

Moving in



Jennie Mayer/THE BATTALION

Freshman **Erin Semmler**, left, unloads her belongings into Krueger Hall with the help of her sister, Emily, as they prepare for the beginning of the spring semester.

Vendors get strict soliciting limitations

By Michele Brinkmann

THE BATTALION

Vendors on the Texas A&M University campus must follow stricter guidelines this semester in response to repeated complaints by students and faculty members.

Vendors will be limited to nine campus locations, selected by a concessions committee, where they can solicit customers. Previously, vendors could set up an unlimited number of tables across campus.

They also can only be on the A&M campus for eight days this semester, down from 14 days last semester.

Dr. Bill Kibler, chair of the concessions committee that developed the new policies, said students and faculty members complain at the beginning of every semester that the vendors are too aggressive.

"The biggest complaint is the behavior of the vendors and not the number of them," Kibler said.

In response to these complaints, vendors now are required to stay behind their tables, and only two vendors can work at each location.

Vendors in the MSC can set up a table in the main hallway or in the fountain area, but cannot have tables in both areas.

Jennifer Elliot, a sophomore biomedical science major, said she has reason to be wary of vendors.

Elliot said she gave a vendor a check for a newspaper, but she never received the paper, nor did the vendor cash the check. She said she left at least ten messages at the vendors office, but her calls were never returned.

Gilbert Sarabia, a Houston Post assistant sales manager, said a few "bad apples" have hurt everyone, and the new guidelines are hurting his business.

"If we mess up one time we could be thrown off campus," he said. "It intimidates us not to be as aggressive as we were trained to be."

Sarabia said that in his ten years of doing his job he has never had a problem with anyone.

"I think the University should keep a few hand-picked qualified people to stay on campus and do their job," he said.

He said restricting the number of locations interferes with his business.

"It is important for us to be spread out all over campus so the students can see us," he

said.

But these guidelines are not as strict as they could have been.

In December, the committee approved a Back to School Services Fair that would have restricted vendors to six days in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

However high costs, time constraints and complaints by vendors prompted the committee to cancel the fair and enforce some new rules for the vendors to follow.

Reed Jenkins, a Star-Tel salesman, said the new rules would not really affect Star-Tel's business, and these guidelines are better than the Back to School Services Fair.

"I wish the policy was like last semester, but the new rules are OK," he said.

Kibler, who is also interim assistant vice president for student services, said a concessions committee member will oversee each of the nine locations.

He said students can address their complaints and concerns to the University Center at 845-8902.

The booths have been set up in the designated areas since last Wednesday and will be in operation until this Wednesday.

Bockris prepares response to research inquiry

By Jan Higginbotham

THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M University chemistry department continues to be plagued with problems stemming from the research activities of Dr. John Bockris and his attempts to turn mercury into gold.

The internal inquiry ordered last November by A&M Interim President E. Dean Gage was extended recently in order to continue the investigation into Bockris' research until the end of the month.

Nancy Sawtelle, communications director for the office of the vice-president for research and graduate studies, said the committee received the extension because

Dr. Bockris was not available to appear before the group until this week.

The panel's chairman, Duane Kraemer, had to make a trip to Australia recently, and this also contributed to the need for the extension.

Bockris is scheduled to be interviewed by the committee Tuesday. His attorney, Gaines West, said they are prepared for the appearance and are confident the truth will prevail.

"We feel the allegations are outrageous," West said. "We believe he (Bockris) has not done anything to discredit himself or the University. We believe that he will be exonerated."

West and Bockris are currently

preparing their response to the inquiry. West said he is anticipating a full range of questions and will be ready for all of them.

Bockris filed a request that would allow West to appear with him when the professor goes before the committee Tuesday. West said Bockris might not appear if that request is not granted.

The controversy within the chemistry department has received a great deal of media attention in recent months. Articles concerning Bockris and his attempts to turn mercury into gold have appeared throughout the state, and the story has even received some national attention.

The subject also received one

of Texas Monthly's Annual Bum

Steer Awards last month.

Problems have also developed because 23 of 28 distinguished professors submitted a petition last month calling for the University to demote Dr. Bockris for his "bogus" research.

Rene Henry, executive director of University Relations, told a reporter with the Dallas Morning News in late December that the University needed to speak with staff lawyers concerning the matter to ensure the protection of Bockris' academic rights.

The controversy is expected to come to a close later this month when the committee will release its findings.

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