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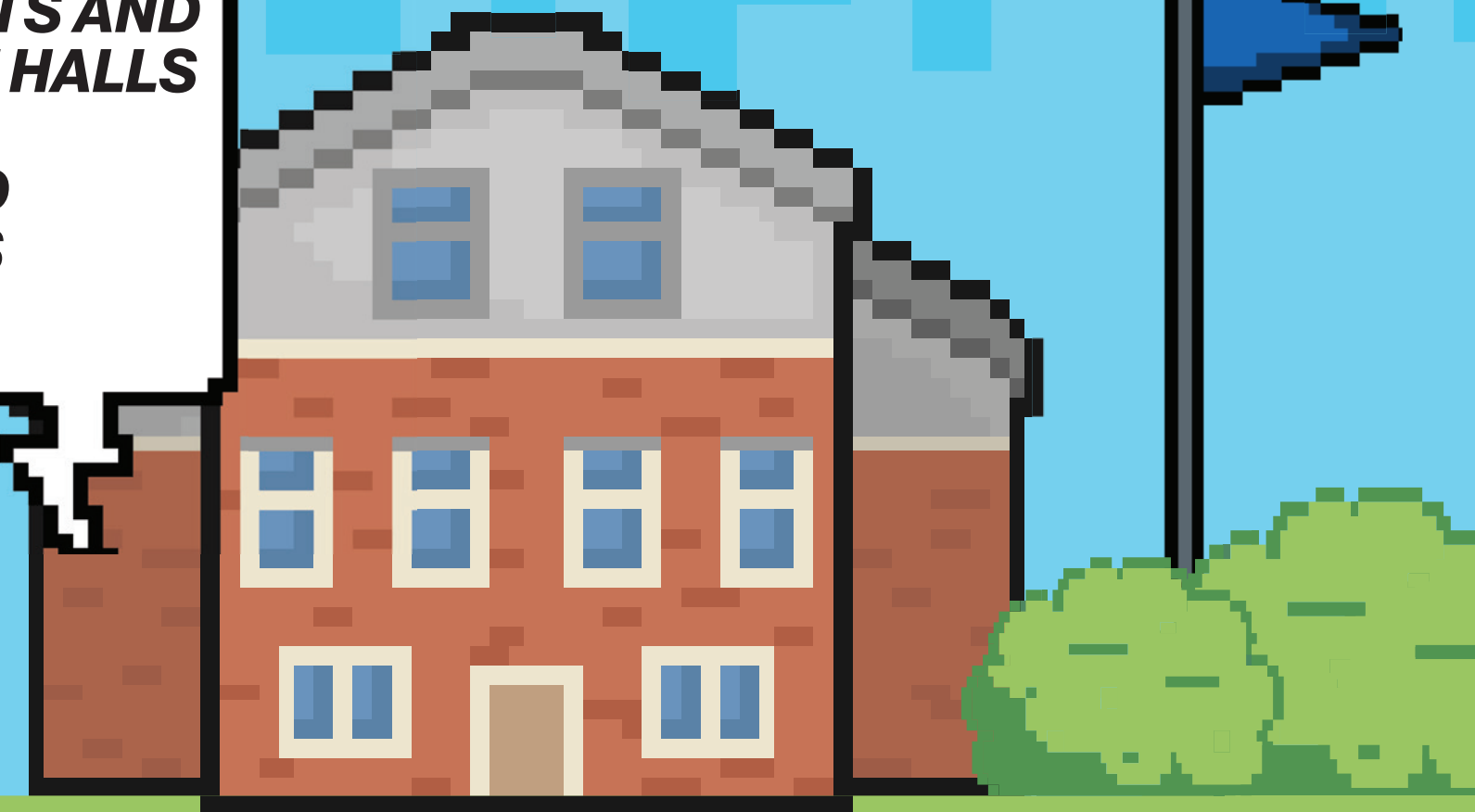
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VIDEO GAMES

Game over: E3's fall from grace



The Electronic Entertainment Expo's future is uncertain after repeated cancellations

BY KENNETH FOSTER
The Shorthorn staff

One of the most devastating blows to the gaming industry by COVID-19 was the repeated cancellations of the Electronic Entertainment Expo, better known as E3.

E3 is a trade show for video game-related material hosted by the Entertainment Software Association to provide game publishers with a space to show upcoming titles and hold press conferences. It was largely considered one of the biggest video game events worldwide but has diminished since the pandemic.

Show organizer ReedPop canceled the event for the second year in a row last month, citing plans to re-evaluate the future of the expo. The only E3 event held since its 2020

cancellation was a virtual expo in 2021 to maintain the social-distancing protocols.

"I would love for it to come back," said Fall Joyner, a local GameStop employee. "But it's been pushed back so many times. It's just never gonna happen at this point."

First showcased in 1995 as a video game equivalent to the Consumer Electronics Show, E3 has been held in Los Angeles nearly every summer until the pandemic. The main focus was for game developers to host press conferences and showcase products to media and industry professionals. Eventually, live streams were offered for the fans at home, and in 2017, the general public was allowed to attend booths, demos and exhibits.

E3's lackluster virtual per-

formance in 2021 could have contributed to its cancellation in 2022 and, more recently, in 2023. But industry experts said that the pandemic highlighted a deeper issue.

It's important to remember that E3 was a trade show first and a "world premiere" fest second, and before 2020, it was unlikely to think it would just disappear from one moment to the other, said Diego Argüello, editor-in-chief and founder of *Into The Spine*, an online video game journalism publication, in an email.

However, while COVID-19 restrictions played a role in the show's decline, the larger impact came from publishers realizing people will tune in to showcases from anywhere in the world, not just an expo hall, Argüello said.

Like in any other aspect, monopolies or central expos aren't ideal. There are several other shows to attend, such as Gamescom, individual showcases from some of the big publishers and Summer Game Fest, which could be the next centralized expo. It will be interesting to see another expo rise and try E3, but it might be a while until that happens, he said.

From now on, expos like E3 will serve as places for gathering for media, content creators and developers, as well as a way to try out demos or talk about unannounced projects ahead of time, Argüello said.

"There started to be some realizations from publishers and the like about how time eroded its importance," he said.

Despite E3's diminishing standing, there is still interest in seeing it return if the model were improved, said Leah Michnevitz, political science and legal studies sophomore.

In years past, the expo hinged on game developers showcasing trailers for upcoming releases and sometimes offering a demo. But since publishers have gotten used to showcasing on their own terms, Michnevitz said E3's new selling point should approach it from the player's side with "a lot more community engagement."

"It's more interesting if the community can get involved or get to experience something or try something out," she said. "For example: Behavior, the *Dead by Daylight* dev team, they have commu-

nities voting or participating in the live streams."

With a model geared more toward how the fans interact with new reveals, E3 might be able to build itself around endorsing fan engagement, giving the developers an avenue of communication with their consumers.

What ultimately becomes of E3 is up to how the Entertainment Software Association decides to adapt to the shifting video game market. It's clear that more rough times are in store if things don't change.

"I think it's the kind of show that had been running for such a long time that the industry took its presence for granted in a way," Argüello said.

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THEATER

Theatre Arlington honors past performers with medallions



The Shorthorn: Christine Vo

Broadcast journalist Caroline Vandergriff sits with her family in front of her medallion during the Theatre Arlington Walk of Fame unveiling March 31 at Theatre Arlington. The unveiling was followed by the opening night of the theater's rendition of *Noises Off*.

The Walk Of Fame features 21 bronze medallions at the foot of the theater's entrance, embossed with a name, star and an icon detailing their field of accomplishment

BY JONATHAN PERRIELLO
The Shorthorn life and entertainment editor

The city of Arlington isn't short of talented folks, but before Theatre Arlington unveiled its Walk Of Fame on Friday, it might have taken a Google search to figure that out.

The Walk Of Fame features 21 bronze medallions at the foot of the theater's entrance, honoring the actors, musicians, producers, authors and other creatives who performed at the theater before achieving regional,

national or worldwide success. From members of Grammy Award-winning acapella group Pentatonix to broadcast journalist Caroline Vandergriff, each received a medallion embossed with their name, star and an icon detailing their field of accomplishment.

The theater is not solely here for people to perform shows in Arlington, executive producer Steven Morris said. "My hope is that the young people that come see the shows, the UTA students and high school students that come in

and see that and think, 'Oh, I could do things here and go further. This could be a stepping stone for me.'"

For several of the honorees, those words ring true.

Stacey Oristano

Stacey Oristano, best known for her role as Mindy Riggs in the Emmy Award-winning drama series "Friday Night Lights," grew up in Arlington and found her passion on the theater's stage.



Stacey Oristano
actor

Oristano's father spent his time in between sports casting and as a stage actor for the theater, so she was around the community as early as six years old. However, it wasn't until she was 16 that she performed her first Theatre Arlington show, *Stepping Out*, a show about a tap dancing class, she said.

She continued performing through high school, winning a University Interscholastic League theater competition before returning to Theatre Arlington a year after graduating college to act in *The Secret Garden*, she said. She then moved to New York to pursue her theater dreams.

While living in New York, Oristano's talent agency, Kim Dawson Agency, booked her an audition for "Friday Night Lights," her first foray into TV acting. Despite thinking she would perform solely in plays and musicals for the rest of her life, the one-episode, seven-line role turned into a five-year part that started her television career, she said.

Since then, Oristano has had both

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