THE BATTALION FACE

Eye on the ball



JAKE SCHRICKLING/THE BATTAL

Karen Schmidt, of Texas Halletsville, Texas, takes a break from her student orientation to shoot pool in the basement of the Memorial Student Center Wednesday. **Schmidt** will attend Texas A&M in the fall.

Fire in the sky

Dallas man offers land for people to have Fourth of July cele

DALLAS (AP) — With fireworks bans in place across the state because of a drought that has turned much of Texas into a tinderbox, one rancher is inviting folks to his land to light up the sky.

Gary Turley has turned 16 acres of his land about a half-hour south of Dallas into "You-Pop," a park where revelers may ignite all the firecrackers and sparklers they want for a \$3 admission fee, \$2 with a coupon.

Turley also is operating a fireworks concession, with devices ranging from 25 cents to \$40, for those who don't bring their own explosives.

Turley insists the idea is more about fun than money. Although Turley said he's heard of no other event like this, at least one nonprofit outfit is running a similar venture this Independence Day. The volunteer fire department in the small town of Rhome, about 23 miles northwest of Fort Worth, has mowed and soaked a three-acre field next door to the fire station where locals can come set off their bottle rockets. It's free but not set up for lots of people.

Turley's park opened last Saturday and will remain in business until the last firework fizzles on July 4th. "We have had several people coming out, and

"We have had several people coming out, and everyone said they are coming back on July Fourth," Turley, who expects a crowd of 2,500 on Independence Day, said. "Everyone is loving it."

Well, almost everybody. Johnson County Judge Roger Harmon said he's not too happy about Turley's plan and has banned aerial fireworks.

"Anyone who pops any (aerial) firecrackers in our county is subject to a Class C misdemeanor," which is punishable by a \$500 fine, Harmon said.

But the ban applies only to missiles and rockets, said Turley's mother, Nan, who helps him run the ranch.

"We'll be sure to check and see that no one has any of those," Turley said. All other fireworks

will be allowed.

The Lillian Volunteer Fire Department doused one blaze at the ranch. Firefigher said he, like Harmon, doesn't like Turke

"I think we might be spending aloub the next (several) days," Salmon said.

Turley has been in the holiday business decade. He first raised Christmas trees, the rides for children and eventually was taken a pumpkin patch for Halloween. That after the difference of his lander that the christmas Tree Farm to Holiday Ranch.

The fireworks idea came last summe heard a friend's son was in trouble for so off in a place where it wasn't allowed.

"Then it just hit me," he said."

His timing was perfect as just last year islature made it legal for landowners outsi

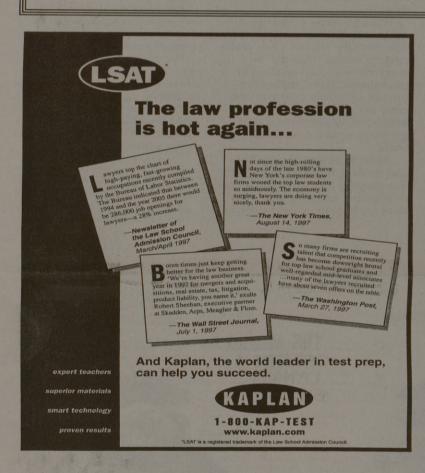
to allow people onto their property to sho "If it's a safe area, that would be a good U.S. Forest Service spokesperson Gay lips takes the place of everyone doing their on

An extended heat wave and droughthe state extremely susceptible to wilder smallest of sparks.

More than half the state's 254 counties fireworks, and authorities in many cities crackdowns against aerial fireworks.

Turley has taken several precautions event safe. He has mowed his grass "to max" and plowed firebreaks that are prevent flames from spreading.

Turley also has hired off-duty sheifs help with crowd control and enforce a malcohol policy



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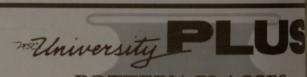
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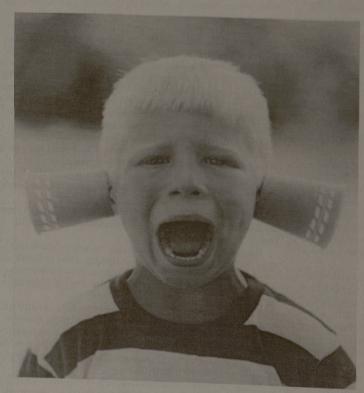
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