



Courtesy Photo

If you haven't been treated to a Blind Boys of Alabama show, then make your way to the WOW Hall tonight. The world-renowned gospel and rhythm and blues group makes its only area appearance on the band's international tour. The concert begins at 8 p.m. with a local funk and blues troupe, the Deb Cleveland Band. Tickets are \$18 and available at FASTIXX outlets, CD World and the WOW Hall. Doors open at 7:30, and the show is an all-ages event.

When students fight, YMCA wins

■ Proceeds from the Greek System's Smoker Boxing Tournament will benefit the Big Brother/Big Sister program

By Bevin Caffery
Oregon Daily Emerald

A hot, crowded gym is filled with eager spectators, the air rippling with energy as they anticipate the appearance of the first fighters. Two toned and intimidating young men enter the ring and the real, live boxing begins at McArthur Court.

But this year's Smoker Boxing Tournament has more to it than just watching raw adrenalized aggression encouraged by a crowd of screaming onlookers: This boxing tournament has a higher purpose and a long history in the hearts of members of the University Greek System.

The Smoker has been traditionally organized by the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, and it is a tradition that stretches back for decades on the University campus. After the chapter's probation from campus, students in the Greek System collectively wondered what would happen to the future of the Smoker. The Greek Life Office took action to pick up the slack and carry on the tradition.

"Greek Life decided that we were going to continue the event because it is such a big philanthropy event," said Kainoa Sandberg, Panhellenic Vice President of Programs.

Tonight the event will benefit YMCA's Big Brother/Big Sister program. The message of the tournament is to "Fight For Kids," encouraging participants and spectators to focus on the philanthropic aspects instead of the fighting between individuals.

Stressing the same theme of unity, the Smoker is a popular event among members of the Greek System and independents alike. This year the coordinators are strongly encouraging people outside the Greek System to attend, to strengthen the student body and break down greek stereotypes of resistance to give back to the community.

Luke McNeal, a member of the Theta Chi fraternity and the Greeks Against Rape Chair, looks forward to tonight. "My chapter looks forward to it every year," McNeal said. "The Smoker is one of our favorite philanthropies because it benefits such a great cause."

Last year's attendance to the boxing tournament reached 1,500, and the Greek Life Office anticipates as many, or even more, spectators tonight.

Greek Life, however, decided to change the recipient of the proceeds from the Smoker. Instead of continuing with Phi Kappa Psi's normal philanthropy beneficiary, it is changing the focus of the event toward a more "civil theme," said Interfraternity Council Vice President of Programs Justin Zuiker. "This event ties directly into the

Greek System because we are donating our proceeds to the YMCA Big Brother/Big Sister program," Zuiker said. "Each member of the UO Greek System has a big brother or big sister in their respective fraternity or sorority, and we have an intimate knowledge of how beneficial having someone to help guide us can be."

As the program coordinator of the Big Brother/Big Sister program, Jude McKay is grateful to the fraternities and sororities putting on the Smoker for supporting the YMCA program.

"Our program doesn't charge anything for our services," McKay said. "We depend entirely on fundraisers from within our own organization and from the community. It is a very generous gesture."

Shannon Kilduff from the YMCA will attend the event this evening to show support and represent her organization.

Zuiker said he hopes the event will be a chance for the program to raise money for charity, encourage athleticism, and just provide a good time for everyone.

The tournament will consist of 13 matches, with 16 men and 10 women participating. The majority of the fighters are from greek houses, but students from Club Sports, the Student Senate, and students outside the Greek System are also representing the student body. Some fighters are entering the ring for fun, while others have been training since the beginning of the year.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity member Sophanna Kuch fought and won at last year's match, and hopes to defend his title on Tuesday. Excited to be back in the ring, Kuch said, "I just want to go out there and test my skills."

Another perspective on the Smoker comes from the ASUO Women's Center. The staffers there agreed that the participation of women in the boxing tournament can be either degrading or empowering, depending on the presentation and the audience's reaction.

"It's not objectifying, as long as they are not boxing in bikinis or whipped cream," office coordinator Lori Brown said. "It's empowering to show women in a nontraditional sport."

The Smoker is one of many events for the University's Greek Week, which runs this week. This year, Zuiker said, the week is geared toward strengthening interfraternity and community relationships.

Other events this week include the public initiation of University President Dave Frohnmayer into the Delta Upsilon fraternity, Delta Gamma's annual Anchor Splash philanthropy, and a "wholehearted participation in University Day and Take Back The Night events," said Zuiker. The week will culminate in an all-Greek Barbecue to draw Greek Week to a close.

Tickets are \$5 at the door and are available at 5 p.m. The show starts at Mac Court at 5:30 p.m.

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