

THE BATTALION

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Reed Arena officials say they will be wary of hosting 'trash shows'

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

Reed Arena officials are more closely scrutinizing groups seeking to use the facility following the death of a participant in an amateur boxing competition held at the arena.

However, the arena's balance sheet indicates selectivity is not a luxury it can afford.

Mary Helen Bowers, associate director of special event facilities at A&M, said there is no official criteria or standards that groups must meet before leasing the arena and that each rental request is considered on its own merit. Ability to

pay, appropriateness for the intended audience and safety are primary considerations, she said.

"We probably wouldn't have a strip show," Bowers said.

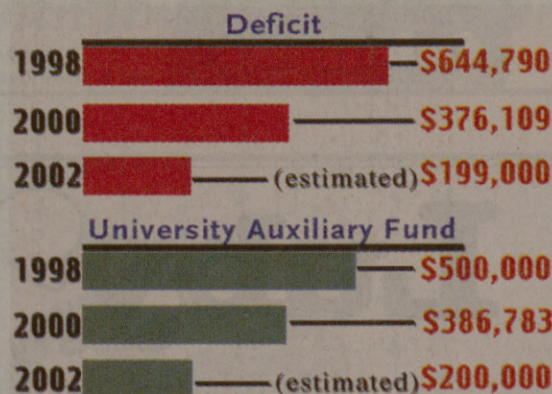
Although the arena has hosted professional wrestling, monster trucks and other "trash sports," Bowers said, there is a relatively small market for them in Bryan-College Station, and most of the large spectator events held at Reed Arena are family-friendly.

When a promotion company requested the arena for the Toughman Contest amateur boxing tournament, Bowers said its track record at other arenas was found to be safe and the contest was

licensed by state regulatory authorities, so the event was booked. Like all other non-University groups, Toughman paid \$3,000 a day for use of the arena floor, plus expenses such as security personnel and ushers. University-recognized organizations can rent the arena for \$2,000 a day, plus expenses.

The two-day Toughman event, which drew modest crowds of about 500 and 370, lost money, Bowers said. Though it is unlikely that Toughman would want to return to Reed Arena, Bowers said she would be wary of hosting a similar event in

Reed Arena lowers deficit



For the past five years, revenue and expenses have both increased

Source: Special Events Facilities

See **Arena** on page 2

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

I'm not "lion"



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Curator of the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection in College Station, Dr. Kathryn Vaughan measures the diameter of an eye socket from an African Lion skull. The skull is

one of the half a million preserved specimen at the Collection. The Wildlife Collection is one of the largest collections in the world.

Fish Camp death not linked with criminal activity

By Sarah Walch
THE BATTALION

The investigation into the Aug. 27 death of Fish Camp staff member Michael Alan Schmidt has turned up no evidence of criminal activity, said University Police Department Lt. Bert Kretzschmar.

Schmidt, a civil engineering graduate student, died after he sustained head injuries in a fall from a golf cart at the camp's Lakeview Methodist Assembly site. He was a staffer in Fish Camp's Session E.

Kretzschmar was the liaison contact UPD dispatched to Anderson County Sheriff's Office to assist with their investigation, said UPD director Bob Wiatt.

Associate Director of Recreational Sports Tom Reber made the trip to Lakeview with Kretzschmar as the student affairs representative, Kretzschmar said. Kretzschmar interviewed witnesses, took photographs of the scene and gathered facts to make sure there was no criminal activity involved.

"We have concluded it was an accident," Kretzschmar said. "We still do not know why he fell off, other than that he was standing (on the back of a golf cart). There was no criminal act involved. Although wit-

nesses did see him before and after, no one was watching him in that split second before he fell."

Schmidt was riding on the cart in a way that was not safe at the time of the accident, said Dr. Bill Kibler, associate vice president for student affairs.

"Student Activities has a number of well-developed risk management rules in place," Kibler said. "In fact, the Lakeview site has a page (in its release form) which explicitly requires students who will be operating a golf cart to sign."

Rules and procedures were in place at the time of Schmidt's accident, he said.

One rule prohibits more than two students riding in a golf cart at any given time. Schmidt was one of three riding in the cart, Kibler said.

Director of Student Activities Dr. Kevin Jackson said students sign release forms that inform them of the risks and expected behaviors of all activities they might be involved in while at Fish Camp.

Fish Camp also requires extensive training for directors and staff, including the crew staff, he said.

"Fish Camp has an emergency medical technician in the infirmary at the campsite at all times," Jackson said.

Schmidt received immediate attention after the accident, he said. Fish Camp Adviser Laura Boren did not immediately return phone calls.

A&M one step closer to ocean drilling project

By Rob Phillips
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M agreed to a partnership with Ocean Drilling Program Joint Oceanographic Institutes (JOI) this week, taking the first step towards retaining its position as science operator of the largest project for ocean drilling in the world.

The new program will begin in October 2003. A&M and Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO) will once again form the JOI team.

A&M has acted as science operator for the existing Ocean Drilling Program for the past 20 years. LDEO is the current project's other principal contractor.

JOI and its two chosen institutions will respond to a request for proposal from the National Science Foundation (NSF) within the next several weeks. NSF funds the majority of the existing program and makes the final decision on which group will win the new contract.

The United States and Japan will lead the new Integrated Ocean

Drilling Program (IODP). If awarded the contract, A&M and LDEO will jointly plan operations and no longer work as separate entities, said Jeff Fox, A&M's ODP director.

Fox said A&M jumped a "major hurdle" by receiving JOI's support.

"We're extremely excited by the prospect of working with JOI and LDEO," Fox said. "It represents a tremendous amount of work by the staff here and support by the University."

Fox said he has "every confidence that the JOI team will be successful" in receiving the new contract from NSF.

A&M currently receives \$38.5 million a year for operating the JOIDES Resolution drill ship and its work on the project. LDEO is granted about \$4 million.

A&M will not likely know who the other parties competing for the contract are until NSF releases its Request for Proposal. The decision on the contract should come either late next winter or early spring, Fox said.

If A&M continues its role as science operator of IODP, it would be "a jewel in the University's crown," Fox said.

Board plans a vote on proposed engineering program in Qatar

By Melissa McKeon
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M System Board of Regents discussed several issues Thursday, including a proposal to begin a project that would establish an engineering program in Qatar, located in the Middle East.

"The project will be fully funded by Qatar," said University President Dr. Robert M. Gates. "A&M will provide undergraduate degrees in petroleum engineering, chemical engineering, and other areas that are oil and gas related. The program will be co-located in College Station and Qatar."

Other degree programs such as design, medicine and business may also be added.

"A draft contract is expected to be completed and presented to the Board of Regents in the January or March meeting," Gates said. "The state department is enthusiastic about our involvement in the program."

Other universities, including Cornell, are already participating in the program. The meeting also featured a report

from the Chancellor's Student Advisory Board (CSAB).

Natasha Croon, chair of the CSAB was among the students that addressed the regents and gave a presentation on how their campus and students are doing.

"The system is made up of 10 campuses," Croon said. "We all meet every year and present ourselves to the Texas A&M Board of Regents at their September meeting."

Regents also discussed concerns regarding \$100 million that Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) set aside for train track relocation around the A&M campus. Four options were presented to the councils of Burleson and Brazos counties, but the councils rejected the plans that would have benefited A&M the most by moving railroads.

Regent Wendy Gramm said the safety of A&M students should be at the forefront of any decisions made regarding track relocation.

"We are getting reports rather than being proactive," regent R.H. Stevens said. "If the money is going to be spent, it needs to be spent on this campus."

Dr. Leo Sayavedra, vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, reported on 12th day class enrollments at all system universities. Overall enrollment is up four percent, but minority enrollment has not increased as expected, Sayavedra said.

"We need year-by-year goals. We're playing catch up as it is," said Regent Lionel Sosa. "This needs to become a front-burner issue. We have an opportunity to show the state what we can do."

Sayavedra said the University of Texas at Austin has a more balanced mix of students due to several factors, including recruiting in more diverse areas and a more aggressive scholarship effort targeted at minority students.

"Seventy percent of minority students who turn us down do so because of money," Gates.

The board discussed a \$1 million Bonfire Memorial maintenance fee funded by existing A&M funds and a \$16.3 million deferred maintenance fee for building repairs across the entire A&M system.

The regents are expected to vote on these and other issues at Friday's meeting.