Hotels fill quickly for May 2005 graduation

By Jennifer Amster
Arizona Daily Wildcat

Students graduating in May will have one more thing to worry about besides the usual commotion of commencement — they will have to figure out where their out-of-town relatives will stay as hotels begin to fill for that weekend.

Some popular upscale hotels in the Tucson area are already booked solid for graduation weekend. May 13-15, 2005, and others are close to selling out. In addition, hotel rates are higher on the weekend because of the increased demand.

Faye DeAratan, president of Arizona Inn, said the hotel started taking reservations for graduation weekend May 14, 2005, exactly one year in advance. DeAratan said the 86 rooms booked almost immediately and the hotel has a waiting list of 50.

"Parents of students find us when their kids first come to Tucson. They want to stay with us when they graduate," DeAratan said.

Arizona Inn, 2200 E. Elia St., is only a mile from campus and its standard rooms start at $199 a night for graduation weekend.

Kevin Tracey, director of revenue management for Marriott University Park, 885 E. Second St., said only about 30 rooms are available for May graduation weekend.

"It's our location that sells us. It's all about the location," Tracey said.

Tracey said Marriott University Park is a hot-spot hotel for parents of students because of the proximity to campus events and quality service.

The on-campus hotel fills up every year for big campus events such as graduation, Tracey said. He expects rooms to be completely booked in February.

"There is always a flurry of reservations after degree checks," he said.

In order to reserve a room for May's graduation, see HOTEL8.

Athletics expects surplus

By Mike DeSantolo
Arizona Daily Wildcat

UA athletic director Jim Livengood told the Arizona Board of Regents yesterday he projects the athletics department to have a surplus of more than $1 million at the end of the year.

Athletic directors from the UA, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University presented reports on their financial status as well as how their student-athletes are faring to the regents yesterday.

"Things look pretty good. We've been able to operate with a positive fund balance," Livengood said.

"Our expenditures are covered by our revenues," said UA President Peter Likins.

The UA athletic budget has finished with a surplus every year for about two decades.

UA's athletic department even managed to escape debt last year despite firing head football coach John Mackovic and hiring interim head coach Mike Stoops.

ASU, on the other hand, had a $400,000 deficit in their athletic department budget during the last fiscal year, said Gene Smith, ASU athletic director.

Smith also said the ASU athletic budget has a continuing deficit of $1.6 million.

To help cut athletic expenditures, the UA athletic department has cut about 15 full-time positions, according to the Arizona Daily Star.

Livengood told the Arizona Daily Star those employees were not necessarily laid off and some were reassigned.

See ATHLETICS8/3

Professionals students make science "Phun"

By Cassie Tomlin
Arizona Daily Wildcat

UA professors and grad students dazzled a crowd of more than 300 with fire, lasers, and bottle rockets Wednesday during the 21st annual Physics Fun Nite, and they will do it again tonight.

The Physics and Atmospheric Sciences building auditorium was filled mostly with families and elementary school-aged children during the event, which featured more than 15 acts and culminated with a professor lying on a bed of nails.

Anne Murdaha, physics graduate student, was capped and masked to play the "Physics Defender." She used a potato gun to shoot a suspended teddy bear during a skit and made metal rings fly with a superconductor machine.

Murdaha said she was happy to be a part of the event for a second year because it shows children the exciting parts of physics.

"It brings physics down from a bunch of equations in a book," she said. "And who doesn't love exploding things?"

Erik Hermon, a Tucson High School physics teacher, drew the largest applause with his demonstration. He ignited a 15-foot propane-filled steel tube and inflated the intensity of the flames by singing into a microphone connected to the apparatus.

The Gregal Nite ends with mathematics professor Bruce Bayly lying on a bed of nails while Hermon hammered a brick on top of him.

"The physics really does work," Bayly said. "The nails are close enough together that they absorb the force from the hammer and the brick, it doesn't hurt.”

In order to make physics demonstrations available to all elementary schools in the community, Bayly recently purchased an old school bus and transformed it into the "Physics Bus." Bayly and Hermon travel in the bus to bring science