



the University Daily

Texas Tech University

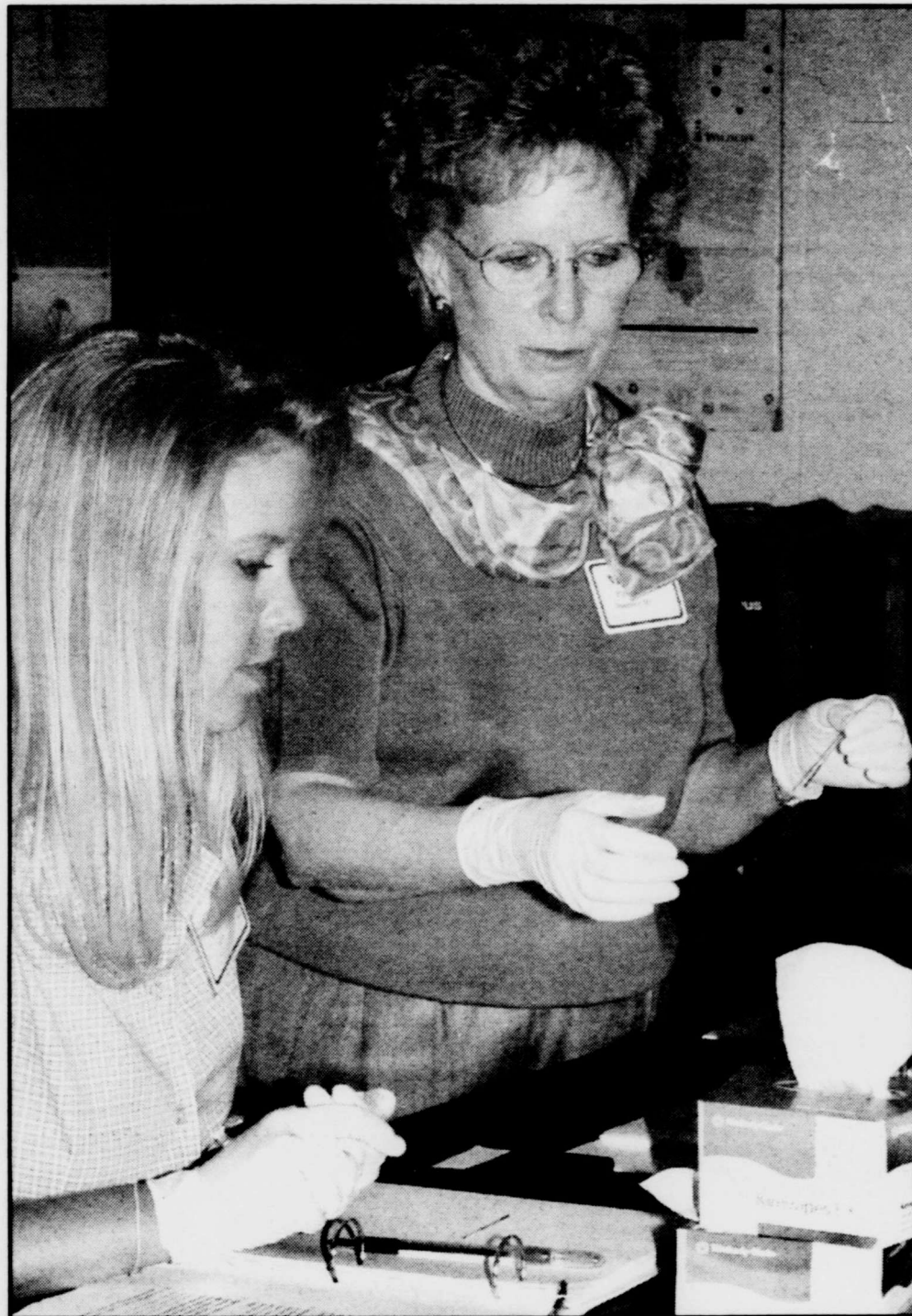
INSIDE TODAY'S ISSUE

Study shows Internet is hazardous to students' welfare.

PAGE 5



GETTING INVOLVED



Cindy Timms from Slaton Elementary School and Myrna Parsons from Monterey High School participate in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Summer Workshop/Outreach Program. For more information about getting involved with this program please contact Julie Isam or Sheryl Schake at 742-2883. Joe Mays ■
The University Daily

School denied independence Mass Comm loses bid

by Jeff Lehr
Staff Writer

The school of Mass Communications at Texas Tech was denied independence by a university committee assigned to review the proposed separation of the school from the College of Arts and Sciences.

The four-member committee decided against the separation by a 4-0 vote, citing a lack of concrete evidence that the school deserves independent status as well as other concerns about the costs and student benefits of the proposal.

Jerry Hudson, director of the school of Mass Communications, made this proposal last fall and said he was not surprised by the vote after talking to some of his colleagues around the country.

"It didn't surprise me," he said. "We were turned down several years ago for this same type of proposal."

Hudson received some "good advice" when he spoke to Will Norton, dean of the school of Mass Communications at Nebraska, who told him not to be surprised by a negative decision.

"They (Nebraska) denied independence in a case similar to ours and they now have independent status," Hudson said.

According to a memo written to faculty members by Hudson Tuesday afternoon, there have been "similar findings by internal academic committees at Nebraska, Alabama and LSU" that

are all well documented. "Internal academic committees at these three institutions all recommended that these programs remain in their prospective College of Arts and Sciences. However, all of these programs became independent schools or colleges and have become national leaders in mass communications."

The committee's decision, which is not final, will now be presented to Provost John Burns who will then present his findings to President-elect David Schmidly. Burns was out of his office Thursday and Schmidly was in Austin on official school business.

Hudson believes Burns will make the correct decision after reviewing the committee's recommendation.

"He (Burns) and I talked for a while and he said he'd like to talk to more people and he wants to take more time on it," he said. "I think the committee did a good job, I just simply disagree with their decision."

Although he disagrees with the committee's decision, Hudson is still upbeat about the eventual outcome of his proposal.

Among the reasons the committee denied independence to the school was the lack of evidence that the proposal would benefit students or faculty and that the program's academic reputation is insufficient to warrant separate status.

The committee also cited as a con-
see MASS COMM, p. 2

Hill investigation continues; \$1K reward offered

by Jeff Lehr
Staff Writer

The Lubbock Police Department is now hoping the students of Texas Tech will lead them to a suspect in the case of murdered Tech student Stefanie Hill.

Flyers have been posted around campus offering a \$1,000 cash reward for information leading to the arrest of the suspect(s) responsible for the murder of Hill.

LPD spokesman, Bill Morgan, said the case is not developing and he is hoping these flyers will lead to an arrest.

"The victim (Hill) is a member of a community within a community and it behooves the police to attempt to gain information from the people of that community," he said.

Morgan also believes that once the regular school year begins this fall and the entire Tech student population returns to Lubbock, there will be a better chance of finding someone who knows something about the murder.

"This (murder) happened right around the time all of the students were leaving (Lubbock)



Hill

for the summer," he said. "We hope there will be someone who went away for the summer that knows something."

Dan Hale, former Tech police spokesman, said to the best of his knowledge the investigation is still ongoing and that is why flyers were posted around campus. The flyers are sponsored by Tech police and are scheduled to remain in the various buildings until August 30.

Hill's body was found shortly before 1 a.m. June 29, in her apartment at Indiana Village, 701 N. Ithaca Ave. Police and firefighters responded to the scene after receiving a call about a fire at Hill's apartment, according to a police report.

Police said there were no signs of forced entry and the door was slightly ajar upon arrival at the scene by police.

Autopsy results performed later that week on Hill confirmed her death as the result of massive head injury. The cause of the head injury still is inconclusive. Police also have one eyewitness who heard a noise and saw a man leaving the scene wearing a baseball cap, dark shirt and brown pants or shorts.

Police are asking anyone with information leading to the arrest of Hill's murderer to contact Crime Line at 741-1000 or Detective English with the LPD Crimes Against Persons Division at 775-2414.

High school seniors get taste of Tech life

by Pam Smith
Staff Writer

A group of possible future Red Raiders will end their visit to the Texas Tech campus today after getting a small taste of what college life is really all about courtesy of the Honors Colloquium.

The students' visit began Wednesday. The Honors Colloquium was started five years ago by former president Robert Lawless using grant money he received. In its first year, the program was funded on about \$1,000 and had an enrollment of 25-30 students.

Jarret Mallon, Assistant Director of Admissions and Records and Honors Colloquium coordinator, said student interest has grown considerably since then.

"The students really enjoy the colloquium because they like just being on a college campus, getting away from Mom and Dad and getting a

taste of what it is like to be in college," Mallon said.

During their stay, students were exposed to a variety of different aspects on campus, including living in the Stangel/Murdough residence hall. Wednesday, they attended a Campus Life Session with the Student Government Association president, were treated to a chemistry magic show compliments of Dr. Dominick Joseph Casadonte, Jr. and attended academic advisement sessions in the department of their choice.

On Thursday, they participated in a "mock" Honors history class taught by Bert Schneiders and were even given a homework assignment to turn in the next day—a two-page paper chronicling the history of their family.

Other activities included a session at the International Cultural Center where they learned about Study Abroad. **see FUTURE RED RAIDERS, p. 3**



Joe Mays ■ The University Daily
Texas Tech Study Abroad counselor Anastasia Coles talks to honors students attending the Honors Colloquium about the advantages and experiences students could have while getting an education in a foreign environment. This is the fifth year Tech has hosted the program for high school students interested in the university.

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14.6% of college students never drink, 6.8% drink once a year, and 12% drink six times a year = 53.4% *Care Alcohol and Drug Survey, 1989-1991, Department of Education Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)*

More suites added to Jones SBC plan

by Jeff Keller
Managing Editor

Texas Tech football fans will have more suites and less club seats available to them at Jones SBC Stadium when Stage Two construction is complete.

A decision was made Tuesday by Tech officials to add five more suites and take away 700 club seats from the proposed Stage Two construction stage. In the Stage Two construction, a new press box, suites, and club seats are to be added to the west side of Jones Stadium immediately following the last home football game for the Red Raiders this season.

The decision to add suites and reduce the number of club seats brings the total number of suites in the plan to 47 and reduces the number of club seats to 800.

The club seats and suites will be located in the new four level press box structure that is part of the Stage Two construction plan for the sta-

dium.

Tech Chancellor John Montford said the changes were made because of Tech's under estimation of the popularity of the suites.

"We under estimated the popularity of the suites," Montford said. "The suite sales were quite successful. We surpassed our own expectations. Consequently we are increasing the number of suites to 47 and we are going to plan on a build out of 800 initial club seats with a capacity to go to 1,200 club seats. That would be a reduction from the original proposed number of 1,500."

When completed, the new structure will have a press box consuming the entire fourth level of the structure.

The new press box will be able to accommodate 102 press members, which will be an improvement over the current press box at Jones SBC Stadium that can hold only 80 members of the press.

Vice Chancellor for Facilities Plan-

ning and Construction for Tech Michael Ellicott said Tech officials toured other university's football stadium press facilities and were able to draw ideas from those tours.

"We visited a number of Division One stadiums," Ellicott said. "We looked at their press boxes and stadium layouts. We incorporated the good ideas into the design and rejected some of the bad lessons."

Montford said the changes to the number of club seats and suites should not cause any delays in the start of the project because Tech has taken the necessary precautions for the changes.

"We don't think this will delay the project because we've made accommodations on anticipating what these changes will cause in terms of construction," Montford said.

Montford said the biggest factor in keeping things on schedule for the Stage Two construction will be the ordering of the steel superstructure for the proposed suites, club seats,

and press box structure.

"The key item in terms of the time line is the steel design and the ordering of the steel superstructure," Montford said. "That is the only issue relative to the time line as I see it. We're going to continue ahead with the design function to the extent possible under existing board of regents authorization."

Montford said Stage One of the project is in budget and Tech will give the plans for the Stage Two construction of Jones SBC Stadium to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval when the board meets in October.

Stage One and Stage Two of the construction will overlap and Stage Two completion is scheduled for the opening of the 2002 Red Raider football season.

With Stage One construction taking place during this football season, Montford said he would like to apologize in advance for the condition the facility will be in this season.

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MASS COMM, from p. 1

cern that the school does not offer a doctoral program. Hudson said that is not unusual.

If separate status were granted Hudson feels the opportunity to attract faculty who will stay longer would be the biggest and most important thing that would be gained by the school.

"It's kind of like a domino effect," he said.

"When one positive thing happens, other good things happen after it."

Hudson said he does not know when a final decision will be made and said he will wait for Burns to make his final decision on the matter.

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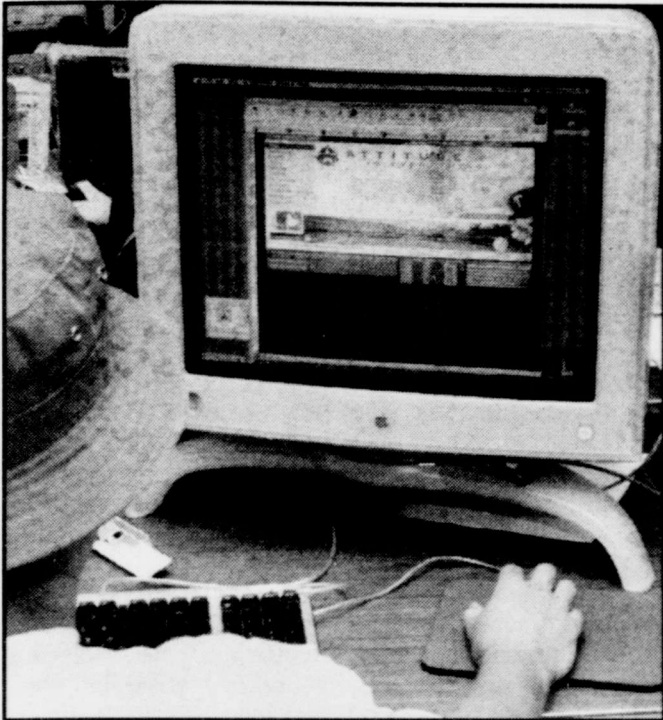
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College Internet junkies lose sleep, friends



by Amy Gurry
Staff Writer

It's three a.m. His glazed eyes stare at the screen as he points and clicks his way through cyberspace. He's been at it for 12 hours, and his 8:00 a.m. history class couldn't be further from his mind.

Internet dependency is a problem that affects at least 10 percent of college students, according to a study conducted by Keith J. Anderson, a psychologist at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's counseling center.

Anderson surveyed 1,300 students at seven American universities and one in Northern Ireland.

The study revealed that 10 percent of college students use the Internet so much that it interferes with their grades,

health and/or social lives.

Julian Zamarripa, a senior MIS major from Ft. Worth, spends an average of seven to eight hours on the Internet a day surfing the net, learning how to design web pages and checking e-mail.

Zamarripa said the Internet can be very addictive.

"Last semester, I was easily on there for seven to eight hours at a time - we'd even go to the ATLC because the computers were faster," Zamarripa said. "There's just so much to look at."

Students characterized as Internet-dependent spent an average of 229 minutes a day online for nonacademic purposes, compared with 73 minutes a day for other students.

As many as six percent of all the students spent an average of more than 400 minutes a

day - almost seven hours - using the Internet.

Zamarripa said many college students spend so much time in cyberspace because everything one could possibly want to know about anything is on the Internet.

"Sometimes I'm on there for 12 hours straight," he said. "You have to remind yourself to get off occasionally and work out or eat."

Of the 106 matching the criteria for an Internet-dependent, 93 were male. Seventy-six percent of those classified as cyberspace junkies studied chemistry, computer science, engineering, math and physics, with computer science majors making up the majority.

Although the net can become addictive, Zamarripa said students involved in these

fields are able to gain a better understanding of computers, software and the World Wide Web through Internet use.

"They know there's more out there than e-mail and chatrooms," he said. "For students in those fields, it's more like hands-on experience. Surfing the net helps you gain knowledge and experience by looking at what people have done on there and getting a feel for how it all works."

Anderson said his study might under-represent "extreme users" because those types of students are so consumed by the Internet that they rarely leave their rooms.

Students surveyed filled out paper questionnaires see **INTERNET**, p. 6

Photo illustration ■ The University Daily
Internet dependency affects at least 10 percent of college students.

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Opinions & Ideas

Friday, July 14, 2000

The University Daily

LETTERS: The University Daily welcomes letters from readers. Letters must be no longer than 300 words and must include the author's name, signature, phone number, social security number and a description of university affiliation. Letters selected for publication have the right to be edited. Anonymous letters will not be accepted for publication.

GUEST COLUMNS: The UTD 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 750 words in length and on a topic of relevance to the university community.

Going to movies remains magical

If memory serves, my first movie was "E.T." I couldn't have been more than three or four years old, but I remember. The huge screen; the life-like voices; the awe at feeling like I was actually in the movie.



Brandon Formby
Columnist

There's something about going to the movies that is still so magical, so escapist, so amazing. In a room draped with thick, velvety curtains, in seats a thousand people have sat in before, on a screen that's shown a million scenes,

some sort of magic just happens.

For two hours reality fades away, and the sights and sounds swirl you into another world to wonder, feel, think, cry, laugh and experience a thousand emotions. The movie is fake, but what it does to you is not.

I remember thinking that maybe, just maybe, bicycles really could fly. I remember how much I wanted to fly the Millennium Falcon and save Princess Leia. Or how I wanted to ride on the back of that big, white whatever-the-hell-he-was from "The Never-Ending Story." I used to wonder what would happen if, like Marty McFly, I went back in time and met my parents when they were in high school.

As I moved on to middle school, my tastes in movies changed. Fearing I was way too old for "kid" movies, and having developed a sense of humor, thus comedies finally being funny, I tried to make myself feel older by going to "grown-up" movies.

Batman was the first movie I went to without an adult present. My first kiss was after some random Fred Savage video game flick. I remember getting those "strange and uncomfortably new" tingly feelings for Christina Applegate when she and her siblings dumped their babysitter's body in a trunk. I saw Demi Moore still hold a flame for the deceased Patrick Swayze and thought, okay, maybe this love stuff isn't all that sickening anymore.

Though I was getting older, the magic and mystery still followed; the desire to be like someone else or to simply be someone else; the suspension of disbelief so strong that no story was too unbelievable, no adventure too unthinkable.

As high school approached, my friends and I found the local multiplex an excellent way to get away from our suddenly overbearing, unhip, clueless parents. If a movie didn't have special effects in it, it couldn't have been good, we thought. "Jurassic Park," though impossible, planted a seed of possibility in our minds as our blood pressure raced at watching Laura Dern and Jeff Goldblume run all over that mountain with raptors close behind.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton and Edward Furlong fighting off the silvery, futuristic robot in the ultimate sequel of all time were bad – in a good way.

John Travolta finally became cool (we were too young for his early days, so we never knew him as cool the first time around) as he and Samuel L. Jackson kicked butt in a movie by some new Tarantino guy.

That Tom Hanks dude from "Splash!" showed the world that "stupid" people have feelings, too, in that one instant he locked teary eyes with Robin Wright-Penn and asked if Forrest, Jr. was smart.

The Fresh Prince became a man in black. And Leonardo was king of the world in a movie that became the highest-grossing ever, though it had the least surprising ending in history (the boat sank!).

I have had love affairs and obsessions – Julia, Gwenyth, Ashley, and I have seen the darkest, scariest parts of the human psyche up on that screen.

The movies have taken us back to eras that ceased to exist long before we were ever born, and time periods that will not begin until long after we are gone. There are images on screen that have been etched into our very souls forever.

Who can forget Kevin Costner's face when he realized it was his father that would come if he built it? Or the way Julia Roberts freaked out after Richard Gere agreed on \$3,000? Or even when the small Haley Joel Osmond told Bruce Willis his secret?

These are all moments that have become as much a part of life as our own life-altering moments. The movies have been breaking hearts and evoking laughter; giving hope and instilling fear for decades. There is a magic you may find up on that screen; a magic that somehow cuts through the air between your reality-based world and that two-dimensional universe; a magic that just may make you feel something. If you let it.

Brandon Formby is a senior journalism major from Plano.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Insider tips

To the Editor:

By the time you are a sophomore at Texas Tech, I would hope you would be more familiar with the facility and how it operates, but since you obviously are not, let me explain our policy.

For as long as the Rec Center has been constructed and operational, this policy has been effect. Using the Rec Center is a privilege, no a right. So the feeble fact that you are a student at Texas Tech has no bearing whatsoever on your connection with the Student Rec Center. As has always been, when you take a certain amount of hours, you pay fees with that hour load in order to use various services at Tech. It is these students and these students only who keep the Rec Center open and our managers working. Those of you who do not take the minimum hours have made no contribution to the jobs of our staff or keeping the doors open. This does not only go for the Rec, it also goes toward the United Spirit Arena, the library and many other facilities. It just happens that the minimum hours you must enroll for is four hours per session in the summer to be paying the Rec fee. (You will be happy to learn that starting in the Fall, only one hour is required to be permitted to the Rec.) However, this is simply how it is, as ordained by Texas Tech University.

I would like to address the comparison made between apples and oranges. I mean, the Student Rec Center and One Guy from Italy. A privately owned business has every right to give their product away for free and bail people out for areas they are lack; whether it be memory, money or re-

sponsibility. However, a state institution does not have that luxury, and in order to remain functional, must have rules, regulations, fees and policies. I think it sounds very nice of you to be so giving and helpful and understanding at your job. I think it's a shame the valuable lessons your job is teaching you has not carried over into your life outside of work when it comes to dealing with people. If can "understand" where people are coming from so well, I fail to see why you even felt obligated to write at all. Can you not understand where the people at the Rec Center are coming from?

As for the fact that you did not drive yourself, did not bring a wallet and were abandoned by your friends at the entrance, these are all personal problems. The Rec Center and its staff had no control over any of these things, and as far as I can see, you are the only one who did. It is ridiculous for me to believe you had absolutely no alternative option to "walking home 20 minutes away." Our observation area outside the ID station overlooks all the basketball courts. There would have been no need for you to enter to get your friends. If they were playing basketball as you said, it would have been easy to flag them down and explain from the observation deck. If you would have taken the time to go to that measure and your friends had not decided not to give you the inconvenient ride home, you options still are not over. The Student Rec Center has tennis courts, sand volleyball, an outdoor basketball goal, a one-mile jogging track, pull-up bars and huge fields for frisbee, football, soccer and rugby. All of these can be accessed anytime with no ID

required for use. That's a lot of options in itself. If you had no equipment for the use of all of these, then one of your friends could check out outdoor equipment with their valid ID and bring it to you. If worse can to worse, you could always run home instead of walking for that extra workout boost.

Finally, the unfair and childish attack on the staff of the Student Rec Center needs to be reprimanded. I work with the people mentioned in this incident, and I can say that they did nothing mean, rude or wrong. I can say that not one student employee at the Rec enjoys confrontation. In fact, ID checking is the least favored position due to the difficulty level in dealing with problems like yours. If this ID attendant and manager had a quarter for every time someone came through begging for an exception just because they are a student at Tech, they would not need this job. You are not being treated unfairly or getting singled out. This policy applied to everyone all the time. You should feel terrible for asking someone to jeopardize their job so you can go play. If you are ever let in under the same or similar circumstances, that ID attendant would not only display a complete lack of understanding for the Rec Center policies, but would also be placing their fellow staff in a difficult position, blatantly breaking the rules. And if caught, they could lose their job.

I'm pleased to say you did get at least one thing right in your letter when you said, "This article should have never had to be written." My praise to those who understand the value of doing the right thing, no matter what.

Sally Harrison
Junior, Student employee

Cowboys look forward to camp Campo style

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (AP) — As long as the Dallas Cowboys have Troy Aikman and Emmitt Smith, they'll never admit to be rebuilding.

Still, this is about as close as it gets. When the Cowboys open training camp Monday, they'll be breaking in a new coach, two new coordinators, their old offense, a new go-to receiver and several potential replacements for Deion Sanders.

They'll also be adjusting to life without familiar faces Michael Irvin and Daryl Johnston.

So many changes at once could be

a sign of panic or leave everyone feeling confused.

Instead, this merry-go-round offseason is coming to a close with

folks having enjoyed the ride and looking forward to what's next.

"I sense that this team is a little more enthusiastic," Aikman said dur-

ing the final summer minicamp.

"This group, so far, seems to be enjoying playing together. How much we keep enjoying it will depend on

how much success we have."

Much of the renewed enthusiasm has come from the new coach, Dave Campo.

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BELLYDANCE CLASSES, Kunami Ryu Doga, 5411 Aberdeen, next to Deli Palace. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. - noon. \$5/class. For information, 747-4620.

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FUTURE RAIDERS, from p. 3

Abroad programs and attended a session devoted to learning about the applications needed for admissions, the Honors College and scholarships.

"I really liked the fact that we got to meet with the same teachers we might have, visit the same classrooms we will be in as students and live in the residence halls with a good size group of people," said Finley Harbaugh, a senior from the Episcopal School of Dallas who is attending the sessions. "It really feels like college."

The Honors Colloquium, which is a joint program between the Office of Admissions and School Relations, is an event designed to introduce "academically talented" high school seniors to the Texas Tech campus in order to familiarize them with what the campus has to offer. This year the Office of Admissions and School Relations invited about 80 students.

"These students are students who will be high school seniors next year primarily from Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico, and they are interested in a variety of different majors," said Kambra Bolch, assistant dean of the Honors College. "We just wanted to introduce them to some of the

programs that Texas Tech has to offer such as Study Abroad programs, early options into medical school and research projects."

Mallon said the students were chosen out of those who had submitted their test scores to the university from the PSAT, SAT and ACT. He said the minimum SAT score to be considered was a 1250, but that it was really insignificant because the average SAT score for the students who came to the university was a 1390.

While their possible majors varied, many of them were interested in engineering, business, music, journalism and pre-professional health areas.

"I heard about the colloquium through the mail, and my college counselor had talked about it," Harbaugh said. "My mom, who went to Texas Tech, also got some information about it off of the Internet."

Currently, Tech only offers one session of the Honors Colloquium. Mallon said if the interest in the program keeps rising, then they would attempt to set up more sessions.

He said Texas A&M and the University of Texas have similar programs which enlist up to 250 students per session. Mallon, however, believes the fact that Tech's sessions are small also adds to the experience of the students involved.

"Many of the students tell us that

they prefer our session because it is smaller than the other universities, so they are allowed to meet more people," Mallon said. "Some of the students in our sessions will meet people who were at the same session at a different college that they never even saw there."

Harbaugh said another reason she liked the Tech session better than others she attended was because of the friendliness she encountered while visiting the campus.

"I went and talked to the people over in animal sciences, and they were really nice to me," Harbaugh said. "I told them what my interests were, and they really tried to help me out. At other universities, all I heard was that 'I wasn't able to get into that.'"

In the past, Mallon said there has been a high percentage of people who attend these sessions who eventually register and attend Texas Tech. He said he often sees many of them registering or becoming active in organizations such as SGA, student leaders in sororities or fraternities and in sports.

"Some of the students that attended the first session are becoming seniors this year," he said. "It's really great to look at where they all are now."

INTERNET, from p. 5

while in class, and he said the extreme Internet users may have skipped class that day to remain online.

Reese said students often turn to the Internet because of the lack of a social outlet, but in turn, they only further seclude themselves.

"A lot of students become wrapped up in the Internet because they don't have social networks," he said.

"The Internet can be very isolating."

The problem of excessive

Internet use on campus is growing, as colleges continue to make the net more available to students - keeping computer labs open 24 hours a day and installing Internet connections in every dorm room.

Reese said both good and bad things come with Internet use.

"There is a lot of information out there, which is a good thing," Reese said.

"But when it precludes you from getting out there and getting the information in other ways, it's not so good. Too much of a good thing can be bad."

'Dive-In Movie' rescheduled

The University Center's showing of Disney's "Tarzan" which was supposed to play yesterday has been rescheduled for July 18, due to cancellation.

The film was postponed because of the possibility of thunderstorms in the area last night.

The film will be shown at the Aquatic Center at dusk Tuesday and adult and children's door prizes will be given away prior to the screening.

Patrons of the event are encouraged to bring their swimwear and enjoy swimming as well as the film.

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Thompson aiding Comets to victory

HOUSTON (AP) — It's not that Tina Thompson wants to be the Houston Comets' third offensive option, defend the opposing team's best low-post threat and set "more hard picks than I ever have in my life." But being a role player hasn't exactly taken the luster off the career of the former top pick in the 1997 WNBA draft.

"Coming here, I did have high aspirations," Thompson says. "In college I was the go-to player. But it's not something I'm bitter about. I think you can't be when you have the success we've had on this team."

Few can argue with the success of Thompson and the three-time WNBA champion Comets. Despite playing in the shadows of Cynthia Cooper, the WNBA MVP in 1997 and 1998, and Sheryl Swoopes, the league's leading scorer this season, Thomp-

son has carved out quite a niche with the Comets. The Southern Cal product was a member of All-WNBA's first-team in 1997 and 1998, and was recently named as a starter in the All-Star game for the second consecutive season.

"I don't go unrecognized," Thompson said. "My role is the third go-to player on this team. But I've got three rings because of that and I wouldn't trade anything for that."

After slipping to second-team All-WNBA last season, Thompson is emerging this year as one of the league's best all-around players. She's ranked among the league's top 20 performers in nine different categories, including points, rebounds, blocks, minutes, free throw and field goal percentage.

"We wouldn't have three rings

without Tina Thompson," Comets coach Van Chancellor says. "She can do so many things right now. I really don't think she's got enough credit for what she's done. Tina changed her role, not me."

Part of that role was Thompson becoming more of a scoring threat on a team that already has two of the WNBA's top four scorers in Swoopes and Cooper. Thompson's scoring average this season increased by more than five points to 17.4, good for seventh in the league.

But it's her prowess from behind the 3-point arc that has helped the Comets remain the league's top team with a 19-2 record after Wednesday's 77-62 victory over Sacramento. Even as a 6-2 power forward, Thompson leads the WNBA in 3-point shooting percentage — making more than 44

percent of her attempts. Her precision from the outside has opened up the lane for explosive wing players Swoopes, Cooper and point guard Janeth Arcain, making the Comets an even tougher defensive assignment than in previous years.

"I think the fact that I can play the outside game or I'm able to venture away from the post adds to the versatility of the team," Thompson said.

"It gives us a component that no other team in this league has. I think if I couldn't shoot outside shots, then our pick-and-roll wouldn't be as effective."

Swoopes, who has benefitted from Thompson's improvement as much as anyone, said the Comets' offense now has a number of weapons for a run at a fourth straight championship.

Agassi injured in car accident

(AP)-Andre Agassi strained his back when his car was rear-ended in Las Vegas, forcing him to miss the U.S. team's Davis Cup semifinal next week. Agassi's car was hit as he rode to his Las Vegas home from the airport after returning from Wimbledon on Sunday, the U.S. Tennis Association said. Agassi has muscle spasms in his right side and can't raise his right arm above his shoulder.

"It's a big loss for me and the team," U.S. Davis Cup captain John McEnroe said Wednesday. "You're counting on Andre to pull out a couple of wins in singles and maybe pull out the doubles, too."

Messier back with New York Rangers

NEW YORK (AP) — Mark Messier is back. Back in New York and back with the captain's 'C' on his Rangers jersey.

Messier made a triumphant return to the team he led to the 1994 Stanley Cup at an emotional news conference Thursday morning at Madison Square Garden.

The 39-year-old center, who spent six years in New York, returned after a stint with the Vancouver Canucks. When he put the on Rangers sweater, with the 'C' sewn on, for the first time in three years, Messier could not hold

back the tears.

"I knew what it meant to be a Ranger before and how tough it was leaving," said Messier, who signed a two-year deal late Wednesday night with New York that is worth upwards of \$12 million. "To be able to come back is exciting for me and my family."

The presentation Thursday morning began with a highlight video and built from there.

It reached its peak when it was disclosed that Brian Leetch had relinquished his captaincy back to

Messier, who ended 54 years of frustration by carrying the Rangers to their first title in 54 years.

"I feel a little bit strange wearing the sweater right now with the captain's 'C' on it," Messier said after raising his arms in triumph. "I think people know what I feel about Brian. For him to turn the captaincy over and for me to accept it from Brian is truly an honor."

Messier left for Vancouver as a free agent following the 1997 playoffs, as a rift developed between the star player and Rangers management.

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| <p>"30-Pack" Keystone Light Busch Reg. or Light Miller High Life</p>  <p>12⁹⁵ 30•12oz Cans</p> | <p>"Large Size" Jim Beam Bourbon Whiskey</p>  <p>17⁹⁵ 80° 1.75mL</p> | <p>"12-Pack" Zima Dos Equis Sol</p>  <p>11⁹⁵ 9⁹⁵ 12•12oz Btls.</p> |

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