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Texas A&M The Battalion

WEATHER

TOMORROW'S FORECAST:
Mostly cloudy and milder.
HIGH: 70 LOW: 56



Vol. 89 No. 117 USPS 045360 14 Pages College Station, Texas Monday, March 26, 1990

Board gives go-ahead for new events center

By CHRIS VAUGHN
Of The Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M Board of Regents gave the go-ahead Friday to begin plans to build a 14,500-seat special events center on west campus.

The Board discussed the special events center Thursday, but didn't vote on the plans until Friday afternoon. William A. McKenzie, chairman of the Board, said he is ecstatic about the new coliseum.

"This is the most welcome addition to the campus we've ever had," McKenzie said.

The special events center's cost is projected to be \$35 million and is scheduled to be built near the Beef Cattle Center on west campus.

McKenzie said the actual construction could begin in only a year with the entire project completed in three years.

The special events center will replace the 36-year-old G. Rollie White Coliseum, which has become an "embarrassment" to A&M, according to a document prepared by the University.

G. Rollie White is the second smallest arena in the Southwest Conference with a seating capacity of 7,500. Only Autry Court at Rice University is smaller.

McKenzie said Thursday that A&M basketball has suffered in high school basketball recruiting because of the outdated arena, and a new coliseum might attract more young players.

In addition to basketball games, the new coliseum will be used during commencement exercises.

A&M officials said in a document that commencement "has become a laborious occasion for graduates, their families and the faculty because of the limited capacity and the uncomfortable seating" in G. Rollie White.

Commencement is divided into nine sessions, and University officials said a new coliseum would reduce that number and would enhance the graduation experience for everyone.

The new center would also be used for concerts, rodeos, circuses, ice shows, large banquets and conferences.

The arena will be a double bowl

Regents approve resolution to expand TAMUS drug policy

By BILL HETHCOCK
Of The Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M University System will have a broader drug policy, the Board of Regents decided in a resolution passed Friday.

The drug policy now in effect applies only to employees of the System and does not deal with alcohol. The expanded policy will cover both students and employees, and will apply to alcohol abuse and illegal drug use, said Edward Hiler, deputy chancellor for academic program planning and research.

"By adding alcohol, we're acknowledging that alcohol is a form of drug," Hiler said.

TAMUS officials are considering stricter rules and penalties for students and employees who abuse alcohol, Hiler said. A task force has been created to look into specific changes in A&M's policy toward alcohol and drug abuse, he said.

James Bond, deputy chancellor for legal and external affairs, said the new drug policy also may call for some form of drug testing. This issue will be decided in upcoming meetings of the drug policy task force.

In December, President Bush signed the Federal Drug-Free Schools Bill. This bill requires schools to implement a program to prevent abuse of illegal drugs and alcohol. Schools failing to adopt a program of this type by Oct. 1, 1990, risk losing federal funds and other forms of financial assistance, including student loans program participation, Hiler said.

But compliance with the Federal Drug-Free Schools Bill is only part of the reason for developing a new system-wide drug policy, Bond said.

"This effort to really get at the drug problem started before we found out we would have to conform to the new federal laws," he said. "Now we must harmonize what we do to meet the federal regulations."

Bond said he expects A&M's new drug policy to include educational programs aimed at increasing awareness of problems relating to drug and alcohol abuse, and a rehabilitation program for employees and students who have substance-abuse problems.

The U.S. Department of Education is developing guidelines for implementing the drug-free schools bill.

structure with three different levels. The main level will include all of the seating. One level will include the playing floor, support facilities, storage, food services, and meeting facilities. Another level will include box office areas and security posts.

College Station Mayor Larry Ringer has said the city's Capital Improvement Control Committee will propose a bond election in the summer to help fund the facility.

In other business, the Board of Regents:

- Approved the spending of \$6.6 million for utility adjustments near the A&M campus when the Texas State Department of Highways and

Public Transportation begins its Lo-Trak Project on Wellborn Road.

The LoTrak Project will lower the railroad tracks west of campus in order to separate them from bicycle, vehicle and pedestrian traffic. A&M has agreed to assist the state by financing all utility adjustments from University Drive to George Bush Drive.

- Approved an increase in parking garage fees beginning with the fall semester. A reserved numbered parking garage permit will jump from \$150 to \$200, a priority permit will increase from \$170 to \$225, and a basement garage permit in Zachry will increase from \$180 to \$225.

Anticipation



Photo by Jay Janner

Members of the Texas A&M baseball team watch from the dugout as the Aggies make the final out in their first win in a double-header sweep of the Texas Tech Red Raiders Saturday at Olsen

Field. Those wins and another win Friday night increased A&M's winning streak over Tech to 21 games.

• Complete game results/Page 9

Fire ravages club killing 87 patrons from smoke, flames

NEW YORK (AP) — Fire raced through an illegal social club early Sunday and turned a packed dance floor into a deathtrap of smoke and flame that killed 87. A man who allegedly had earlier fought with a club worker was arrested for investigation of arson and murder.

The fire, the nation's worst in 13 years, tore through the Happy Land club, which authorities said lacked proper exits and other safeguards.

The 2:40 a.m. (CST) fire killed 61 men and 26 women, most of them Honduran and Dominican immigrants. Most were found on the second floor.

"People literally were stacked on top of each other," Anthony De Vita, the Fire Department's command chief, said. "It was a firetrap," he said of the two-story building in an impoverished neighborhood near the Bronx Zoo.

Some of the victims broke a hole through a wall to an adjoining hall in a desperate attempt to save their lives, Red Cross worker Margaret Glugover said.

Police Commissioner Lee Brown told a news conference that Julio Gonzalez, 36, a Bronx resident, was arrested for investigation of arson and murder.

"We believe the motive in this case was the result of a dispute he had with a female employee of the club," Brown said.

Police said Gonzalez went into the club about 2 a.m. and began arguing with his former girlfriend, who sold tickets near the entrance.

"He's trying to talk her into making up, she's saying 'Leave me alone,'" Lt. Raymond O'Donnell, a police spokesman, said.

A club bouncer evicted the man half an hour later, and police alleged he returned and started the fire near the entrance.

The woman employee left before the fire, Brown said. At least two women and one man — the disc jockey — survived, Brown said. Most of the dead were believed to

have suffocated from the thick smoke, which billowed hundreds of feet, but some were trampled, said Lynn Schulman, an Emergency Medical Service spokeswoman.

After viewing the bodies, Mayor David Dinkins called the scene "graphic and sad."

Dinkins said an order to vacate the club was issued in November 1988 because the club lacked proper sprinkling systems, exits, emergency lighting and signs. City records show orders were delivered to the club July 24 and again Nov. 1, Dinkins said.

"I don't know what subsequent visits were made there," the mayor said, adding that the city was stepping up efforts to shut down such clubs.

"This is the worst thing I have seen in my career," Emergency Medical Services specialist Christopher McCarthy said. "It hurt my stomach. It was sickening."

"Most of the bodies were in dance clothes," McCarthy said. "They were out to have fun. ... I saw wall-to-wall bodies — an indication of mass confusion and panic."

EMS Lt. Roy David said there were "a lot of people, obviously frantic at one point, trying to make an exit."

The fire was the deadliest in the continental United States since a May 28, 1977, blaze that consumed the Beverly Hills Supper Club in Southgate, Ky., killing 164 people. A Dec. 31, 1986, fire at a hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth, killed 96 people.

The tragedy occurred in East Tremont, a section of the Bronx borough. Deputy Mayor Bill Lynch described it as an "economically disadvantaged, working-class, Latino neighborhood."

The building housed a group that organized children's baseball as well as adult social events, Lillian Rivera, a neighbor, said.

A makeshift morgue was set up at a hall next door.

CAMAC sparks official language debate

By SEAN FRERKING
Of The Battalion Staff

A discussion about the controversy over English as the official language of the United States was a war of words.

The presentation, part of a conference sponsored by the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture, sparked a heated debate in front of 80 to 100 students Friday.

Louis Zaeske, Class of '64 and founder of the American Ethnic Coalition, and Dr. Herman Garcia, an associate professor of curriculum and instruction and Bilingual Education at Texas A&M, presented their cases to the mostly Hispanic audience.

Zaeske, who began the debate, said the is-

sue of English as an official language has been misunderstood as English-only legislation.

"I am standing before you today to advocate official English when we talk about our government speaking to the citizens and the citizens speaking to the government," Zaeske said. "That's what official English means — nothing more, nothing less."

Zaeske said that, at first, many people think English as the official language would discriminate against ethnic minorities. But in reality, he said, official English protects minorities from discrimination by insuring one ethnic language is not given more weight than any other.

Zaeske said English as an official language also would make the practice of government more efficient. By using a standard language

in a trial or any other event funded by the state, official English would eliminate the confusion caused by multiple languages and their translations, Zaeske said.

"Can you imagine what kind of chaos a multilingual state would cause?" Zaeske said.

Zaeske said official English would bring ethnic minorities in the American mainstream much more quickly and act as a glue for American minorities and unify the nation, Zaeske said.

In fact, Zaeske said, the present bilingual education system segregates against Hispanic students and is the main reason the Hispanic drop-out rate is so high. He said he favors immersing students into American culture so

See English/Page 6

Speaker: U.S. work force needs educated women

By STACY E. ALLEN
Of The Battalion Staff

Women of tomorrow can enter the corporate world if they are equipped with a solid education, said Carmen S. Gonzalez, guest speaker at the conference for the Committee on the Awareness of the Mexican American Culture.

The session, titled "Women's Role in Society," featured Gonzalez and Dr. Sylvia Fernandez, admissions counselor for Texas A&M representing South Texas.

Gonzalez said the future looks bright for women as major contributors in the American workplace.

"The future will bring daycare, sometimes right at the work site or as an employee benefit and better maternity leave," Gonzalez said. "These changes will make it easier for women to be superwomen, juggling career, family, recreation and community involvement."

Gonzalez cited "Megatrends" as reporting that 74 percent of men work while 79 percent of women without children under the age of 18 are members of the work force. More than half of all women with children work, she said.

"The book says the days of women as a minority in the work force are over," Gonzalez said.

"The future of women in the work force is encouraging, and those getting a college education will be in demand."

Gonzalez said Working Woman magazine issued a special report on the state of the work force in the 90s. The magazine, she said, reported the American labor pool is shrinking. Gonzalez said unemployment is 5.2 percent, the lowest in 15 years, and the labor pool is suffering from a shortage of qualified young people.

These statistics show that if women are equipped with a good education they can succeed, she said. A lack of higher order thinking skills that are required for high-tech positions and an under-educated population have left many jobs begging for qualified employees.

Fernandez emphasized that women should do more than just fulfill educational requirements if they hope to be successful.

"You must go beyond those requirements because they're going to be just enough to get you in the door," Fernandez said.

Regent: Education key to Hispanic enrollment

By TODD L. CONNELLEY
Of The Battalion Staff

Education is the key to increasing the number of Hispanics at Texas A&M, said Board of Regents member Raul B. Fernandez.

During a discussion Saturday on the evolution of the Mexican-American family, Fernandez was asked what could be done to attract more Hispanics to A&M.

Hispanics currently make up seven percent of A&M's population.

"Education means opportunity," Fernandez said "It gives us a chance to be, to do and to accomplish anything we want."

He said that the testimony of a college student is a powerful method to attract high school seniors.

"If you go back to your schools and talk about the importance of a good education then you are making a strong impression," he said.

The speech concluded a two-day conference sponsored by the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture. La Familia, La Vida: Looking Back into the Past and into the Future, was the theme of the conference and of Fernandez's speech.

He outlined the different families in his life and the importance of each.

"My personal family is the most important to me," he said. "It's the only family that picks us — you have no choice. It's what you do with it that's crucial."

Fernandez said that A&M becoming his educational family was a direct result of his parents.

"As long as I could remember they told me I was going to college," he said. "When the time came, I got a scholarship from the Laredo A&M Mothers Club and off I went."

After college Fernandez entered the military and then began his successful business career.

He said the business world was another family that was instrumental in his life.

"Each of us has an endless supply of families," he said. "It's what you do with them that is so important."

"We have a responsibility to make life a little better for all the families we've been involved with."

Fernandez is a builder and real estate investor from San Antonio. He was appointed to the Board of Regents by Governor William P. Clements in 1989.