

Senate fundraiser planned

A fund-raising party for U.S. Senate candidate Jon Coon is scheduled for 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, at the C.A.I. Hall, 5640 Williams Lake Road in Waterford Township.

Tickets are \$8 if purchased in advance, \$10 at the door. Call (800) 566-2666 to order tickets.

The party features a live band, dancing, free hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

Coon is running as a Libertarian candidate. He lives in Henderson, Mich.

OU considers new athletic building

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

Oakland University is thinking about building a multimillion-dollar student recreation center to augment or replace the 31-year-old Lepley Sports Center.

The board of trustees recently gave university administrators permission to hire a bond counsel to consider the feasibility of the project. Should the board approve the edifice, bonds would be sold to pay for it, and a student activities fee would be used to pay off the bonds.

At 74,000 square feet, Lepley is the smallest athletic building in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. In contrast, the Field House at Grand Valley State University is 210,000 square feet and serves a smaller student body than Lepley.

Built for use solely as a recreation center for students when enrollment was just 2,000, Lepley has since become home to OU's 10 athletic teams in addition to its primary role.

Recently, Lepley has developed serious maintenance and mechanical problems with the swimming pool. Estimates to repair the problem have topped \$200,000. A section of the gym floor was replaced a year ago after a roof leak ruined it. The front steps are crumbling. Pieces of plaster fall off the walls of the racquetball courts. And there have been two small fires recently.

University officials lament that Lepley is barely adequate to support the recreation wants and desires of 13,000 students, let alone OU's 10 athletic teams.

A report based on an OU fact-finding tour of other universities concludes that the quality of a school's athletic facility weighs heavily in a student's choice of universities.

"All directors said in one way or another that a full-service recreation facility is necessary today to stay competitive in the student recruitment market," the report says.

Steve Ragan, an administrator at Eastern Michigan University, agrees. EMU's Olds Student Recreation Center, he said, "is ab-

solutely fantastic (and) one of the best things about the university. If you're trying to be a major university it's very important to have a primo athletic facility."

Paul Bissonnette, OU's vice president of finance and administration, said no one has figured out yet how much a recreation center would cost, what would be in it, or where it would be built.

However, he said the emphasis is to have a student recreation center first, if necessary at the expense of the needs of OU's athletic teams. The teams, Bissonnette said, "are not a part of the concept." After general student recreation, "any other uses would be secondary."

OU board of trustees Chairman James Sharp Jr. said he would like to see the recreation center built, but it's construction is by no means carved in stone.

"I wish I could say that it was, but it isn't," Sharp said. "We've got to make sure we can pay off the bonds."

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