



Tech alum goes on 'Idol' ■ page 9

THURSDAY, Feb. 10, 2005

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Lubbock, Texas © Copyright 2005

Faculty Senate says no to implementing fall break

By Meghann Lora/The University Daily

The Faculty Senate voted Wednesday against the Student Senate's proposed fall break.

Student Senate resolution 40.30 calls for the fall break to be scheduled Oct. 20 and Oct. 21 to coincide with the football game at the University of Texas in Austin.

The resolution proposed to adjust the academic calendar to make up for the two lost days of classes. The last day of classes would be Dec. 9, and final examinations would take place the next Monday through Friday. Graduation ceremonies would take place on Dec. 17, but graduates would not receive diplomas until Dec. 21.

Gene Wilde, president of the Faculty Senate, said the senate needed to make a decision on the issue of a fall break to guide the decision-making of Tech officials.

"Something is going to be decided on the issue sometime soon," he said.

The Faculty Senate voted on a motion against the Student Senate's resolution.

"The senate resolution 40.20 passed by SGA ... is unworkable," Wilde said.

The Faculty Senate voted on proposing the consid-

eration of having the Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week off. The Senate voted 14-21 against the motion.

David Birney, professor of organic chemistry, spoke at the Faculty Senate meeting about the difficulty a Thursday and Friday break would cause for science laboratory courses.

Birney said labs are taught on a weekly schedule. He said the elimination of a Thursday and Friday would eliminate one week of laboratory sessions.

"We only have 13 (weeks) to begin with," he said. "You have to reduce it to 12 instead of 13 weeks in the lab."

Birney said because of accreditation problems, some students would have to take another laboratory course to fulfill their laboratory science requirement.

"We are between a rock and a hard place," he said. "I would feel much more comfortable with a week off at Thanksgiving."

Bryan Camp, associate professor at the law school, said a fall break would have negative effects on the law school.

"This would cause a significant hardship," he said. The law school already starts one week before the

rest of Tech, Camp said. The fall break would cause final exams to occur up until the day before graduation. He said this would cause staff members to work extra days in order to finalize grades.

"You have to think about the staff," Camp said.

Other arguments against a Thursday and Friday fall break included interrupting the Tech theatre department programs and the loss of two days for student travel.

John Roberson, a sophomore civil engineering major from Midland, said he is in favor of a fall break.

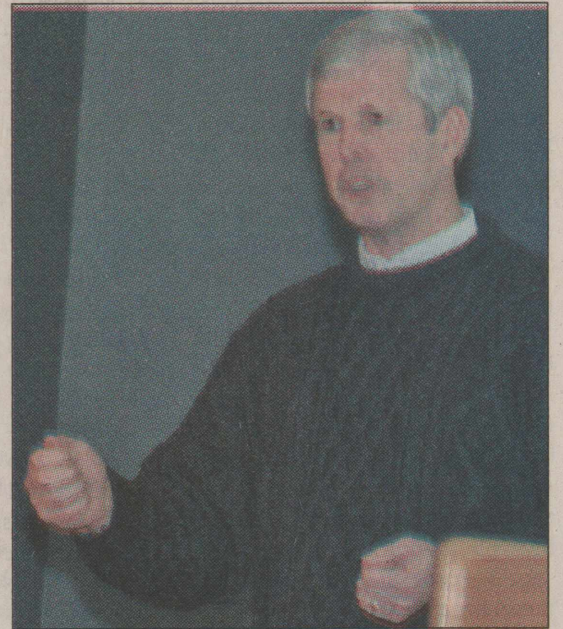
"It would give you some time to relax," he said.

Roberson said a Thursday and Friday break would be better than getting the whole week off at Thanksgiving.

"You're already getting a break a Thanksgiving," he said. "Why not have two breaks?"

Roberson said he does not agree with seniors graduating before grades have been finalized. He said his parents would want to see a diploma on graduation day.

"They wouldn't be happy," Roberson said. "They're paying the school and they expect a diploma when I walk across the stage."



COL. BUDDY KNOX, director of Traffic and Parking, addresses the Faculty Senate Wednesday afternoon.

FACULTY continued on page 6

COTTON COUNTRY



ANDREW WEATHERL/The University Daily

ABOVE: EUGENE BEDNARZ, A local cotton farmer, pulls bolls of cotton apart to show the fiber. LEFT: Recently harvested cotton is transferred from a cotton stripper to a machine that bales the cotton on the Bednarz farm in Slaton.



Cotton production in Lubbock hits all-time high

By Kelly Gooch/The University Daily

Lubbock is one of the leading producers of cotton worldwide, making up 2 percent of the world's cotton production and harvesting a bumper crop this year.

Four million acres of cotton are harvested in Lubbock and surrounding areas, said Dick Auld, agricultural department chairman and professor at Texas Tech.

Joel Basinger, a third-year agronomy doctoral student from Southland, said cotton is widely produced in Lubbock because it is tolerant of the weather, including droughts.

Basinger said he grew nearly 30 acres of cotton

on his father's farm this year, and a farmer needs to have 3,000 acres to make a living off of the crops they produce.

This year, Basinger said he made \$8,800 for the gross total before bills, and the cost of production including equipment and seed was \$2,500.

Cotton is used to manufacture more than clothing, Basinger said. Cotton often is used to make mattresses and diapers.

Auld said the U.S. textile industry is disappearing, which means most items are shipped overseas.

Basinger said he is not planning on becoming a

COTTON continued on page 6

Tech, Shelley hit with new allegations

By David Wiechmann/The University Daily

Aaron Shelley, Texas Tech's former nutritional supplement director for athletics, continued to order the energy drink Jacked after the athletics department received a notice from the NCAA advising that Tech stop ordering the product, according to Tuesday's issue of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

Jacked contains 200 mg of caffeine, and the NCAA claims extended use of the product could result in a positive drug test for caffeine.

Shelley pleaded guilty to money laundering in December for a scam he ran through the supplement program at Tech. Shelley laundered nearly half a million dollars from the university and was ordering banned products with university funds, according to court documents. It is unknown if his subsequent termination is related to the newest allegation.

"I have the story. The story is accurate, and I have no reason to doubt it."

— JENNIFER KEARNS
NCAA Associate Director of Public and Media Relations

Athletic Director Gerald Myers said it was a case of putting trust in someone who did not need to be trusted.

"We had hired someone who was unscrupulous in his activities here," Myers said. "When we found out what he was doing, we terminated him immediately and turned the case over to the police."

Myers said Shelley was entrusted to run the supplement program because of his expertise in the field.

"Aaron Shelley is nobody's fool. He's a sharp man," Myers said. "He knows the supplement industry; that's his industry, and we trusted him."

The report in *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* states the NCAA notified Tech's compliance department as well as the respective offices at the Big 12 Conference and other Big 12 universities. Myers said after the memo had been sent, Shelley continued to order Jacked, contending the product was not banned by the NCAA.

"Aaron told us, even after the e-mails, that Jacked was not illegal," he said. "He changed the ingredients (in a report to me) and we trusted him."

Tech received the warning from NCAA in November 2002, and purchase order records obtained by *The University Daily* through Freedom of Information Act requests indicate Shelley

SHELLEY continued on page 7

Increased technology not at fault for growing problem of identity theft around nation

By Brittany Barrientos/
The University Daily

National Consumer Protection Week, organized by the Better Business Bureau and other organizations aimed at protecting consumers' interests, is in full swing. This year's theme is identity theft.

According to the Federal Trade Commission's Synovate Report, released September 2003, 12.7 percent of people surveyed by

the Federal Trade Commission have been a victim of identity theft.

Nan Campbell, president of the Better Business Bureau of the South Plains, said identity theft is a large problem nationally, but is less of a problem in Lubbock.

"In larger cities it is becoming more of a problem," she said. "It must be pretty big in that they are dedicating a whole week on how to prevent it and protect yourself from it."

Campbell said a big issue she wants people to realize is identity theft is not necessarily the fault of technology.

"It is not necessarily (worsening) because of the computer," she said. "The virtual world is not always the culprit."

According to the 2005 Identity Fraud Survey report, released by the BBB and the Javelin Strategy and Research, identity theft is likely to happen in traditional ways, such as losing a wallet or purse, rather than online.

Sgt. Keith Woodard of the Lubbock Police Department said in numerous cases, identity theft is committed by people acquainted with victims. He said mail theft also is common.

"(People) can get a lot of information from mail," he said. "(You) should get a P.O. box or a lockbox at your house."

Woodard said numerous scams occur both on the computer and by telephone. He said students should be aware of scams.

"If it looks too good to be true, it probably is," he said.

According to the Synovate Report, identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in the United States. The most commonly reported form of identity theft is the misuse of credit card numbers, according to the report.

Campbell said the purpose of Consumer Protection Week is to raise awareness and

THEFT continued on page 6

Inside The UD

Classifieds 13	Opinions 4
Crossword 7	Rundown 2
Life & Leisure 9	Sports 12

Weather

Today	Tomorrow
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Car bomb explodes in Madrid, injuring 43 people

MADRID, Spain (AP)—A car bomb blamed on Basque separatists exploded in a Madrid office park Wednesday near where King Juan Carlos later appeared, injuring at least 43 people in the worst terrorist attack in the Spanish capital since last year's bombing of commuter trains.

The bomb exploded at about 9:30 a.m., less than an hour after a warning call purportedly made by the Basque separatist group ETA. It shattered thick panes of glass in buildings—spraying shards over a wide area—and damaged cars.

Police did not have time after the call to the Basque newspaper *Gara* to fully cordon off the area or fully evacuate workers and visitors at the sprawling convention center nearby, where the king later met Mexico President Vicente Fox to inaugurate an art show that includes Mexican works.

The latest bombing came hours after police arrested 14 suspected members of ETA and a week after Spain's parliament overwhelmingly rejected a plan giving the Basque region broad autonomy bordering on independence.

In recent years, police have weakened the separatists with arrests, but the bombing is a reminder they retain the ability to use violence.

The bomb detonated near a plaza with a large bust of the king's late father, Juan de Borbon, and outside a building housing the French computer manufacturer Bull.

The bomb used an estimated 66 pounds of explosives, Interior Minister Jose Antonio Alonso said. It was the worst blast in Spain's capital since the March 11 train

bombings that killed 191 people and were claimed by militants saying they acted on behalf of al-Qaida.

A witness identified only as Daniel told CNN+ television that the bomb shook his car as he drove about 100 yards away from the blast site.

"It was an extremely powerful explosion," he said.

Another witness, Bull communication director Manuel Amenteros, told The Associated Press he was in a first-floor office about 20 yards from the bomb when it exploded.

"What saved me from the force of the blast and from flying glass shards was my computer," he said.

The injured suffered bruises, cuts from flying glass and

damaged eardrums, said Javier Ayuso, spokesman for the Madrid emergency medical service. No one was seriously hurt, he said.

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero denounced the bombing.

"ETA and those who support it have no place in political or civil life. Bombs lead only to jail," he said during a visit to Poland.

ETA is blamed for more than 800 deaths since the late 1960s in a campaign

of bombings and shootings aimed at creating an independent Basque homeland in land straddling northern Spain and southwest France. Its political wing, Batasuna, was outlawed in 2003.

The Interior Ministry said 14 ETA suspects were arrested Tuesday in all three Basque provinces plus areas in northern, eastern and southern Spain.

The suspects were involved in recruiting new members, supporting existing commandos and gathering information on potential targets for attack, the ministry said in a statement.

ETA detonated a small bomb in a Mediterranean resort hotel Jan. 30, two days before the vote against broader autonomy. One person was slightly injured.

ETA carried out a string of small bombings in northern resort towns over the summer. It also detonated seven bombs around Spain on Dec. 6—the anniversary of Spain's 1978 constitution, which set up the system of regional autonomy that ETA abhors as insufficient.

"What saved me from the force of the ... flying glass shards was my computer."

— MANUEL AMENTEROS
Witness and Bull
Communication Director

The Rundown



Friends find teen President to request Rice says NATO stabbed to death solidarity funding will not police world

HALTOM CITY (AP)—Police said Wednesday they were following several leads but had not identified a suspect in the stabbing death of a 14-year-old girl whose friends found her body in the courtyard of their apartment complex.

Lan Thuan Bui's body was found Monday, face down, near a swing set at the complex in this Fort Worth suburb. She had been stabbed in the neck and chest.

"The investigators are working around the clock, and they're following up on numerous leads, but there have been no arrests," said Haltom City Detective Terry Stayer.

Friends said Bui was fascinated by violent crime, crime scenes and enjoyed the hit TV drama "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." She often would tell her friends not to cry if she should die unexpectedly.

"She should still be here," Christine Garcia, 14, said as she wept in her mother's arms.

WASHINGTON (AP)—The \$80 billion war funding request President Bush will send to Congress next week includes \$400 million to help nations that have troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Poland, a staunch ally in Iraq, is earmarked to receive one-fourth of the money.

The White House announced the fund, dubbed the "solidarity initiative," after Bush's meeting Wednesday with Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski.

"These funds ... reflect the principle that an investment in a partner in freedom today will help ensure that America will stand united with stronger partners in the future," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said in a statement.

"This assistance will support nations that have developed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other partners promoting freedom around the world." Poland has taken command of a multinational security force in central Iraq that includes about 6,000 troops. Poland has more than 2,400 troops in Iraq. Polish officials say that a reduction this month will leave them with somewhere near 1,700 troops in Iraq.

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Wednesday that Iran cannot delay indefinitely accountability for a suspected nuclear weapons program, but said the United States has set "no deadline, no timeline" for Tehran to act.

Nearing the end of a European tour that included visits to both old and new members of the expanding NATO, Rice said the United States remains in "close consultations" with its European allies on the issue.

She warned Tehran the United States would not accept foot-dragging by the government there as officials weigh various diplomatic overtures that European nations have made to resolve the nuclear question.

In Washington, President Bush said he was pleased with the response Rice had received from Europeans on efforts to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions. "The Iranians just need to know that the free world is working together to send a very clear message: don't develop a nuclear weapon," Bush said. "And the reason we're sending that message is because Iran with a nuclear weapon would be a very destabilizing force in the world."



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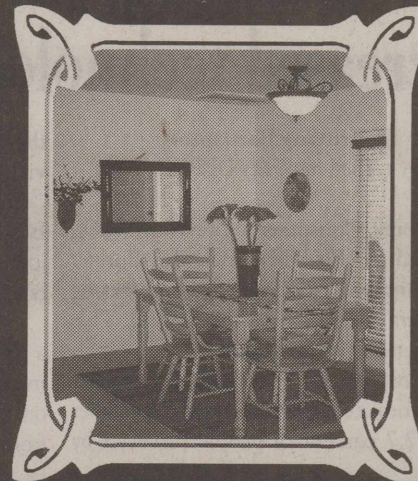
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U.S. allies bid to oust Baradei, head of IAEA

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — The United States is lobbying allies in a bid to oust the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency, perhaps as early as the end of the month, diplomats and officials told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Anticipating that present European diplomatic efforts on Iran will fail, the diplomats and officials also told AP that Washington plans to increase pressure on Tehran over its nuclear program when the International Atomic Energy Agency meets Feb. 28.

In Tehran, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami told foreign diplomats that no Iranian government would ever abandon the progress the country has made in developing peaceful nuclear technology.

Washington, which accuses Iran of making nuclear weapons and wants it brought before the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions, considers IAEA head Mohammed ElBaradei too soft on the Tehran leadership.

No U.S. comment was available on Washington's strategy for the upcoming IAEA board of governors meeting.

But several diplomats and government officials from IAEA member countries dismissed recent reports that the United States had given up attempts to unseat ElBaradei because of lack of support from other countries.

"They've been lobbying, and close friends have given them a good reception," said one of the officials familiar with the issue, who, like the others, spoke on condition of anonymity.

Another said Undersecretary of State John Bolton and other senior State Department officials "were still lobbying the capitals, telling them it's the way to go."

With ElBaradei's agency spearheading international attempts to

scquelch nuclear proliferation, the head of the IAEA is a key position for Bush administration officials. They want someone who shares their views of which country represents a nuclear threat and what to do about it.

ElBaradei has challenged those views — first over prewar Iraq and then Iran, both labeled part of an "axis of evil," along with North Korea, by President Bush.

He first disputed U.S. assertions that Saddam Hussein had an active nuclear weapons program — claims that remain unproven. He then refused to endorse arguments by Washington that nuclear activities Iran claims are meant only to generate power are actually part of a clandestine weapons program.

A direct U.S. move to oust ElBaradei failed late last year — the Americans were unable to find anyone to challenge him for a third term by the Dec. 31 deadline, shortly after calling on him to step down with his second term completed.

It remains unclear whether Washington could muster the 12 votes needed among the 35-nation IAEA board for a vote of non-confidence in ElBaradei.

Ahead of the Feb. 28 meeting, the majority is either in favor of a third term for the IAEA head or appears to be undecided. Reflecting sentiment among the latter, one diplomat said his country "had full confidence" in ElBaradei but still shared the U.S. view that no U.N. agency head should serve past two terms.

The contacts appeared to be restricted to the high level, with Vienna-based diplomats saying the U.S. mission in Vienna pointedly refuses to discuss the issue.

In a related issue, the United States will try to redirect international focus on Iran's nuclear activities back to the IAEA by pushing for creation of a special agency committee that would deal with "problem countries,"

a diplomat said.

For the first time in more than two years, ElBaradei is not producing a written report on Iran for the upcoming board meeting.

While investigations continue into past and present suspicions about Iran's nuclear program, agency officials say that no major revelations meriting the need for a written report have surfaced this time around.

But American officials suggest the lack of a written report is the latest reflection of the IAEA's failure to be tough on Iran's nuclear transgressions, which, they say merit referral of Tehran's dossier to the U.N. Security Council.

The U.S. push to create a special committee, first proposed last year by Bush, appears driven by the feeling that talks between Iran and Germany, France and Britain will fail.

Those three countries are trying to persuade Iran to agree to either scrap its plans to enrich uranium or extend its present short-term suspension to a freeze lasting for at least several years.

While the United States publicly supports the talks, officials privately say they expect them to fail, leading to renewed enrichment activities — which can produce the fissile core of nuclear missiles — and a fresh need for the IAEA board to consider Security Council referral.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice suggested as much Wednesday, telling Fox News that if the Iranians "are unwilling to take the deal, really, that the Europeans are giving ... then the Security Council referral looms."

The Europeans have promised Iran economic and technological aid in return for cooperation on the nuclear issue.

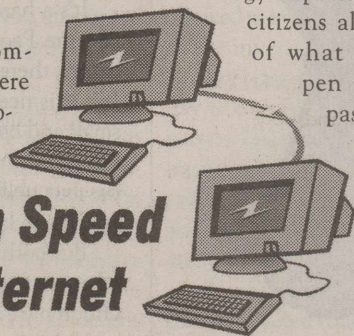
On Wednesday, the Iranian president warned that if the talks fail, his government will not be bound by its undertaking to suspend enrichment.

"If other parties (to the negotiations) are not committed to their promises, we will not be committed to our promises at all," Khatami said.

"They've been lobbying, and close friends have given them a good reception."

— U.S. DIPLOMAT
Official familiar with Nuclear Technology

High Speed Internet



include charging for broadband, dial-up, fiber-optics, cable modems, and cellular and digital subscriber line links. Internet access, bandwidth capacity and the transmission of cable and satellite television could also fall under the extended tax code.

University telecommunications experts were not familiar with the proposed Internet tax.

"I'm not familiar with the law, and I'm not sure how it would affect state agencies like the university," said E.F. Hale, Mississippi associate vice chancellor for Information Technology.

Ronald Clark, Mississippi director of telecommunications, gave a similar comment, saying he could

not even begin to speculate on what consequences may result if the tax law is extended.

Despite the increase in federal funding the tax will provide, many companies, information technology experts and private citizens alike are wary of what might happen if the law is passed, according to various media reports.

In addition to the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Internal Revenue Service and Treasury Department have considered changing the telecommunications tax law to reflect more recent technologies.

The Joint Committee on Taxation included the suggestion to extend the telecommunications tax as well as a host of other options on how to reform old, fruitless tax laws in its report.

Mississippi applied sciences student Dalindra Felton of Greenville, Miss., said she hopes "Congress and the president will carefully consider any possible negative results of taxing Internet connections," Felton said.

Felton said she does not want to pay anymore than she already pays for Internet service.

Currently the law, permanent since 1990, is for a tax of three percent on traditional telephone service. Its roots, however, date back to 1898 when Congress taxed one cent per phone call to help pay for the Spanish American War.

While the House of Representatives voted to repeal the tax just a few years ago, the Senate never acted on it, leaving it in the books.

Congress considers taxing Internet connections

By Marti Covington/
Daily Mississippian

(U-WIRE) OXFORD, Miss. — Lawmakers want to extend a current telecommunications tax law to include all Internet connections, and some university telecommunications experts are unsure how the change could affect the University of Mississippi.

The United States Congressional Committee on Taxation issued a report in late January suggesting a current law taxing 3 percent on telecommunications be extended to Internet connections.

According to a report at www.cnetnews.com, the committee's report, aimed at addressing President Bush's call for a revision of the tax code, offered the option of revising the 3 percent telecommunications tax to cover "all data communications services to end users."

If selected, the new option would

Maryland school administrator charged with laundering money

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — A school administrator pleaded not guilty Wednesday to charges alleging she laundered profits made by a multimillion-dollar narcotics ring.

Court papers allege that Pamela Y. Hoffer-Riddick, 43, a regional assistant superintendent for Prince George's County schools in Maryland, deposit large sums of money

into banks and credit unions for the drug ring.

She declined to comment on the charges as she left the courtroom Wednesday.

She was charged with five counts of money laundering, which carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine for each count. Trial was set for July.

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VIEW FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSITY

Obsessing about body image detrimental to children

By Rebecca Beteet/
The Lariat

(U-WIRE) WACO — I like to eat. No, actually, I love to eat. I eat when I'm happy, bored, tired, sad and scared.

I even wake up in the middle of the night to eat. I eat and eat and eat and, the strange thing — I'm never full.

Millions of girls struggle with body image. I can empathize with the women in a 1994 study who, after being exposed to thin models in magazines and television, had feelings of hopelessness, shame, remorse, frustration and anxiety.

I have my good and bad days. Sometimes, when I look into the mirror, I like what I see.

Other times, like after watching an episode of "Alias," I realize how out of shape I am. Vowing to lose six pounds by next week, I find comfort

in a pint of Ben & Jerry's.

The National Eating Disorders Web site suggests 45 percent of college students are on a diet at any given time. I am not alone in my quest to lose weight.

I talked with Dawn Montaner, founder of Lifelines Foundation of Eating Disorders, and asked her why 80 percent of women, myself included, had a negative body image? Her answer? Parents.

For many students, this will not strike a chord, but for me it did. I have a 4-year-old son, Christian.

I thought back to all the times I had commented on my weight and appearance in front of him.

I know I don't have a weight problem. I also know deep down I'm satisfied with the way I look. But, like many women, I want to be perfect. I know this is an unrealistic expectation.

Montaner made me realize I was teaching my son what matters most is what a person looks like, not who a person is on the inside. I was not focusing on my inner qualities. I was unconsciously teaching my son to look at someone's appearance first and their inner qualities last.

Two weeks ago, I went to a discussion on campus called, "What are you hungry for?" My first thought was Taco Bell.

The discussion made me realize I was focused on food and not spirituality. I was comparing myself to women who were nothing like me. They didn't have my height, build or genes.

Many women compare themselves to others and that defines how beautiful they believe themselves to be.

Can an apple ever be as beautiful as an orange? Seems like a silly question, but has a lot of truth.

Media, society, family and friends help define beauty. These unrealistic expectations put me, and I am sure a few thousand other girls, in an uncomfortable position of trying to measure up.

For some, the quest to conform may lead to excessive behaviors detrimental to the physical and mental health of an individual. Accepting who I am and focusing on God will not only change my looks but my outlook on life. More importantly, it will change the way my son views himself, women and the world.

So, here I am at home, with the TV unplugged and the magazines burned. I try to think positive thoughts while checking my bank account to see if I can afford to buy a new pair of jeans; throwing away my old size and embracing "the me" size.

Whiners have their say, too

Don't fear those who complain, but those who don't speak up

Leg warmers. Men who sob uncontrollably for five solid days. Cellulite. People who lie about their sexual orientation. These things frustrate me. To be honest, I hate them. If I had my way none of them would exist.

Yes, I am whining and I am not going to apologize. I am not going to feel guilty for not accepting and embracing things that are bad. For too long, whining has a bad rap it doesn't deserve. It is not a social ill, but rather a social blessing.

It is important to note for the duration of this column, whining will include the following: any and all forms of dissent, objections, differentiation of opinion, pleas for justification and general protests.

It's a hard conclusion by which to come. People whine about asinine things, there is no doubt about that. But it is needed. You have to start small and build up. I hope it begins with whining about fashion faux pas but ends with protests about sweatshop labor.

But both asinine and important whining are frowned upon. As children we are taught complaining and whining is bad. No one wants to hear your gripes with the world. There is always a sunny side. Or at least shrug your shoulders and get over it.

We teach moving on and not looking back. Crybabies are to be made fun of. Trembling lips, held-in sobs were sucked up and pushed to the back of memory. Live and let live. Sh*t happens, you know?

That's what our children are taught. If there aren't enough building blocks to play with — too bad, get over it. Math's hard? Maybe you should study more and complain less.

And children buy into it. As proof, I offer all the adults who make a good faith effort to not complain. They focus on the positive and turn a blind eye to the negative. Their only dip into whining is when they complain about complainers.

This war against whining is really a war for apathy. It is a way to subdue the masses. No need for conspiracies and cover-ups if you condition a public to keep its mouth shut when things go wrong. A seemingly perpetually happy society is a frightening idea.

After all, whining is a grand American tradition. The Boston Tea Party, emancipation, women's

Sarah Looten



This war against whining is really a war for apathy. It is a way to subdue the masses. No need for conspiracies and cover-ups if you condition a public to keep its mouth shut when things go wrong. A seemingly perpetually happy society is a frightening idea.

suffrage and boring Super Bowl halftime shows are direct results of whining. There are a lot of things wrong in this world. And every grievance, atrocity and injustice should be addressed — even if ultra-low rise jeans are the atrocity in question.

It's all right that life isn't always sunshine and roses. Refusing to whine should not be mistaken for optimism, just as whining shouldn't be mistaken for pessimism. In fact, I would go so far as to say true whiners, who whine and do something about it — they are the true optimists. They are willing to rub a few people the wrong way and step on a few toes to get things changed.

So no more grinning and bearing it for me. I won't feel guilty for calling the world on its BS. My name's Sarah. I'm a whiner and I'm proud of it.

■ Looten is a senior political science and sociology major from Panhandle. Feel free to complain about her, to her or with her at sarah.n.looten@ttu.edu.

TECH TALKS BACK

Elevate the discourse: a call for more conservative voices on The UD opinions page

Every day I grab a newspaper on my way to class, flip to the opinion section, read mindless anti-Bush slander and spend the rest of class trying to get my blood pressure under control.

Unlike most college campuses, Texas Tech is fairly conservative. Yet day after day, I read thoughtless blather on The UD's opinion page. I'm a firm believer in freedom of speech and self-expression.

So I challenge the conservative majority at Tech to step up to the plate. If we're going to be inundated with snide remarks and tasteless jokes regarding our president and his administration, shouldn't we lift the editorial page with a little substance?

I wonder — are my conservative friends submitting opinion pieces that aren't being run or are we too busy to respond? Are we as passionate as our fellow students with a liberal bent, or are we satisfied to rest on our electoral laurels?

We seem to be content to let the liberals have the run of the editorial page, and to do so with utter irresponsibility. The predictable negativity offers no solutions to problems, or viable alternatives to the programs they so passionately denounce. Does this bother anyone beside me?

In the Feb. 8 UD, a column titled "The State of the Union's real meaning" by Dave Ring is a case in point. Ring said he

couldn't watch the State of the Union, then later says, "Every time I flipped to the president speaking, it was the same banter and rhetoric that always has come from him and his posse's collective pie hole."

How can someone write an informed column on the State of the Union when he didn't watch the whole thing? Maybe if he did, he could write an educated and substantive column addressing the key issues.

He continued to say, "Such vague wishy-washy talk isn't meant to spread democracy, it's called covering your butt."

How can he judge truth from butt-covering? His butt appears to

be the one exposed here.

I concur with Ring about one thing, though: leaders are accountable for what they say and do.

Circumstances change, and the string of cause and effect make it difficult to find solutions to complicated problems. But power is a byproduct of leadership, and must be kept in check, so politicians are accountable to their constituents. Business leaders are accountable to shareholders. And editorial writers are accountable to readers.

In Ring's case, it's absurd to write a column on accountability when he cannot account for most of his assertions.

We, my friends, are not just the future of America — we are her present. If a visitor picks up our campus paper today, how confident will he feel with the country in our hands?

I say let him be impressed by the level of thoughtful exploration of issues on both ends of the spectrum and everything in between. But let it be done responsibly and respectfully.

So my Republican brothers and sisters, please voice your opinion and help me out here with credible opinion columns.

And if you're an anti-Bush columnist, please break the mold. Go out on a limb and discuss solutions without discrediting

yourself with fruitless, tasteless jokes and slander. If you write a substantive, respectful column, Bush supporters will actually listen to your concerns and potential solutions.

This is what makes America great: exchanging ideas and looking at all sides of an issue.

Sometimes compromising achieves something better than either side could come up with alone.

Let's start with our own opinions page, and who knows what kind of difference we might really make.

— Lucas Fairchild, sophomore political science major from Dallas

Tell us your opinion. Send your letters to the editor and guest columns to opinions@universitydaily.net.

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GUEST COLUMNS: The UD accepts submissions of unsolicited guest columns. While we cannot acknowledge receipt of all columns, the authors of those selected for publication will be notified. Guest columns should be no longer than 650 words in length and on a topic of relevance to the university community.

Guest columns are also edited and follow the same guidelines for letters as far as identification and submission.

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F.I.T. Tech participation higher than anticipated

By Lindsay Wharton/
The University Daily

Administrators at the Robert H. Ewalt Student Recreation Center got a pleasant surprise Saturday morning.

At the first meeting for F.I.T. Tech, a program designed to encourage basic health and fitness, 30 teams were expected, but 112 showed up.

Student recreation center administrators presented an information session about how to properly begin and continue an exercise program.

"You have to identify your goals," said Betty Blanton, associate director of recreational sports.

Blanton said staying motivated about an exercise program is difficult if people do not set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed objectives. Students who are concerned about their health should make long-term goals, like losing a specific amount of weight and short-term goals, she said.

Planning to walk a certain amount per day or eating several servings of fruits and vegetables is a great way for people to start working on their health, Blanton said.

Twenty percent of people begin an exercise program and continue it regularly, Blanton said. This means 80 percent of people do not stay with their program.

Health-conscious students should

analyze the benefits from working an exercise program. When people know the possible results, they are usually encouraged.

"People stop exercising because they don't see results," said Earnestine Frazier, an adviser for the College of Education.

Frazier said she has started working with F.I.T. Tech to improve her overall health.

People planning an exercise program need to understand barriers, Blanton said.

Success is difficult to obtain when a person is not aware of the obstacles that can prevent him from obtaining his goal, she said.

A common barrier is time, Blanton said. Students need to look at their schedules to find a time when they can exercise.

Students also can ask their friends for help and motivation, Blanton said.

"It's a lot easier to disappoint yourself than another person," she said.

People with busy lives also can incorporate exercise into their daily activities, Blanton said. Taking stairs instead of an elevator and parking farther away from the entrance at a grocery store are ways to do this.

Making exercise a priority is impor-

Target Heart Rate

Maximal Heart Rate = (maximum activity)
(220 - Age) beats per minute

Resting Heart Rate =
Measure before getting out of bed for three mornings and average them out.

Heart Rate Reserve = MHR - RHR

Target Heart Rate =
(HRR) X (%Activity) + RHR

Source: www.spurfit.com/sports/glossary/energetics_aerobic_kvnm.html

tant, Blanton said. When exercising is done regularly, it can become a daily living habit. Students can take some of their leisure time to work out.

"I only exercise in two-month spurts," said Chris Favella, a senior sociology major from San Antonio.

Cardiovascular exercise is recommended to maintain a healthy heart. Blanton said a person should do 20 to 30 minutes per day. Students should find their target heart rate and stay within that number, she said.

"I know we will be healthier and more conscious about our health," said Phong Nguyen, a doctoral student in higher education.

Nguyen said she has learned a lot of valuable information about being healthy and active even with a busy



STEVE LEWIS/The University Daily

BETTY SHARP, A Compensation Analyst for Tech's Personnel Department, Virginia Kelemen, lead program analyst for Tech's information systems, and Betty Blanton, associate director of Recreational Sports talk as they walk across campus Wednesday as part of the F.I.T. program.

schedule. Lectures have helped her understand the importance of keeping a regular workout schedule, she said.

Because she is a graduate student, Nguyen said she does not have much time to spend exercising. She said F.I.T. lectures also have helped her understand that she needs to take any time she has available to exercise.

When exercising, the quality and age of the participant's shoes are important,

Blanton said. She said she has heard people complain about pain in their legs. Proper shoes can alleviate the pain. Shoes should have a strong arch and support for the entire foot, she said.

Staying safe while exercising at night is imperative, Blanton said. Students should wear reflective clothing and walk in well-lit areas to increase visibility, she said. Dogs can also be taken on walks for protection.

Judge allows new evidence in murder trial of nurse accused of euthanizing patients

ARCHER CITY (AP) — A judge on Wednesday ruled that prosecutors can present evidence from three people who said they survived injections by a former nurse who is charged with killing 10 elderly patients with lethal drug doses.

Vickie Dawn Jackson, 38, is being tried in two of the deaths at Nocona General Hospital in January 2001. She faces up to life in prison if convicted of capital murder; prosecutors are not seeking the death penalty.

Jackson's attorney, Bruce Martin, had argued that evidence from the

three new patients should not be introduced because Jackson has not been charged in those cases.

Jackson, who was in court Wednesday, also faces an attempted murder charge in the case of an 11th patient.

State District Judge Roger Towery did not rule Wednesday on Martin's request to prohibit prosecutors from mentioning the total number of deaths at the hospital from December 2000 to February 2001. He said jurors may assume Jackson was suspected in all deaths during that span.

District Attorney Tim Cole, who represents Archer, Clay and Montague counties, said the increase in deaths at the hospital should be allowed as evidence because that led to the investigation.

Jury selection was to start Thursday from a pool of more than 100 people. But court officials were looking for another site for jury selection and the rest of the trial because the acoustics in the aging courthouse are inadequate.

At a December pretrial hearing, the judge ruled that Jackson's statements to authorities during the 2001

investigation were admissible.

When questioned by the FBI, Jackson said she never meant to hurt a patient — just sedate him — when she injected him with mivacurium chloride, which is used to temporarily halt breathing in order to insert a breathing tube, according to court records. When asked why she injected the patients with that drug, she answered, "I don't know," according to court records.

The judge also ruled in December that a discarded syringe authorities reported finding at Jackson's house in February 2001 was admissible as evidence.

The trial was moved to Archer City, about 50 miles west of Nocona, because of pretrial publicity and the potential for many in the jury pool to know Jackson or any victims.

In early 2001, officials at the 38-bed hospital said they discovered a

twofold increase in deaths, many occurring during Jackson's shifts.

Officials said they discovered that at least 10 vials of mivacurium chloride, which is administered by syringe or IV, were missing from crash carts. A few months later 10 bodies were exhumed, and the manner of death was changed to homicide after autopsy reports showed that all died of toxic effects of mivacurium.



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Faculty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Christi Geissler, a sophomore early childhood major from Albuquerque, N.M., said schools in New Mexico have fall breaks.

"I was wondering why we didn't," she said.

She said having the fall break on a Thursday and Friday would be more appealing.

"I think it would almost be better to have a fall break because Thanksgiving is two and a half weeks before Christmas," Geissler said.

She said she has taken a laboratory course before and understands the trouble a fall break would cause.

"If it's gonna cause that much trouble, then it's probably not worth it," she said.

Wilde said implementing a fall break requires action by the Board of Regents.

Theft

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

teach people that they need to keep an eye on suspicious occurrences.

"(The program) is trying to point out that we are all vulnerable and we will be vulnerable if we don't use our heads," she said. "Taking a bit more time to protect what you probably never thought of being vulnerable before."

Peggy Kennedy, a banking officer at American State Bank, said when someone applies for a credit card at the bank, employees compare the information given with the information on file at the credit bureau.

When issued a credit card, Kennedy said, consumers should immediately sign the back of the card so merchants will have a basis

for comparison.

"It is up to the merchants to compare signatures," she said. "Merchants are getting better about checking the signature on the cards. It used to be if the card was approved, it was OK."

If a card is lost or stolen and reported to the police, Kennedy said, the victim would be reimbursed after the investigation is complete. When this happens, the bank pays the customer back and counts the deficit as a loss, she said.

According to the Synovate Re-

port, the median value related to identity theft is between \$500 and \$999, but 16 percent of people surveyed who have dealt with identity theft said it cost them more than \$5,000.

The report also showed the median amount of time to solve the problem of identity theft for victims is between two and nine hours. Six percent of the people surveyed who have dealt with identity theft said they spent more than 10 days trying to resolve the problems.

Campbell said precautions to guard against being a victim of identity theft are carrying only what is needed, shredding documents that contain important information once they no longer are necessary, especially during tax season. Being skeptical of suspicious e-mails received and keeping passwords for credit cards separate from the credit cards themselves is wise.

Campbell said also to be wary of anything that claims to be giving away a prize for a fee.

Cotton

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cotton farmer, and his work in cotton production is to pay for school.

Out of the six children in his family, none are planning to go into cotton farming, he said.

His sister, Ashley Basinger, first-year agronomy doctoral student from Southland, said she does not believe cotton farming is profitable enough to make into a career.

"I can't make a decent living off of it," she said.

Joel Basinger said China controls the price of cotton.

"China's our competitor in terms of production," Ashley Basinger said.

The only way to be globally competitive, Auld said, is to get bigger and faster.

Cotton producers continue to use past methods to keep their cotton farms working.

"We're still using the same basic principles of the cotton gin," he said.

A lot of times, Ashley Basinger said, she will not have the equipment needed to grow crops other than cotton.

Auld said people are saying cotton producers need to be globally competitive at world market price.

Daniel Olivier, a second-year crop science masters student from South Africa, said his father works

for a cottonseed company in South Africa.

Farms in South Africa are half the size of American farms and not as mechanized, Olivier said.

Some main problems of farming in South Africa, Olivier said, are obtaining new technology and insects eating the crops.

Olivier said he plans on going into industry rather than farming when he graduates.

Stacy Gill, a horticulture graduate student from New Home, said he farms 1,000 acres of cotton 25 miles south of Lubbock and has been farming for 23 years.

"It has to be a pretty good-sized operation to make it pay," he said.

Gill said farming is a family trade; his father was a farmer, and at some point his son may take over his farm.

"It's a good way of life," he said.

Mark Kellermeier, a senior animal science major from Mereta, said he grew up on a farm near San Angelo where his father and uncle farm together.

Kellermeier said he plans on farming after he graduates.

He said he majored in animal science for security.

"In case I go broke farming, I have something to fall back on," he said. "It takes volume to make money."

Although working as a farmer can be difficult, Auld said he believes cotton will continue to be a large industry in Lubbock.

"So goes cotton, so goes the life-blood of Lubbock," he said.

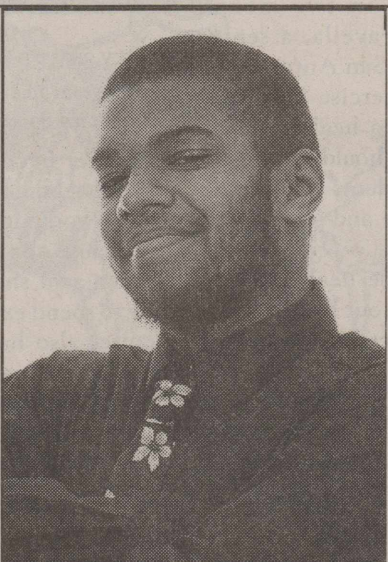
"Taking a bit more time to protect what you probably never thought of being vulnerable before."

—NAN CAMPBELL
President of the Better Business Bureau of the South Plains



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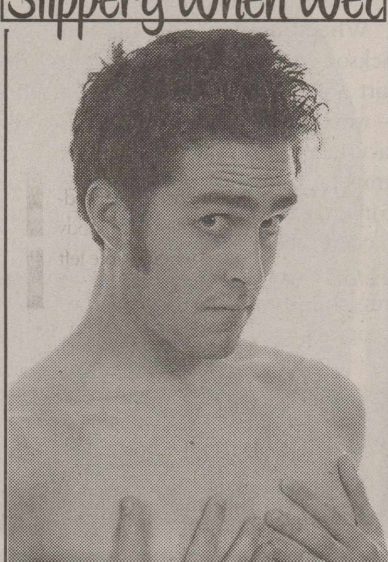
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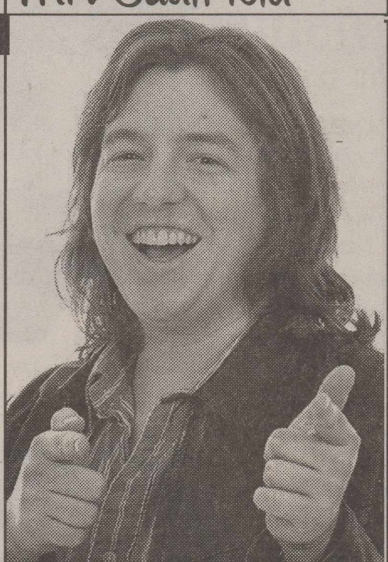


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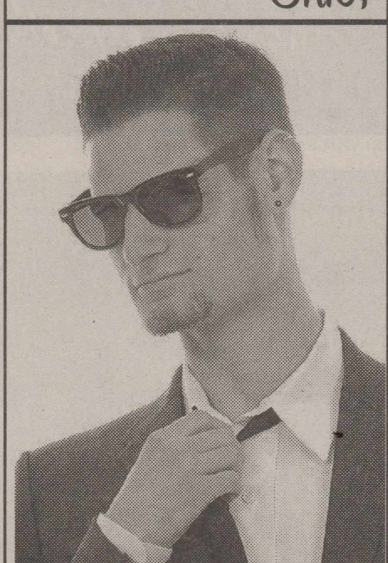
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Researchers urge routine HIV testing

(AP)—Urging a major shift in U.S. policy, some health experts are recommending that virtually all Americans be tested routinely for the AIDS virus, much as they are for cancer and other

diseases. Since the early years of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, the government has recommended screening only in big cities, where AIDS rates are high, and

among members of high-risk groups, such as gay men and drug addicts.

Two large, federally funded studies found that the cost of routinely testing and treating nearly all adults would be outweighed by a reduction in new infections and the opportunity to start patients on drug cocktails early, when they work best.

"Given the availability of effective therapy and preventive measures, it is possible to improve care and perhaps influence the course of the epidemic through widespread, effective and cost-effective screening," Dr. Samuel A. Bozette wrote in an editorial accompanying the studies, which appear in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

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Morning-after pill may reach stores

By Laura Jerpi/
The Pitt News

(U-WIRE) PITTSBURGH — Plan B, otherwise known as the morning-after pill, may soon be available as an over-the-counter drug. After much deliberation, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to announce its decision soon.

"I have heard they didn't feel they had enough time to decide," said Dr. Nancy Jasper, assistant professor of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia University Presbyterian Hospital.

"The evidence in front of the FDA is overwhelmingly in favor of making it over-the-counter," said Dr. Pamela Talley, interim senior physician at the University of Pittsburgh's student health services. "Should this occur, our staff would continue to educate our patients about its appropriate use, and our pharmacy would certainly stock it."

Jasper said she believes Plan B should be available at college student health centers. Plan B is currently available at Pitt's student health center, by prescription only, for \$22.

"When used as directed, [Plan B] helps to cut down unwanted pregnancies. It is 89 percent effective when used within 72 hours of the event."

Jasper does not believe having Plan B readily available to students will make them more likely to have unprotected sex.

"Studies across the board have shown that making contraception available to young adults does not encourage them to have sex," Jasper said. "Plan B should be used when contraception is not available or has failed."

The director of the student health center at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Patricia Lamantia, disagrees with Jasper.

"I will not make [Plan B] available to UPG students. I feel that it makes it too easy to have unprotected sex," said Lamantia, who has the authority to determine what is available at the health center.

Lamantia hopes there will be certain regulations on Plan B if it becomes an over-the-counter drug.

"I would hope the FDA would put certain controls on it, i.e. under 16 needs a signature," said Lamantia.

Jasper offers the Plan B prescription to patients in advance, so her

patients have the prescription in case they need it. "Allowing Plan B to become an over-the-counter drug might be good because it would probably cut down on unwanted pregnancies and abortions," Pitt Senior Nick Byers said.

Jasper said that almost any woman can use Plan B. Many emergency contraceptive pills contain both estrogen and progestin, but Plan B contains only progestin. Women should check with their physicians if they have questions about the correct usage of Plan B.

Plan B can cause some uncomfortable side effects, however.

A Pitt student, who wished to remain anonymous, said she experienced severe stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting after taking Plan B. These side effects did not begin to subside until three days after taking the medicine.

"Plan B should be an over-the-counter drug because it would eliminate many more abortions and unwanted pregnancies," said the student.

"I would hope the FDA would put certain controls on it, i.e. under 16 needs a signature,"

— PATRICIA LAMANTIA
Director of Univ. of Pittsburgh
Student Health Center

Shelley

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ordered Jacked as late as February 2004.

Jennifer Kearns, associate director of public and media relations at NCAA, said she is familiar with recent reports on the matter and has no reason to question them.

"I have the story," she said. "The story is accurate, and I have no reason to doubt it."

Caffeine is listed on NCAA's banned substances list as a stimulant and states a urine test with 15 micrograms/milligram is considered a positive test. Consuming an energy drink with a high level of caffeine could result in a positive test.

Kearns said caffeine can not be provided to student athletes through nutritional supplements.

Bylaw 16.5.2g states: An institution may provide only nonmuscle-building nutritional supplements to a student-athlete at any time for the purpose of providing additional calories and electrolytes, provided the supplements do not contain any NCAA banned substances. Permissible nonmuscle-building nutritional supplements are identified according to the following classes: Carbohydrate/electrolyte drinks, energy bars, carbohydrate boosters and vitamins and minerals. This bylaw was made effective in August 2000 and later revised. The revised bylaw went into effect August 2002, according to NCAA bylaws.

"You can't stop student athletes from drinking Mountain Dew, which has caffeine in it.... To put it into perspective, a 160-pound person would have to drink six to eight cups of coffee in approximately a two-hour period to test positive" Kearns said. "What it comes down to is the NCAA wants athletes to be aware this is not a good way to hydrate themselves and drinking this could result in a positive test."

Mohawk-wearing Idaho teen survives scalping

BOISE, Idaho (AP)—A member of a punk clique scalped another member apparently as punishment for her disrespectful behavior toward women, police said. The victim, a 16-year-old girl whose hair was cut in a mohawk, survived.

Authorities are searching for Marianne Dahle, 26, who allegedly tied the teen up and used a 4-inch knife to cut away the crown and back portion of her scalp. A felony arrest warrant accuses Dahle of aggravated battery, which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years.

Dahle was visiting Kirkham Hot Springs in central Idaho with the girl and a friend when the attack occurred Jan. 18. The teen spent two weeks in the hospital and is now recovering at home. Authorities did not release the girl's name, though she identified herself as Sheila to Boise TV station KTVB.

"When I say this gal was scalped,

she was truly scalped," said Bill Braddock, chief deputy of Boise County. "The top of her head, her hair, was completely cut off. The motive, as near as we've been told by witnesses, was retaliation for acting in a way that the adult perceived as being offensive to women as a gender."

Braddock said the victim, Dahle and another teenage girl who witnessed the attack were long-term acquaintances who belonged to the same clique. The victim's mohawk hair cut may have played a role in the assault, he said.

"In their punk group, wearing a mohawk is a sign of being a punker, and according to their creed if you disrespect women you are not allowed to wear a mohawk," he said. "But I don't think the victim had any idea in the world she was going to be scalped."

Sheila, who is from Nampa, near Boise, told KTVB that she thought the woman was going to cut her hair.

"Why would they do something like this to me?" Sheila asked. "I thought they

were my friends."

Doctors grafted skin from Sheila's thigh to cover the inches-long circular patch of missing skin on her crown. She has one operation left. She wears hats to hide the healing patch of skin.

The group is not a gang, Braddock said, though they had at least some established rules of behavior.

"It was an act of revenge. I view this as a case where an adult female is using predatory control — both psychological and sexual — toward juvenile victims. There are definitely sexual overtones to this crime," Braddock said.

No drugs or alcohol were involved in the attack, Braddock said.

Police were alerted after Dahle allegedly dropped the teen off at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center in Boise, Braddock said. Sheila said her face and body were covered with blood when Dahle left her at the hospital.

Authorities recovered the scalp, which had been left behind at the hot

springs, but doctors were unable to reattach it, Braddock said.

The Kirkham Hot Springs, about 70 miles northeast of Boise, are popular with campers and hikers, but visitors during midweek in the winter can count on near total seclusion, Braddock said.

The case has been difficult to investigate because it has taken deputies time

to win the trust of witnesses and friends of the victim. Some witnesses are afraid of retaliation.

"Everybody in this case is very fragile and they're worried about how they're going to be judged by their peers," Braddock said. "I have to be very protective of my victim and others who are cooperating."

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78

By Alan P. Olschewski
Huntington Beach, CA
2/10/05

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

RAFT	SLAB	ADAMS
AGUA	PARA	REMIT
TONI	ITER	CAIRO
CLOTHES	HANGER	
SCH	GEE	TEN
MOLARS	BOXES	
ELIDE	FLOE	TEMP
WINDS	HTEL	DWIFER
SINE	AXES	HEIM
RAZED	FESQUE	
AAR	MED	BIL
GROUND	SKEE	PER
OMANI	TINS	DEAL
RONDO	ALIT	GALA
ARSON	RONA	ENID

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Relationship Playlist

"Turn Your Love Around"
The Art of Flirting
Tuesday, February 8th
7pm @ Student Union Starbucks

"Keep on Loving You"
Once you've got 'em, how do you keep keep 'em?
Wednesday, February 9th
7pm @ Student Union Starbucks

"Another Day in Paradise"
Couples Massage
Thursday, February 10th
Register at the Rec Center-\$5

"Hungry Heart"
Etiquette Dinner
Thursday, February 10th
6-8pm @ The Market Alumni Pavilion

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Controversial Colorado professor defiant during speech

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — An embattled Colorado University professor who compared Sept. 11 victims to Nazis struck a defiant tone during a campus speech, saying "I'm not backing up an inch."

Ward Churchill, who had filed a lawsuit after officials at the state-funded university threatened to cancel his address, was interrupted several times by applause as he spoke to more than 1,000 people Tuesday night.

Churchill has resigned as chairman of the university's ethnic studies department. Gov. Bill Owens has called for Churchill to be fired, and the university's Board of Regents is investigating whether the tenured professor can be removed.

"I don't answer to Bill Owens. I do not answer to the Board of Regents in the way they think I do. The regents should do their job and let me do mine," Churchill said to thunderous applause.

"I'm not backing up an inch. I owe no one an apology."

In an essay, Churchill wrote that workers in the World Trade Center were the equivalent of "little Eichmanns," a reference to Adolf Eichmann, who ensured the smooth running of the Nazi system.

Churchill also spoke of the "gallant sacrifices" of the "combat teams" that struck America.

The ethnic studies professor said Tuesday his essay was referring to "technocrats" who participate in what he calls repressive American policies around the world.

A longtime American Indian Movement activist, he said he is also culpable because his efforts to change the system haven't succeeded. "I could do more. I'm complicit. I'm not innocent," he said.

The Boulder Faculty Assembly, which represents professors at the

Boulder campus, has said Churchill's comments were "controversial, offensive and odious" but supports his right to say them based on the principle of academic freedom.

During his 35-minute speech, Churchill said the essay was not referring to children, firefighters, janitors or people passing by the World Trade Center who were killed during the attacks.

The essay and follow-up book attracted little attention until Churchill was invited to speak last month at Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., which later canceled his talk out of security concerns.

University of Colorado officials cited those same concerns but backed off after Churchill filed a lawsuit earlier Tuesday asking a judge to force the school to let him speak.

The crowd Tuesday night was loud and orderly as Churchill spoke: "I do not work for the taxpayers of the state of Colorado. I do not work for Bill Owens. I work for you," he said.

About two dozen police officers were scattered inside and around the ballroom where the speech was given. Most of those attending supported Churchill.

"The regents should do their job and let me do mine. I'm not backing up an inch. I owe no one an apology."

— WARD CHURCHILL
University of Colorado
Professor

Federal courts, some attorney generals oppose plan to move class action suits

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal judges who would hear the majority of class action lawsuits under a plan moving through Congress told lawmakers two years ago that giving them thousands of new cases instead of letting state courts handle them could be a big burden.

Fifteen state attorneys general also told the Senate this week they oppose the legislation, saying it "would result in far more harm than good."

The legislation seems to be on the fast track through Congress.

Under an agreement between the GOP-controlled House and

Senate, if senators don't change the legislation, the House will pass it quickly and send it to President Bush to be signed.

Bush, speaking in the Commerce Department building just blocks from Capitol Hill, pressured senators to pass the bill without any changes.

"They're trying to amend the bill," Bush said Wednesday. "That's code word for they're trying to

weaken the bill. They're trying to make the bill not effective."

Bush and other supporters say the bill, which would send most multistate class action lawsuits to federal court instead of allowing them to be heard in state courts, is needed because lawyers try to file their lawsuits in states where they can get large payouts.

Senators who back the bill say greedy lawyers make more money

from such cases than do the actual victims, and that lawyers sometimes threaten companies with class action suits just to get quick financial settlements.

Oponents of the bill say it is aimed at helping businesses escape multimillion-dollar judgments for their wrongdoing and would hurt lawyers trying to litigate those cases.

A 2003 letter from a federal judges' organization argued that sending those cases to federal courts could hurt the courts as well.

The Judicial Conference of the United States, the federal court system's policy-making board led

by Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, told the Senate in 2003 that it opposed bills like the one Congress is now considering.

"That opposition was based on concerns that the provisions would add substantially to the workload of the federal courts," Leonidas Ralph Meacham, director of the conference's administrative office, said in the March 26, 2003 letter.

In fiscal year 2003, 2,148 new class action cases were filed in federal courts, court officials said. That was a decrease from the two previous years, with 2,818 filed in 2002 and 3,082 in 2001.

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