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A&M, college officials granted immunity

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — A federal judge has removed Texas A&M University and college officials as defendants in claims filed by victims of the 1999 bonfire collapse.

U.S. District Judge Samuel B. Kent, ruling that governmental immunity applied in the cases, dismissed the claims. He ruled that university officials were not "deliberately indifferent" to the dangers of bonfire.

But Kent said University officials

could have prevented the deaths of 12 people and injuries to 27 others when a 59-foot-high stack of logs toppled.

"The university officials were aware of the dangers posed by the bonfire," Kent wrote in his 19-page decision. "Consequently, it can be argued that they may have acted negligently, possibly even grossly so."

The University and its employees are still named in several lawsuits filed in state court. Those cases will

be heard in Brazos County.

Attorneys for the 60 defendants had asked that the cases be transferred to Brazos County.

They argued state law requires the trials take place where the accident occurred. They also said trials in other counties would be too inconvenient for defendants who don't live where the cases were filed.

Plaintiffs' attorneys in the probate court cases have argued that the law

allows survivors to file suit in the county of residence.

Darrell Keith, who represents several of the victims' families, said his clients can still request that the trials be moved out of Brazos County.

All the lawsuits seek unspecified amounts for damages.

There is no monetary limit on wrongful death claims in federal court. Texas' Tort Claims Act caps lawsuit damages against government

agencies and their employees at \$500,000.

Plaintiffs' attorneys said they will appeal Kent's ruling to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

"We're saddened by the court's decision because the judge does say they were aware of the dangers," Geno Borchardt, who represents the Keller family, whose son was among those killed in the collapse, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in Wednesday's

Campus wireless security lacking

By Kelln Zimmer
THE BATTALION

In a forum discussion Wednesday, Willis Marti of the Computer Information Services Network Group at Texas A&M emphasized that campus wireless lacks the performance of wired access and security.

As access becomes widespread, increased security measures must be taken in order to minimize the risks associated with wireless access, he said.

"Our goal is not campus wireless," he said. "Wireless access is to be used only as a supplement to the wired access we already have."

According to information listed on the Tamulink website, wireless access is currently available through numerous ports on campus, including Evans Library, the Harrington Education Classroom Center, the Commons Lobby, the West Campus Library and many food service locations across campus.

There are plans for additional wireless connections in the Pavilion, the lobby and hallways of Wehner, Zachry and the remaining food service locations.

The forum addressed security as a pressing issue facing the increased wireless use on campus.

"In a wireless environment, you essentially need two things," Marti

Wireless connections available on campus

- Evans Library
- Langford
- West Campus Library
- Student Computing Center
- Harrington
- Commons Lobby

Food service locations

- All MSC cafeterias
- Sbis Dining Hall
- Duncan Dining Hall
- Commons Dining Hall
- Bush/41st Club

For a complete list of locations go to <http://net.tamu.edu/network/tamulink.html>

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

said. "You must have authentication, knowing who's there, and you must have confidentiality, knowing if they can listen in."

Following high demand from departments on campus for wireless access, requirements for TAMU wireless were created requiring that it work immediately and provided proper authentication through user identification and confidentiality through data encryption.

"This is not a system where you will just be able to walk up and use a laptop," Marti said.

Wireless access on campus,

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Annual fire training being held this week

By Ruth Ihde
THE BATTALION

The Texas Engineering and Extension Services (TEEX) is holding the 73rd annual municipal fire training school at the Brayton Fire Training Facility this week. It is the largest live fire training facility in the nation, said Marilyn Martell, director of public information at TEEX.

The Brayton Fire Training Facility was established by a former chemistry professor from Texas A&M.

Before 1960, fire training was performed on the A&M campus, said Pat Barrett, a director for the training school.

Cary Roccaforde, a guide and instructor with the Municipal Recruit Center, said about 2,267 volunteer firefighters attended this year's municipal training school and about 140 highly qualified instructors are present to help train them.

This is the third of four weeks in

the training program. The first week was Spanish school, which firefighters from as far as Venezuela and Brazil attend. This year, over 600 Spanish members attended. The second week was Emergency Response and Rescue school, and the fourth is industrial week, he said.

Roccaforde has been involved in firefighting since he was 15 years old and has seen the Brayton Fire Training Field develop into 126 acres of props used to train the firefighters in different situations.

There are 135 props that simulate real life situations a firefighter may come in contact with in his or her career, ranging from a house fire to chemical, industrial, and transportation fires, he said.

The training facility also has an area called "Disaster City," a simulated train wreck, rubble pile and a

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RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

The 73rd annual municipal fire training school is being held this week at the Brayton Fire Training Facility this week.



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Texas A&M men's tennis coach **Tim Cass** has set his sights on the national championship to close his chapter at A&M.

Cass writing his book

By Kevin Espenlaub
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M men's tennis coach Tim Cass said his father always told him that life was a collection of chapters. After ending his playing days and coaching for eight seasons at his alma mater, the University of New Mexico, Cass is in the process of writing what he considers one of the most important chapters so far.

He hopes his chapter with A&M ends with an NCAA national championship.

"It's not a secret to anyone on this campus or anyone in the nation that our goal here is to win a national championship," Cass said. "It's difficult for the most part because of tradition and the fact that we haven't

won one yet."

Since taking the head coaching position at A&M in 1996, Cass has led the Aggies to unprecedented success, including a top 20 finish this season in which the Aggies made it to the NCAA round of 16 for the third consecutive season.

But, the world of tennis has changed a lot since Cass began playing near his home in southern California nearly 30 years ago.

"If you look at college tennis 25 years ago, it was far different than it is now," Cass said. "Back then the sport was dominated by Americans, and now if you look, probably 75 of the top 100 collegiate players are foreign."

"There's probably only two or three of us left coaching that are focused on

trying to develop young 17 and 18 year old players from here instead of going overseas where you can bring in a 20 or 21-year-old freshman who will have a lot less growing pains than some of our younger kids have."

Cass' recruiting style has landed him praise around the world of college tennis, crediting his upbringing for his effort and his refusal to look for an easy way out.

"Kids have changed a lot, even since I started coaching 14 years ago," Cass said. "When I was growing up, if I came home and told my dad that the football coach made me run too much in practice, he would just laugh in my face ... I try to find the players to come

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Callaloo workshops come to A&M

By Melissa McKeon
THE BATTALION

Callaloo, a well known African-American and African literary journal founded in 1976, is having its annual creative writing workshop in the Blocker Building July 20 through Aug. 4.

Callaloo publishes original works and critical studies of black writers worldwide.

It was founded and is edited by

Texas A&M English professor Charles H. Rowell.

"The *Callaloo* workshops are designed to develop skills in creative writing, poetry and fiction," Rowell said.

The journal offers an assortment of fiction, poetry, plays, essays, cultural studies, interviews and art. Frequent annotated bibliographies, special thematic issues and original art and photography are some attributes of the prominent international journal, he said.

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English professor dies of colon cancer

By Molly McCullough
THE BATTALION

Dr. Helen Barthelme, senior lecturer in the English department, passed away June 28 of colon cancer. Colleagues are working together to establish a scholarship in her memory. Barthelme took time off from teaching this spring in the middle of the semester due to back problems and complications with the cancer.

"I always think of her smile," said Maura Ives, associate head of the English department. "She always had a wonderful smile whenever I saw her."

Ives is in charge of coordinating the scholarship to honor Barthelme, which could be awarded to an outstanding teaching assistant. Barthelme frequently taught large classes and worked closely with a teaching assistant.

Ives knew how much she appreciated the assistant's

help and thought this would be a good gesture since there is not an award specifically dedicated to helping teaching assistants.

However, if enough donations come into the scholarship fund, additional awards could be created that are not limited to teaching assistants, Ives said.

"Helen was a very dedicated teacher and wonderful person," Ives said. "We would like to honor her in this way."

So far, faculty members, colleagues, friends and former students of Barthelme's have donated to the scholarship fund.

"The response around here has been really positive," Ives said.

Barthelme taught mostly American Literature and writing courses at A&M. Besides teaching classes, Barthelme was an award-winning author. Her book

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