort in Negril Saturday. One of them was jumping rope. Naked.

Thank talk show host Jerry Springer, who taped two shows



on a beachfront stage, including one Saturday titled: "I am spring broke and I'll do anything for money."

"Jerry, I'm so desperate for money, I will jump rope naked," shouted Damian Novak, as the crowd hooted and jeered. "I'm just dead broke. I think I drank too much."

"I'll give you \$40 to keep your clothes on," Springer retorted.

Novak, a polite, well-spoken University of Wisconsin electrical engineering major with a 3.4 grade point average, shed his clothes anyway.

"I was drunk in a bar and some lady came up and asked me if I would do it," Novak said later. "It's Spring Break. You can do these kinds of things."

Springer's shows were arranged by MTV. The music video station, something of an electronic measuring stick of Spring Break hotspots, has been taping shows from Spring Break sites since the early 1980s, but has never strayed from the continental U.S., spokeswoman Marnie Malter said from New York.

This year, it plans to film in three off-shore sites Hawaii, Cancun, and Negril, where the station wrapped up taping on Saturday night.

No matter how charming Jamaica might seem, gift-wrapped in blissful fun, mango-tinted sunsets and a haze of marijuana smoke, it is hardly paradise.

Ninety miles south of Cuba, Jamaica embodies the flux in the Spring Break market, by reaping the benefits of new visitors while struggling under the growing pains they bring.

Those same pains have been passed through a lineage of U.S. cities including Fort Lauderdale, stormed by 350,000 students in 1985, its peak as Spring Break's ground zero. Still a fledgling Spring Break destination, no comparable

figures are available for Jamaica.

Unlike in South Florida, there is no resentment here toward tourists. Except for a rise in Spring Break traffic, foreign visits have fallen in recent years, weakening the Jamaican dollar and cutting jobs.

"There is a significant appreciation for the fact that this is an increasingly consistent market," said O'Neil Hamilton, spokesman for the Jamaican Embassy in Washington. "This is something we do not take lightly. They have the run of the place, just as long as they are not committing murder or mayhem."

There is no drinking age in Jamaica, another significant attraction for students, most of whom are not 21 and cannot drink legally in the United States. According to the U.S. Embassy in Kingston, a New York student died in Negril last week of alcohol poisoning. He was not the first.

"There happens to be a little ganja (marijuana) here, too," said Pickled Parrot bar owner Mike Dobs, who is building a \$10 million, 160-unit townhouse across the street. "If you're looking for ganja, you've got more in your first hour on the island than you can smoke in a week."

While tourists are not seen as a threat, they are seen as prey. Life in some areas is an exhaustive hustle - for cabs, drugs, hair braids and sarongs which has only been magnified by the influx of young travelers.

"We've gotten offered mushrooms, LSD, prostitution, cocaine, you name it," said Keith Bowers, a Virginia Tech University junior.

Though tourism is a \$10 billion-a-year industry in the Caribbean, it is not an economic savior, especially in countries such as Jamaica. Much of the money spent returns to owners and shareholders of U.S.-based airlines, hotels and restaurant chains. Widespread poverty is left behind.

"More people. Less money," said Jamaican native and Montego Bay cab driver Steven Campbell.

The hustle can turn violent. Several students have been attacked and robbed, although no specific figure is available.

"It's the new thing," said Peter Chue, a Jamaican who lives in an abandoned building in Montego Bay and carries a machete for protection. "They will leave you your life. Not much more."

In the past six months, Jamaica has taken several steps to combat the trend.

The U.S. government has permission to board any incoming boat from Jamaica deemed suspicious. The Jamaican government has begun seizing houses, cars or hotels it thinks have been purchased with drug money. It has begun bulldozing some of the worst blighted areas.

"You can't have people coming into tourist areas to rape and pillage," Dobs said. "Let it happen long enough, and there won't be any tourist areas at all."