

Evacuation procedures at A&M

Fire drills not required

By CARMEN MOLINA
Reporter

Many students remember fire drills in high school that provided a few minutes escape from the boredom of class. But at Texas A&M, that diversion rarely is provided.

Fire drills are not required by law beyond high school, says Harry Stiteler, University safety and health officer.

"We would like to have a fire drill in each building each semester, but it is not required," he says.

The University policy does require fire safety and emergency evacuation policies for each building on campus, Stiteler says, but it is the responsibility of the assigned building proctor or fire marshal to schedule the drills.

"There are some buildings that have never had fire drills," Stiteler says. "It is somewhat of an inconvenience."

College Station Fire Marshall Harry Davis says one or two drills

per year for each building is an adequate number.

Glenn Ferris, housing operations supervisor, says all residence halls are required to have at least one drill per semester. He says the fire drills held here the last few years have been very satisfactory.

Jake Canglose, assistant building proctor for the O&M Building, says the first priority in the O&M Building is evacuation.

Canglose says he is concerned with the difficulty of vacating the multistory building. Canglose and the other staff members rehearse their drill at least once or twice a year and then make the necessary revisions.

Karen Burke, the building proctor for the Blocker Building, says Blocker has neither a building plan nor regularly scheduled drills. After the alarm goes off, everyone simply vacates the building, she says.

Rosemary Rousseau, building proctor for Sterling C. Evans Library, says one drill usually is scheduled for the library per year, but there were some problems with false alarms last semester. This has created a "cry wolf" situation for the students, and some students refuse to vacate the building, she says.

Burke says Blocker has had similar problems with false alarms and with students refusing to leave the building.

Stiteler says some of the false alarms are caused by the new fire safety system. The new system, which is more extensive and elaborate than any found in Bryan-College Station, has not yet been installed in all buildings on campus, he says.

Though there are no laws that require vacating a building during a fire drill, it is a University policy to clear the building, Stiteler says.

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"He's the most organized person I know. He's already working on his excuse for leaving early for Padre Island for spring vacation."

Senate hears obscenity laws debate

Associated Press

AUSTIN — A Senate committee heard testimony Tuesday on a bill that would narrow the meaning of "community standards" in questions of obscenity.

Sen. Bill Sarpalius, D-Groesbeck, who introduced the bill, said statewide standards are now used to determine what is obscene in accordance with a Supreme Court ruling that "community standards" should vary by county.

Sarpalius said the bill would prohibit attorneys from presenting obscene evidence, brought in all parts of the state, to juries in all counties.

Sen. Ted Lyon, D-Mesquite, questioned whether the state would have 254 different standards.

But Susan Hoeler, attorney in Dallas, said there would not be many different standards because jurors have to comply with the statute on obscenity.

The statute includes provisions that juries must review the community standards and that a law obscene acts must be shown.

Hoeler said, "This bill allows people in the county to define decency of their county. That's very diverse so the rationale is cable."

Senate approves veterans' housing, prison transfer bills

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The Senate on Tuesday approved two proposals that would keep the veterans' housing program alive and would allow Texas to exchange prisoners — including troublemakers — with other states.

The Senate also approved and sent to the House a bill that would set up a two-tiered program for judicial retirement, with future judges included under a less generous benefit formula than current judges.

A proposed constitutional amendment by Sen. Lindon Williams, D-Houston, would raise the limit on bonds for the veterans' housing program from \$500 million to \$1 billion.

Williams said the program, which allows eligible Texas veterans to borrow \$20,000 at less than 10 percent interest for the purchase of a home, is so popular that it will run out of money by November if the bond limit is not increased.

Williams said his proposed amendment would extend the housing program to military personnel on active duty.

If the House also approves the measure, it will go on the November statewide election ballot.

Sen. Ray Farabee, D-Wichita Falls, sponsored the proposed constitutional amendment that would allow

the state to transfer inmates from Texas prisons out-of-state.

Farabee said more than 40 states now have similar authority, and the Texas Department of Corrections requested the measure.

Farabee said prisoners could be transferred for medical reasons or to rid a prison of a certain troublemaker.

Another example, he said, "would be a state witness who might be in danger in a given setting."

Farabee's constitutional amendment would go to the voters in November.

A bill implementing the amendment also cleared the Senate and was sent to the House.

The judicial retirement bill is a money-saver, according to its sponsor, Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan. The fiscal note says it would cost the state \$500,000 the first two years, \$1.9 million the following two years and so forth.

If we do nothing, Caperton said, the state would be paying out \$200 million a biennium for the retirement system starting in the year 2010.

The current plan allows a judge to retire at any age with 20 years of service, and the proposed plan would raise the service requirement to 25 years.

Rejected

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posed a plan to keep Basement going, but it was rejected.

Reinarts says the council increased Basement's budget from the \$500-\$1,000 range to \$4,000, so the committee could add variety acts to its programming.

He says he asked the council to reduce the budget back to the previous amount and allow Basement to program acts like they had previously gotten before the budget increase.

Reinarts says committee members liked those acts better and did a better job of selling the entertainment.

According to a committee report, the program review committee considered this suggestion but decided to eliminate the committee and allow it to reapply sometime in the future.

The report says a reduction in Basement's budget would not allow the committee to satisfy students' programming needs.

"One of the reasons Basement has been looked upon unfavorably is because Basement doesn't do anything that is 'important' in the nature of a SCONA, Wylie Lecture Series, or OPAS," Reinarts says. "But I feel that Basement was important because it was fun. We weren't affecting as many students as say a Town Hall, but we didn't spend as much as Town Hall either."

The decision to eliminate these groups was one the council found difficult to make, Wood says. But it will probably be better for the MSC in the end.

He also says that although committees know this is their last semester, they are working diligently. "They're really trying to make good use of their time," he says.

Basement is planning a road show in Rumours on Feb. 22. It has tentative dates for two groups. In the past Basement has brought in such entertainers as King Carrasco and Chandel.

A white water rafting trip to Rio Grande is in the works for the Outdoor Recreation as well as a backpacking expedition to the Grand Canyon. The group also will be participating in the Outdoor Horizon Conference from Feb. 22 to March 2, which will feature speeches by several outdoorsmen.

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