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River alcohol ban considered

Central Texas leaders study drinking at parks and rivers

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The idea of banning alcohol along Central Texas parks and rivers is spreading, with San Marcos city officials now considering a similar proposal.

Officials say a drinking problem that began years ago has prompted them to study banning alcohol in their city parks, many of which are near the San Marcos River.

"The area by the falls in the river, the people drink and they get belligerent," Jane Roach, a member of the San Marcos Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, told the San Antonio Express-News in Tuesday's edition. "I don't even go down there anymore. People use the parks like a bar."

In New Braunfels, the city council has proposed banning alcohol on sections of the Guadalupe and Comal rivers designated as a central business district.

Some San Marcos residents worry that if New Braunfels bans drinking while tubing, that could send more troublemakers to the San Marcos River. The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission last month did not act on the New Braunfels plan, instead recommending that the city rework its proposal.

San Marcos Parks board member Marvin Nite said drinking in the parks has been a concern for years.

"The parks are for children, not for alcoholics to do their stuff," said Nite. Even though the San Marcos

proposal does not include Parks Director Rodney Cobb, there are concerns the would become more rowdy, heavy-drinking crowd if open containers are from bank to bank on Braunfels rivers.

New Braunfels residents complained last summer that contributed to problem included profanity, nudity along on the rivers. City officials this week they still hope state approval for the ban.

The San Marcos advisory will likely hold public hearings the coming months before entering a recommendation to council, Cobb said.

Victim's family sues Dillard

ARLINGTON (AP) — Relatives of a man fatally shot at a mall by an off-duty police officer filed a \$50 million wrongful death claim Monday against the officer and Dillard's Department Stores Inc.

The lawsuit, filed in a state district court, alleges that Arlington police Sgt. Keith Humphrey used unjustified deadly force in June against 41-year-old Roy Don Bearden.

Humphrey, who was working as a security guard in plain clothes, shot Bearden four times after chasing the unarmed man through Dillard's and struggling with him.

Papers filed in the lawsuit contend that Dillard's was negligent in supervising the officer. Tom Carse, the family's attorney, said the large claim is designed to get the jury's attention about the seriousness of the case.

"That's the starting point for placing value on human life," Carse, who represents Ronnie, Misty and Dawn Bearden, Bearden's brother and two daughters, said in Tuesday's edition of the Arlington Morning News.

The officer has said he fired shots only after Bearden, who was suspected of stealing a \$50 razor at a

nearby Sears store, shouted that he was armed and ready to be reaching for a gun.

A Tarrant County grand jury declined to

"[The large claim is] the starting point for placing value on human life."

— Tom Carse, Bearden family attorney

Humphrey in the shooting last November, and a internal investigation cleared the officer of wrongdoing.

An autopsy by the Tarrant County medical examiner's office showed Bearden had cocaine in his system when the shooting occurred.

Family members say the toxicology results were entered to protect the police.

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