

Dance hall holds smoke-free night

Hall of Fame sponsors smokeless event

By WILL HEALY

Reporter of THE BATTALION

The Texas Hall of Fame and A&M organizations joined forces to sponsor a smoke-free night Wednesday at the Texas Hall of Fame.

The event "exceeded expectations," said Chip Schaeffer, assistant lecturer in the kinesiology department. The event was so successful that they are making plans to do it again next year, he said.

Eta Sigma Gamma and Aggie Alliance co-sponsored the event. Even though the purpose of the event was to increase awareness about the dangers of cancer, not to raise money, Eta Sigma Gamma President Mike Kelly said the event received nearly \$5,000 in donations.

Schaeffer said he had been country/western dancing for three years and "got sick of coming home smelling of smoke."

The smoke-free night was Schaeffer's idea. Over the summer, Schaeffer said he talked to the owner of the Hall of Fame about the problem with the smoke. They both agreed to hold the event November 18, the night before the Great American Smokeout, he said.

Schaeffer said he hoped that patrons would complement the program and that the Hall would have a smoke-free night at least once a year and maybe even once a month.

Texas recycling efforts to pay off

Water Commission to award millions to cities developing recycling programs

Fort Worth, Lubbock, Beaumont among those already chosen to receive funds

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — The Texas Water Commission got tough on recycling Thursday. But instead of handing down a mandate, officials handed out some money.

Commission officials announced a plan dubbed "Clean Cities 2000," which will award \$4 million to cities and rural communities developing recycling and composting programs.

"Obviously this program is a rarity because we're going to be giving money back," Water Commissioner Pam Reed said. "What we're announcing today is a return of millions of dollars to local governments and obviously it doesn't happen very often, and hopefully we're going to see a big return on our investment."

The commission will provide start-up funding for 30 cities to begin recycling of household and workplace trash, yard waste, used motor oil and tires, said Water Commission Chairman John Hall.

The program also will help communities find marketplaces for recyclable materials,

Hall said.

"These programs are very important because in Texas today, local governments are spending over \$1.2 billion to pay for the disposal of the trash that we generate," Hall said.

Hall said Fort Worth, Lubbock, Beaumont

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— Pam Reed, Water Commissioner

and Harlingen and rural areas in East Texas, Central Texas and the Panhandle have already been designated to receive funds.

More communities will be announced later, he said.

"We recognize at the Texas Water Commission that we will not be successful in our endeavors unless we actually form a strong partnership with local governments and with the private sector," Hall said.

Fort Worth will receive \$500,000 while Lub-

bock and Beaumont will each get \$400,000. Harlingen will get \$350,000.

A Central Texas area comprised of Bastrop, LaGrange, Schulenburg and Smithville will share \$250,000.

A Panhandle cluster of towns including Borger, Fritch, Pampa, Panhandle and Stinesboro will receive \$350,000 and the East Texas communities of Lufkin and Nacogdoches will split \$400,000.

The program is an offshoot of the commission's Clean Texas 2000, a statewide campaign to reduce pollution.

The funds going to the cities for recycling were derived from landfill tipping fees collected by local communities and forwarded to the state, said Patti Everitt, the Water Commission's Clean Texas 2000 coordinator.

In addition, water commission staff members will work with the cities to develop and operate the programs, Everitt said.

Cities are chosen based on factors, including demonstrated support by community leaders, the existing level of public awareness, geographic diversity and strength of recycling markets, she said.

Humanitarian aid caravan seeks to avoid border encounter

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAREDO— The organizers of a caravan taking 15 tons of humanitarian aid to Cuba have promised to avoid a confrontation with U.S. Customs officials as they attempt to cross into Mexico Friday morning.

Any confrontation will be initiated by U.S. authorities, who have pledged to enforce the long-standing trade embargo against Cuba, caravan members said Thursday as they made final preparations for the crossing. The Rev. Lucius Walker, a group leader, said he hopes the effort will demonstrate that the embargo is "stupid."

"It's crazy and it needs to be ended," Walker said. The 43-vehicle caravan, organized by Minneapo-

Organizers of Cuban aid mission to reach Mexico today; U.S. Customs officials promise to enforce trade embargo

lis-based Pastors for Peace, is carrying medical supplies, powdered milk, bicycles, Bibles and school supplies gathered during stops in 83 U.S. cities.

About 100 activists are planning to take the goods across the border into Nuevo Laredo, Mexico around 8 a.m. Friday. From there, they plan to go to Tampico and load the goods onto a Cuban freighter.

"We consider our mission right and just in every sense of the word," said Tom Hanson, national co-ordinator for Pastors for Peace.

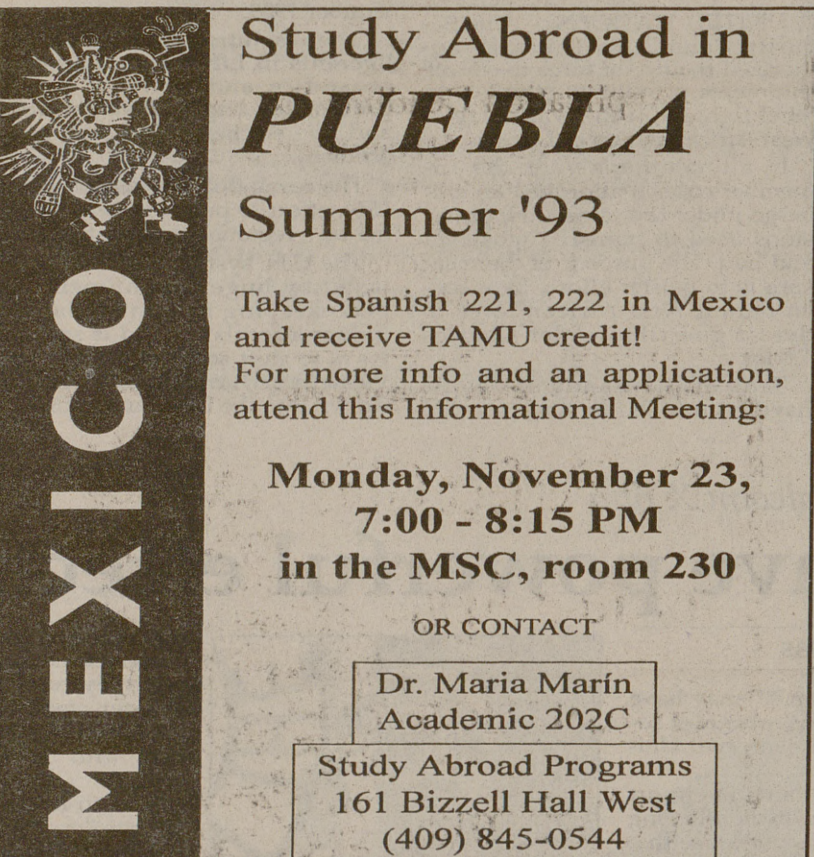
Mexican authorities have been instructed to facilitate the caravan's passage, said Raul Cardenas, Mexican consul in Laredo. But the activist may have trouble making it that far. Caravan organizers have refused to apply for U.S. export licenses required under a recent law that strengthened the Cuban embargo.

"Our position is that to enter into a licensing agreement with the federal government will legitimize the embargo, which we oppose," Walker said.

U.S. authorities have not said what actions they will take when the caravan attempts to cross the border.

"We are business as usual," said U.S. Customs spokeswoman Judy Turner. "We will take the deliberations of the convoy members and take whatever actions are deemed appropriate."

Walker said the organization would consider legal action if the caravan is turned back. Treasury Department spokesman Bob Levine declined to comment on what might happen Friday, but he said such attempts to violate the embargo carry civil or criminal sanctions. Under the civil sanctions, which could be levied following an administrative hearing, violators would be subject to fines of up to \$50,000.



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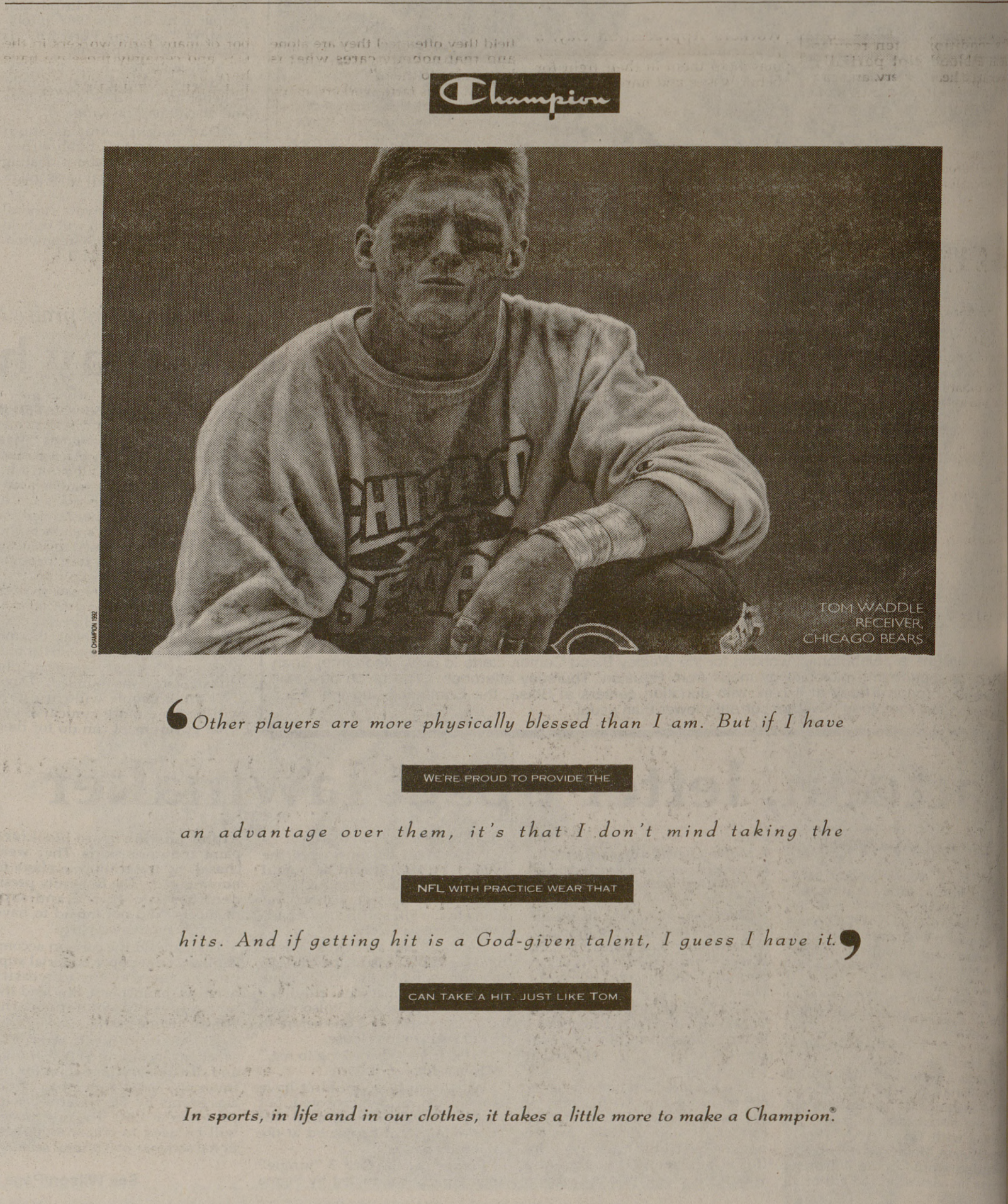
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