



*Before and after! Six months ago the Union Lounge was the bare room above, plus a vision. The picture on the right is a small sample of what the beautifully furnished room looks like now.*

**T**HE average O. U. alumnus on coming back to Norman five or ten or twenty years after graduation has a feeling like an airplane pilot lost on a dark night—he doesn't know just where to land. If he is a fraternity man, he can be sure of at least a synthetic greeting at the chapter house, but he is not likely to find many familiar faces. If a non-fraternity man, he has few close ties to any particular spot in Norman.

What he would really like to do is to see some of his contemporaries, other alumni back in Norman for a visit. Until February of this year there was no comfortable, convenient place where alumni could gather before a football game, or on other occasions during the year when some special event pulls former students back to the campus.

But in February, when the new and beautiful main lounge room of the Union was thrown open for public inspection and use of students and alumni, a rallying point for visiting alumni was, at long last, provided.

When the Union was built in 1928 with gifts from friends and former students of the University, supplemented by a bond issue pledged by a student fee, the sponsors of the project had the vision of an alumni center as well as a student center.

The Union was to be the place that every alumnus would head for when he returned to the campus for a visit. He would find there the alumni offices, a comfortable lounge room, and perhaps eventually, hotel service.

The alumni offices were placed in the building from the start. Now the lounge room has been provided, and by the time



the bonds are all paid off in 1943 perhaps some definite plans will mature for the rooms for campus visitors.

As the Union now stands, every inch of space is utilized, almost as carefully as in a huge department store where every square foot of floor space has to be productive.

It is probably safe to say that the new lounge room is among the finest of its kind in the whole Southwest. The furnishings alone—comfortable and beautiful divans, lounge chairs, straight chairs, desks, reading lamps, window seats, tables and so on—cost \$6,000. The construction work in the lounge, two new dining rooms and the new alumni offices cost \$23,000, of which \$6,000 was supplied by the Works Progress Administration of the Federal Government.

The transformation of bare brick and concrete walls to an elaborate lounge room is most amazing to the students and alumni who had viewed the barn-like unfinished room for the last ten years. The carefully worked out decorative scheme was accomplished under the direct supervision of Mrs. Sammy McCall

Burns, '19ex, Norman interior decorator.

The whole project for completion of the Union was carried through by T. M. Beard, '21, alumni executive secretary and manager of the Union, and Homer Heck, '35, assistant manager of the Union. Although they obtained approval of the project and handled the details of completing it, they give much credit to Frank Cleckler, '21, former alumni secretary, and other former leaders in the alumni association and Stadium-Union Board for the work done in paving the way for this project.

It was Frank Cleckler who fought the Union's battles through the depression and turned the management over to Ted Beard in the fall of 1936 without a single bond in default.

The total investment in the Union is now approximately \$300,000. The furnishings in the building amount to more than \$50,000. Bonds outstanding amount to \$213,000.

Students occasionally object to the Union fee assessed them at enrolment time each semester as part of the general enrolment fee, but it is this fee that

made possible the erection of the Union. The Board of Regents authorized the collection of a Union fee only after the student body had approved the proposal. Actually, the fee is a Stadium-Union fee rather than a Union fee, as bonds for the Union and the Stadium were sold in a single issue. None of the income from the fee may be used for operation of the building until bond payments have been met, and such income has been barely large enough to cover the bond payments in past years. The Union therefore, has found it necessary to pay its own way by making enough profit on some of its activities to keep going other important services that are not self-supporting.

The Union is a beehive of activities from early morning until late at night. The Cafeteria serves six hundred meals on an average day. Coffee drinkers and snack eaters keep a large majority of the tables in the Cafeteria occupied all the time. It's standing room only when a campus orchestra plays swing music there once a week.

A series of Sunday afternoon musical programs designed to give students the kind of music they like has been started in the Union ballroom. An overflow crowd of 350 attended the first program, which was given by the University Concert Band. Students visiting the Union lounge were invited to vote on the kind of music they preferred, and a program was made up in accordance with their wishes.

More than a score of student organiza-  
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*Margaret Anne Gessner, new director of activities for the Union, is shown conferring with her assistants, Bill Waldrop and Mary Harriet Covert. In the second picture, two students are admiring the beautiful wood carving at the fireplace in the Lounge. In the circle is a student on her way to a dance in the Union Ballroom, who agreed to pose in one of the Lounge's attractive window seats.*



*Lower left, Earl Foster, former Alumni president, and Union Manager Ted Beaird enjoy a corner of the Lounge. Lower right, Mrs. Sammy McCall Burns, who designed the decorative scheme, is talking with Homer Heck, assistant manager of the Union.*



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tions hold regular meetings in the Union, and more would use the building if suitable quarters could be provided. The Independent Men's Association (organization of all non-fraternity men) has a dance occasionally in the Union ballroom, recently redecorated and improved. The Men's Council stages an all-University dance about once a week. Fraternities book the ballroom whenever they can find a vacant Friday or Saturday night. One enterprising fraternity dance chairman tried to book the ballroom a year in advance. Every Saturday afternoon except on football Saturdays the Union is host at a free dansant for all comers. That is, free to dates but stags are charged 25 cents in order to prevent a mob scene.

The basement floor of the Union now contains the cafeteria, the recreation room, the news stand and the University Book Exchange. The Book Exchange is not under management of the Union, but is owned by the University. It is housed in the Union in return for contributions made toward the building fund in past years. The recreation room maintains a number of pool and billiard tables and two bowling alleys, which are popular with students. The cafeteria, recreation room and news stand provide most of the Union's operating fund.

The north wing of the first floor contains the new lounge room, which is under the supervision of Miss Margaret Gessner, newly appointed director of activities for the Union. Other facilities in the north wing are the Woodruff Room, a dining room seating approximately 150 people, in which is hung the famous Woodruff collection of paintings loaned to the University School of Art by Leonard J. Woodruff, and in turn loaned to the Union Building by the School of Art; and the English Room, a smaller dining room seating approximately sixty persons. All service in these rooms is under the direction of the manager of the cafeteria. Many students, faculty and Norman groups use these rooms for luncheons, teas, dinners and banquets. Bookings are usually made far in advance.

The south wing of the first floor is occupied by the Union offices and the offices of the Alumni Association which are housed in rooms 121, 123, 125 and 127, on the west side of the hall. The east side of this wing is occupied by the offices and classrooms of the University speech department. The southeast corner room also is used by the speech department. The large southwest corner room has been divided into temporary offices for the Independent Men's Association, the Phi Eta Sigma Tutoring Service, and for the Men's Council.

The second floor contains the ballroom, check room, and numerous rooms for student activities. The entire east side of the south wing is now occupied by the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. offices, with the newly furnished Y lounge between the two offices. This unit has just been redecorated and refurnished on the event of the removal of the Y. W. C. A. office from the Women's Building to the Union. An extensive program of joint activities has been planned by the two organizations in this new center of student Christian work.

The third floor of the Union is occupied by living quarters available to members of the faculty. These are very popular because of their convenience and comfort.

The fourth floor of the Union is the first floor of the tower and is occupied by the main studio and control room of radio station WNAD, University broadcasting station. The fifth floor is occupied by the offices of the radio station and the Oklahoma Public Speaking League and the small studio and control room of the radio station.

On the sixth floor, which is not open to the public, is the delicate mechanism of the huge four-faced clock that can be seen from all parts of the campus.

Completion of the lounge and other facilities in the Union during the present school year have changed the whole atmosphere. Elimination of bare concrete walls, and the addition of a dignified and tastefully furnished lounge have given both students and alumni a more home-like and more pleasant place to gather and to meet friends.

Mr. Sooner Alumnus wondering with a measurement of bewilderment just where to go first the next time he visits Norman doesn't need to hesitate any longer. He can just head for the Union building and find his clubroom awaiting him. And likely as not, that's where the other alumni who are visiting Norman will be.



**Lushanya acclaimed in Italy**

Italy, which gave Soonerland's Joe Benton a sound operatic training, is now giving a friendly reception to Lushanya, Chicakasaw Indian princess who attended the University under the more prosaic name, Tessie Mobley, of Ardmore.

She sang recently at Torino, Italy, in the title role of the opera *Madame Butterfly*. Italian critics called her voice "young and beautiful" and predicted a great future for her. Lushanya made her operatic debut in Italy in 1937, in *Aida*. She has given concerts in most of the principal cities of Europe, including a command performance for the late King George and Queen Mary of England. She won one of Mussolini's twelve scholarships at the University of Rome.