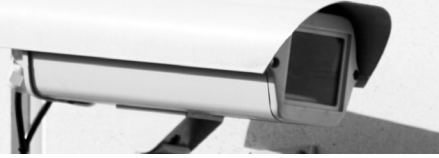




The men's basketball team continues conference play this weekend in Colorado. Sports, page 8



Campus police beef up surveillance. Tuesday in News



Will Obama be able to deliver change? Tuesday in Opinion

SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Grant to raise interest in math, science

By Annie Cooper
Staff Reporter

The Sid W. Richardson Foundation awarded a \$170,000 grant to the College of Education and College of Science and Engineering to help provide summer workshops for elementary and high school teachers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and get students excited about math and science, a university official said.

Janet Kelly, associate professor for curriculum and instruction in science educa-

tion, said fewer high school students are looking to math and science as fields of study in college.

"The goal of the program is to promote and encourage student interest in physics, mathematics and engineering," Kelly said. Other goals of the grant include implementing opportunities to obtain new teaching certification in Texas for grades 8-12 and giving graduate students of the College of Education experience working on curriculum for elementary and high school math and science classes, Kelly said.

Valleau Wilkie Jr., executive vice president of the Sid W. Richardson Foundation, said he believes in supporting education.

"Teachers are the most important people in my world," Wilkie said. "Right now we are focused particularly on high school teachers."

The Sid W. Richardson Foundation has been a source of funding for universities and non-profit organizations working toward greater efforts in education for 20 years, Wilkie said.

Last summer, the foundation conducted

workshops for teachers and students from schools in Coppell, the Fort Worth Independent School District and some private schools in the area, Kelly said.

"The workshops serve to better prepare math and science teachers. Our hope is that teachers will apply what they learned in the workshop activities in their own classes," Kelly said. Wilkie said he is very pleased with the results after only one year.

"I would like to see the efforts made in education become a university-wide objective," Wilkie said.

TODAY'S HEADLINES

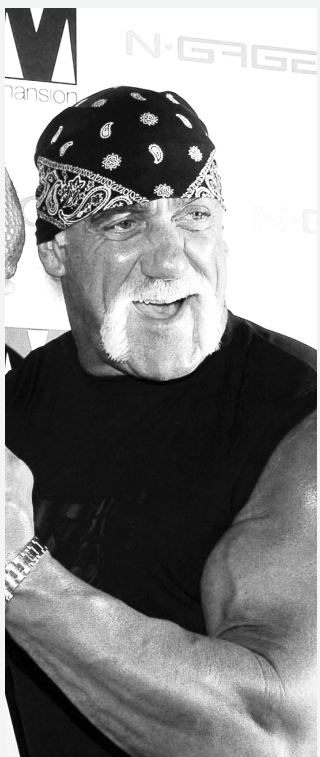
News: Inauguration attendees might have to wait to see D.C., page 2

Opinion: Is Obama the Christian he says he is?, page 3

Sports: Preview of NFL conference championships, Page 8

TOP DVD SALES

- 1 Eagle Eye
 - 2 The Dark Knight
 - 3 Mamma Mia!
 - 4 Wall-E
 - 5 Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who!
 - 6 Wanted
 - 7 Death Race
 - 8 The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian
 - 9 The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor
 - 10 Burn After Reading
- Billboard



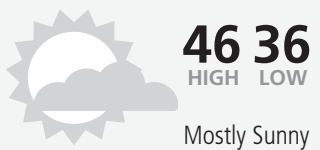
Hulk Hogan should be our dictator. Opinion, page 3

PECULIAR FACT

MIAMI — U.S. agents filed criminal charges on Wednesday against a pilot who parachuted out of his airplane before it crashed in an apparent attempt to escape his legal woes by faking his death.

— Reuters

TODAY'S WEATHER



46 36
HIGH LOW

Mostly Sunny

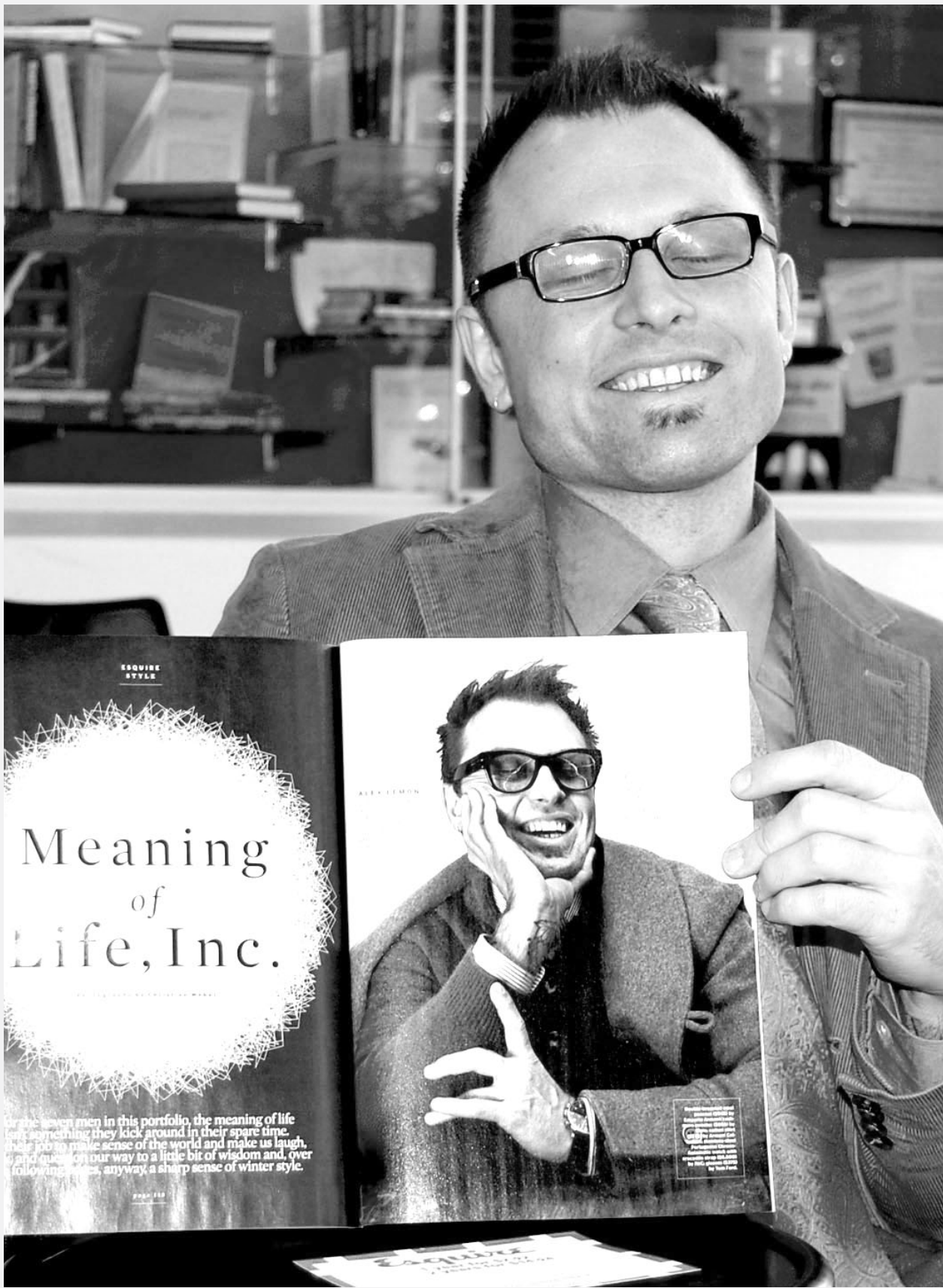
Tomorrow: Mostly Sunny
60 / 40

Saturday: Sunny
60 / 33



Please remember to recycle this newspaper.

'HAPPY TO BE ALIVE'



Libby Davis / Staff Reporter
Alex Lemon, a first-year English professor, was featured in Esquire with his poem "Being Here" as part of a collection of authors writing about the meaning of life. Lemon, who has published two other books and has a third in progress, became a poet after an abnormal growth was removed from his brainstem. The surgery resulted in his having to relearn basic motor functions, such as speaking, reading and walking.

See page 6

NEELEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Student places 3rd in national contest

By Courtney Jay
Staff Reporter

Cuong Nguyen used his business strategy to compete with students across the country, and it's all thanks to advice from his family.

Nguyen said he came to TCU last semester from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where he had begun studying electrical engineering and computer science.

With a doctor, a professor and two engineers in his family, Nguyen said his family thought it was important for him to learn about business, so he decided to change his majors to finance and business information systems.

Elaine Cole, public relations and event manager for the Neeley School of Business, said Nguyen was one of six finalists in the 2008 Fall International Business Simulation Challenge.

Nguyen was introduced to the simulation in a class with business instructor Patrick Nuss. Nuss said the simulation helps students understand how different aspects of business correlate.

Students run their own electronics company during the simulation, allowing them to face the challenges of research, development, marketing and production.

"His team had the highest score in any of my classes," Nuss said.

Nuss said Nguyen placed third in the competition.

Nguyen said he entered the challenge to see how good his business strategy was compared to others with the same interest. He was surprised when he passed the first round.

He said he sat in front of a computer for seven hours to play six rounds.

"It's very intensive," Nguyen said.

The challenge is hosted by Capsim Management Simulations, Inc., which provides learning opportunities to college students through business simulations.

During the challenge, Nguyen worked both individually and on a team. He said he led in the first two rounds of the challenge, but came up with a new strategy for

SEE NGUYEN · PAGE 2

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

System slashes freshman enrollment

By Robert Faturechi
McClatchy Newspapers

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The University of California regents voted Wednesday to cut freshman enrollment by 6 percent, slashing 2,300 spots as the UC system grapples with expected cuts in state funding.

With the University of California receiving a record number of applications this year, the regents' action means heartache for some high school seniors hoping to attend a UC campus come fall.

Regent Eddie Island, who opposed the measure, said enrollment cuts would disproportionately affect underrepresented minorities.

"If we do this, if we break this promise to California citizens, we're going to lose public support," he said.

Regents in favor said the cuts were necessary to maintain quality.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's budget proposal calls for cutting \$131 million from the UC system by June 2010 and eliminating a planned budget increase of \$210 million for 2009-10.

UCLA and UC Berkeley will not be affected by Wednesday's decision and enrollment at UC Merced will continue to grow. Enrollment at the university system's other six campuses will be reduced.

In an effort to address concerns about access, the regents increased the number of transfer students the university would

"If we do this, if we break this promise to California citizens, we're going to lose public support."

Eddie Island

Regent of the University of California

accept by 500 this year and 250 in subsequent years.

In another cost-cutting move, the regents unanimously approved a freeze on salaries to 285 top administrators and to end bonuses for them and many other employees.

QUICK NEWS

Obama's former car auctioned

WASHINGTON — Finally, a hot car from Detroit!

Unfortunately, it's just one: a 2005 Chrysler 300C once owned by President-elect Barack Obama.

The top bid as of Thursday morning on eBay Motors: \$101,100.

It's an eight-cylinder four-door sedan, blue-gray, with just 20,801 miles on it.

Its Blue Book value is around \$13,500, said Donald Moore, the general manager of Rosenthal Chrysler and Jeep in Arlington, Va. Moore estimated that Obama bought the car for about \$32,000.

He sold it early in his presidential campaign and bought a hybrid.

— Katherine Tandler,
McClatchy Newspapers

NEWS

WAR IN GAZA

Peace activists, public differ

By Joel Greenberg
Chicago Tribune

JERUSALEM — The Israeli group Peace Now organized a demonstration Saturday night in Tel Aviv to demand an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza Strip. Barely a thousand people showed up.

With Israel's war on Hamas enjoying broad public support, peace advocates here are in a bind: They are deeply disturbed by the scale of civilian casualties in Gaza but find it hard to protest a campaign against a group pledged to Israel's destruction that has fired rockets at southern Israel for years.

The conflict in Gaza has brought a surge of national unity around the military campaign, with newspapers covered with photos of soldiers in action and blanket radio and television coverage of every rocket strike in Israel. The stories of death and destruction in Gaza are often relegated to the inside pages, and there are only fleeting images of Palestinian casualties on television newscasts.

A prevalent belief that Israel is fighting a just war has added another layer to years of disillusionment with peace efforts and a sense that an agreement with the Palestinians is a pipe dream.

"There's a lack of faith in the chances for peace, hatred of the Palestinians — a combination of despair and a sense of just vengeance," said Tom Segev, an Israeli author and journalist.

Rocket strikes by Hamas that have reached deeper into Israel than ever before have reinforced a sense of vulnerability that is overriding any empathy for the suffering of ordinary Gazans under Israeli bombardment. And the absence of heavy Israeli casualties in the fighting has prevented public support for the campaign from eroding, as happened in the 2006 Lebanon war.

When the Gaza war began, Meretz, the leading party on the left, expressed support for striking back at Hamas after its incessant rocket attacks. But the party has now moved to advocating a cease-fire and a diplomatic solution to halt the fighting, a position also voiced



SHASHANK BENGALI / MCT

Oded Tadmor, 57, reads about the Israeli war in Gaza at a sidewalk cafe in Tel Aviv, Israel, Thursday. Israelis overwhelmingly support the war in Gaza and say that Hamas must be stopped from firing rockets at Israel. "It has to be done," Tadmor said.

by the internationally known author Amos Oz, considered the apostle of the Israeli left.

Yariv Oppenheimer, secretary general of Peace Now, said there had been different views in his organization about whether to hit back militarily against Hamas, but now there is a consensus in favor of a cease-fire and negotiated arrangements to keep the peace.

The war had put the Israeli left in a "complicated situation," Oppenheimer acknowledged.

"On the one hand this war is hurting so many innocent civilians and causing so much misery and suffering on the Palestinian side that you can't just ignore it and go on with your life," he said. "On the other hand the goal of this war is to attack Hamas, which won't recognize Israel and is committed to the idea of its destruction. So it's hard to come out against it, especially when you think of the rockets fired from Gaza at Israel for years."

Many Israelis accept the army's assertion that it is doing everything possible to avoid harming civilians when fighting gunmen that it says have turned residential areas into battlegrounds.

The indiscriminate nature of the

Hamas rockets, which have killed four Israeli civilians in the current conflict, strengthens a prevalent perception that Israel's war is not only just but also fought in a way that is morally superior to the tactics of the adversary.

Reports of abuses by the military that have caused outrage abroad, such as a recent Red Cross statement that the army had blocked medical aid to wounded Palestinians, have received scant attention in the Israeli media.

Gideon Levy, a liberal columnist in the Haaretz daily, wrote that Israelis had become brutalized by the grinding conflict with the Palestinians.

"Everything is permitted, legitimate and just," he wrote.

Yet Oppenheimer believes that despite the public mood in wartime, most Israelis still accept that in the end there will have to be a political resolution to the conflict with the Palestinians. That realization, he argues, will not be eroded by a war against an adversary that rejects a peace agreement with Israel.

"In the long run people will understand that you can't just solve the problem using the army, and that without a political solution the next war is not far away," he said.

INAUGURATION

Come back later if you want to sightsee in D.C.

By Ellen Creager
Detroit Free Press

Visitors to the inauguration this month will find there's more going on in Washington, D.C., than an economic meltdown and a change of presidents.

The charming Smithsonian's National Museum of American History has reopened after two years of renovations. The new Capitol Visitor Center debuted with a flourish in December.

Here's the lowdown on how to visit four D.C. highlights — and the status of each attraction during inauguration week.

The U.S. Capitol

Closed to visitors Jan. 17-Jan. 20, it otherwise will be open inauguration week.

Enter the grand underground visitors center on the east side of the Capitol across the street from the Supreme Court.

No reservation is needed for the visitors center, but for a free one-hour tour of the Capitol itself, order tickets in advance (free, www.visitthecapital.gov, 202-226-8000).

During weeks when Congress is in session (not inauguration week), you can get an additional pass to visit the spectators' gallery from your member of Congress. Contact his or her office, preferably three months ahead.

The American History museum

It will be open during inauguration week. After an \$85 million renovation, it is highlighted by a new interactive mounting of the Star-Spangled Banner flag. On Jan. 19, a new

exhibit, "Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life," is to open. In addition, a traditional first ladies exhibit has reopened, featuring inaugural gowns.

Less illustrious but perhaps even more popular artifacts like Dorothy's ruby slippers are still on display — and, thank goodness, so is my favorite thing at the museum, chef Julia Child's entire kitchen. Bon appetit! (free, www.americanhistory.si.edu, 202-633-1000).

White House

As any presidential contender can tell you, the door to the White House is pretty hard to enter. That's true for tourists, too. The White House Visitors Center will be open during inauguration week, but tours of the White House will be suspended for that period and several weeks around it (the National Park Service does not give dates due to security concerns).

White House tours normally are open for groups of 10 or more with advance tickets from their member of Congress; book at least three months in advance (www.whitehouse.gov, 202-456-7041).

Ford's Theatre

The theater where Lincoln was shot has undergone a fantastic \$50 million renovation — but the bad news is, the inauguration will be about three weeks before Ford's Theatre reopens — on Feb. 11. Anyone visiting after that can see a host of celebrations of Lincoln's 200th birthday, plus plays and tours (free, www.fords.org, 800-899-2367).

NGUYEN

continued from page 1

the final round.

During the final round of the simulation, Nguyen said he invested a lot of money to produce two new products. He said he hoped the total quality management approach, which combines organizational functions to meet customer needs, would help the new products

come out sooner.

"I took the risk with that hope, but I was wrong," Nguyen said.

Nguyen said he believes the challenge helped him to apply what he has learned in his business classes.

He said he plans to stay in the U.S. after graduation for a short time, but hopes to eventually return to Vietnam and start his own company.

ROOMMATES

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OPINION

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The Skiff View

Schools should devote more to math, science

The Sid W. Richardson Foundation recently donated \$170,000 to the College of Education and the College of Science and Engineering to help local elementary and high school teachers generate more interest in math and science. Although this idea will help students to improve their grades and motivate them to learn more about the subjects and help teachers to know what will drive students toward careers in those fields, it's only a temporary remedy for a nationwide problem.

The source of the lagging interest in these areas is difficult to discern, but a solution is needed right now. The accountability of the public school system and parents should also be considered with regards to how interested students are in their classes.

A grant may help in the short term but cultivating appreciation for both subjects is what is really important.

Realistically, the grant will not solve the problem but rather serve as an example for teachers in other school districts to try new methods to increase student motivation and interest.

The more students are actually engaged by these subjects, the more likely it is that their standardized test scores will improve.

Last month's release of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study showed some gains in fourth- to eighth-graders' standardized test scores for math, but the United States still lags behind other industrialized nations like China and India. Improved science and math scores are necessary to better prepare students for a more competitive global economy.

For a nation built on ingenuity, the United States shouldn't be outpaced in science and technology.

Features editor Chance Welch for the editorial board.

The Skiff View represents the collective opinion of the editorial board.

SATIRE

Want real hope, change? It's time for Hulkocracy



DAVID HALL

Sometimes democracy and a market-oriented economy just don't work.

Take America's current financial crisis. Fat cat politicians on Capitol Hill go home to their trophy wives and eat steaks lined with gold shavings, letting the economic nightmare grow worse amid partisan bickering. Meanwhile, the rest of us are eating our shoes for sustenance.

It's time for a dictator. It's time for Hulk Hogan.

Look how good life is in Cuba. Every time an American camera crew goes down there, it is followed around by hundreds of smiling children saying "comida."

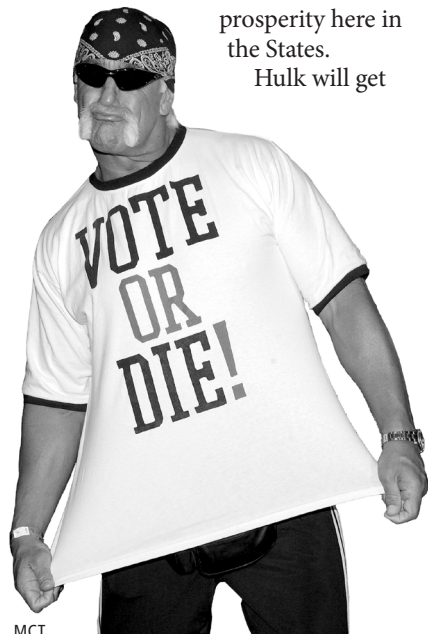
Naturally, I have no idea what "comida" means. However, one time in high school, I walked by a Spanish class with an open door, so I think I'm more than qualified to make a conjecture. "Comida" is obviously the word that happy Latin American children use to invite you to a party.

Being a child of suburbia, I was raised correctly to believe that money buys happiness. That's just the truth.

I mean, Daddy threw a pool in the backyard because he was always away on business. Who needs a father's love and support when you can shoot your friends with water guns? So, back to the point, people in Cuba are obviously rolling in dough since they are smiling and inviting random Americans to parties.

We need that kind of prosperity here in the States.

Hulk will get



MCT

things done and fix the economy.

Did you know we pay people at the Internal Revenue Service millions of dollars every year just to steal our money?

The Hulkmeister, I imagine, would have a better plan. He would abolish taxes.

He would also fire all those people at the IRS and turn the offices into a humongous carnival complete with a giant water slide and all-you-can-eat funnel cake. Admission will be an agreeable \$5, which will be used to maintain the park. Now, you are actually getting something from the IRS.

What did silly old taxes ever do for you anyway? Did they fix the broken streetlight in your front yard? Yeah, after about six years. You could have been on the tilt-a-whirl seven billion times in that same span.

Remember the social studies textbook you had in high school that referred to Nazi Germany as an up and coming ally of America? Taxes bought that too. Wow, what a country!

Once Hulkomania has cut the red tape at the IRS, he would save America some more money.

Who needs traffic lights? Not Hulk. He lives life hard and fast with reckless disregard for the rules, and so should you.

According to Hulk's accountant, who also happens to be his dog, providing juice to traffic lights costs our fair nation \$800 trillion a day. That's a lot of cash. Consider the economy bailed out.

Whoa. What's that? Did Hulk's economic plan just drop kick you with awesomeness? It gets better.

Hulk wants to sell all overseas territories. Do you know how much some wealthy oil mogul from Saudi Arabia would pay to build a resort in Guam? More bills than you can even imagine.

What's more, Fiji won't be worried about the U.S. trying to conquer them anymore. Our lack of presence in the area would only strengthen ties with the island nation. Do you know how many nukes they have fixed on our major cities? 9,000. They hate us so much. If Fiji is a sleepy island paradise then I'm Walt freakin' Whitman.

So, let's recap. Hulk would bring carnivals to drab government buildings and cut costs substantially. Also, he would keep Vijay Singh and his friends from bombing New York City back to the Stone Age. What a guy.

Move aside, Barack Obama. The time for democracy is over. Hulkocracy has come to body slam some sense into the American people.

David Hall is a junior news-editorial journalism major from Kingwood.



Don Wright is a political cartoonist for The Palm Beach Post.

U.S. can't afford a destabilized Mexico

Mexican President Felipe Calderon, who met with President-elect Obama on Monday, has vowed to put drug gangsters in his country out of business — and he has backed up his words with actions. Calderon has no other choice if he wants to keep Mexico from turning into a narco-state, but the decision has resulted in a frightening increase in violence, particularly along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Mexican border cities from Matamoros to Tijuana have become battlegrounds for drug gangsters fighting each other and law-enforcement authorities, with the body count rising by the day. In Tijuana alone, the death toll from drug violence in 2008 reached a reported 829. The total number of slayings because of the drug wars in Mexico reached 5,300 in 2008, more than double the 2,477 reported in 2007.

Frankly, it doesn't take a lot of imagination to perceive that, as Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said last week, the United States might eventually see a "significant spillover" of violence.

That's why Chertoff decided to create a "contingency plan" to combat violence along this country's southern border. Once he has become presi-

dent, Obama must ensure that his designated Homeland Security director, Gov. Janet Napolitano of Arizona, picks up where Chertoff leaves off, not only in finalizing a plan to coordinate with the Pentagon, but also working with Congress to see that the plan is well funded.

Why, after all, should the United States be exempt from the violence when our country represents the biggest market for drug consumption in the world? For decades, the United States has been shielded from significant security threats along its borders by virtue of enjoying good relations with its neighbors. The relationship, as President Calderon and Obama noted, remains strong. Still, the threat of spillover violence is rising because of the battle to control access to the U.S. drug market.

Last month, the Justice Department's National Drug Intelligence Center reported that the same gangsters responsible for Mexico's violence are taking root here. "Mexican drug-trafficking organizations represent the greatest organized crime threat to the United States," the report said. "The influence of Mexican drug-trafficking organizations over domestic drug trafficking is unrivaled."



SXC.HU

If anything, the U.S. government has been slow to recognize the threat. Gov. Napolitano, fortunately, comes from a border state and is well aware of the problems caused by drug trafficking. Obama's new national-security team will have its hands full with challenges from the Middle East to South Asia. Some of these challenges may take priority, but none will be closer to home than the threat posed by drug-trafficking violence in Mexico.

This editorial appeared in the Miami Herald on Tuesday. It was distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Obama must demonstrate true faith



ANDREW WEATHERFORD

As we find ourselves on the eve of a new presidency, I am reminded of how important it was to Americans for each candidate to establish his or her religion during the primaries.

President-elect Obama struggled throughout the campaign with rumors that he was a Muslim. When this turned out to be unfounded, the religious liberal left, confident that Obama's Christianity was as solid as theirs, were off to the voting booths.

We are now left to wonder though, how much his Christianity will be an evident guiding factor in his decisions during the next four years.

Will our new president pray publicly and hold Christian services on Air Force One as did his predecessor? Will he seek religious counsel and have prayer meetings with world religious leaders?

Or are such actions only a Republican form of Christianity?

In the last eight years, many openly complained about the extent to which religion was alive in the White House. I do not believe that we can expect such open worship from Obama.

Our new president will be more of a not-so-in-your-face, socially-conscious Christian rather than the evangelical presence which has been a cornerstone of the long-reigning religious right.

Some may assert that faith is irrelevant to the American people, but it obviously did matter during the YouTube debates and the Q&A at Saddleback Church where questions were formed by average Americans.

Politicians are using religion as a political strategy just as they may change accents in different cities on the campaign trail.

Obama is just Christian enough to tick off many of his constituents, but not enough to win over the religious right.

Turning his back on his long-time pastor was a symbol of Obama's lack of loyalty to his faith.

When the Rev. Jeremiah Wright's sermons threatened his political campaign Obama denounced his comments and downplayed the message that he had sat and listened to for years as being outdated.

Obama's condemning response to an "obscure passage found in Romans," was an equally troubling sign. If he were as devout a Christian as he claims, he should revere the entire thrust of the Bible and respect everything inside of it.

Christianity in America has become a cultural identity like a creed or a birthright, but it is based more on our godless culture than the Bible.

As we evolve as a nation under new, less religious leadership, biblical Christianity in American culture will become increasingly offensive and words like evangelical will be derogatory statements.

I am open to rebuke, and as a Christian, I hope Obama proves me wrong. But whatever he chooses to do or not do, Americans need to remember that our president is our leader and genu-

ine faith truly is important. Only time will tell if the life he leads, both as a confessing Christian and as a leader, is worthy of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Andrew Weatherford is a junior religion major and pastor of Deliverance Bible Church in Fort Worth.



SXC.HU

NEWS

RECESSION SCAMS

Con artists detect opportunity

By Kayce T. Ataiyero and Jon Yates
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — The economy is tough, and there are crooks out there looking to make things a whole lot tougher. The number of financial scams circulating is on the rise, some experts say, as criminals seize every opportunity to take advantage of the desperation many are feeling due to the economic downturn.

"I've been doing this for 22 years, and it's by far the most scams I've seen," said Steve Bernas, president and chief executive of the Better Business Bureau of Chicago and Northern Illinois. "Everyone's looking for get-rich-quick schemes."

Here's a rundown of offers to beware of, along with advice, from the Federal Trade Commission, the Better Business Bureau and the Illinois attorney general's office:

Pay now, loan later

How it works: Criminals set up fake loan companies that guarantee consumers, including those with weak credit ratings, a loan, but with a catch: Pay a fee before the loan is approved. Fees can run several thousand dollars. The consumer sends the fee but never gets the loan and loses the fee as well.

How to avoid it: It is against federal and state law for a business to request upfront fees for loans, according to the Better Business Bureau. Fees also are referred to as taxes, insurance, processing fees or collateral. An advance fee by any name is illegal.

Another red flag is the promise of a loan before the consumer has even applied. The FTC says no legitimate lender would ever guarantee that a consumer will get a loan.

Keep the change

How it works: In one version, consumers are asked to be mystery shoppers for a money-wiring service. Cash the check, wire some of the money and keep the

rest as payment.

Then there are checks sent to sellers of merchandise on online auction and classified sites for more than the price of the item being sold. The seller is told to cash the check, keep a portion as payment and wire the rest back to the buyer. Of course, the check is bogus. But, according to the BBB, the check will appear to have cleared, though the bank is investigating its validity. By the time the bank determines that the check is a fake, the victim is on the hook for the money.

How to avoid it: Experts say the red flag is receiving a check from a stranger or company and being asked to deposit it and wire back a portion of the money.

Make bad credit disappear

How it works: The companies claim to be able to erase your bad credit or, in some cases, create a new credit identity. You pay them and, you guessed it, you get nothing.

How to avoid it: The FTC warns not to use any company that wants you to pay upfront for credit repair. Under the Credit Repair Organizations Act, companies can't require you to pay until they have performed the promised services. Other red flags: If a company doesn't tell you what your free options are, recommends that you not contact the three major credit reporting agencies, tells you they can eliminate bad information on your report or suggests you create a new identity by applying for an employer identification number to use instead of your Social Security number.

Bottom line, there's no quick fix to repairing your credit. It takes time and requires repayment of debts. Anything a credit repair company can do legally, you can do by yourself, the FTC says. For a detailed guide on how to repair your credit yourself, go to www.ftc.gov.

Be an armchair millionaire

How it works: Three popular



PAUL SCHMID / Seattle Times via MCT

5 tips on avoiding scams

1. Be vigilant. Scams appear to be more prevalent during this economic downturn.
2. Beware of financial-services firms requiring upfront fees. Lenders cannot do so.
3. Credit repair services can't require you to pay until they have completed the services.
4. Legitimate companies do not ask for personal or financial information via e-mail.
5. Work-at-home firms should be willing to describe their services in writing.

"They've been around since the 1930s," said the BBB's Bernas. "People keep giving them business."

How to avoid it: The FTC says legitimate work-at-home programs should tell you in writing what's involved in the package they're selling. The agency says you should ask questions to determine what tasks you will have to perform, whether you will be paid a salary or commission, and when you will get your first check. The FTC also recommends you check the company out with the attorney general's office and the BBB to see if there have been any complaints.

OBAMA INAUGURATION

Many Republicans to flee from D.C.

By Jill Zuckman and Richard Simon
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — Palm Springs, here they come.

A half-dozen Republicans are decamping from Washington to Southern California this weekend to get away from the crowds, the cold and Barack Obama bobbleheads. They've rented a house with a heated swimming pool, a hot tub and an outdoor fire pit.

"We'll toast the new administration and, fingers crossed, wish them well before we return on Wednesday and see what the future holds for Republicans in Washington," said Karen Johnson, a lobbyist and former Bush administration official who organized the long weekend.

While many Democrats are approaching the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th president with unbridled excitement, Republican spirits are considerably muted. They are bracing for a couple of million Democratic partygoers invading the city, not to mention the loss of thousands of Republican jobs.

The switch from a Republican to a Democratic White House will put at least 8,000 members of the GOP out of work. The loss of Republican seats in the House and the Senate have added to the Republican employment problem. And the consultants and lobbyists who do business based on their relationships with Republican lawmakers and administration officials are expecting to feel the pinch too.

"I literally don't know a single Republican who's going to be in town over the inauguration," said Scott Reed, Bob Dole's former campaign manager, who is headed to New York. "This is not an easy time. It's not the politics, it's the economics."

Charles Spies, a Washington lawyer who was counsel for Mitt Romney's presidential campaign, is planning to have a party — in Las Vegas. He's holding an "Inaugural in Exile" dinner with his wife and about a dozen GOP friends.

"We live in downtown D.C. and decided we would let Barack

Obama have his moment in D.C., and we would get the heck out of town," Spies said.

But John Feehery, a Republican consultant and former spokesman for one-time House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., is staying.

"For me it's a historic moment, and you don't necessarily want to root for the other team, but you want to be there and observing history," he said.

Besides, said Feehery, who plans to attend a couple of inaugural parties, "If all the Republicans leave town, this makes for more business opportunities for me."

Stuart Roy, a former House Republican leadership aide, is co-hosting an inaugural event on the rooftop of his public affairs firm's building, "partly because we should celebrate historic events no matter whose candidate won the election and partly because we have a sweet view of the White House and parade route."

California Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is coming to the inauguration. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., will be in attendance too.

"Republicans will be respectful in attending a lot of these events, but probably not celebrating on the same level that a lot of the Democrats are," Thune said. "I suspect there will be a lot of dinners where Republicans get together and think about where we go from here."

House Republican leader John Boehner of Ohio will be carrying out official inaugural duties most of the day: tea at the White House, escorting President Obama, the inaugural lunch and sitting on the dais for the swearing-in.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky will be on the platform for the swearing-in, too, next to his wife, departing Labor Secretary Elaine Chao. The pair also plan to attend Kentucky's Bluegrass Ball in the evening.

"Republicans celebrate our democracy and the safe transfer of power that democracy brings to our great land," said McConnell spokesman Don Stewart.

But for a number of Republicans, a Democrat in the White House and expanded Democratic majorities in Congress will be just too much.

"I imagine some folks will be sitting in dark rooms drinking whiskey," said a congressional GOP staffer who spoke on condition that he not be named.

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Jet crashes into Hudson River; All passengers rescued

By Carl MacGowan
Newsday

NEW YORK — A US Airways pilot made an emergency landing into the Hudson River off midtown Manhattan after the plane hit a flock of birds Thursday afternoon — and miraculously all 155 aboard survived the plunge into the frigid waters.

The pilot did a “masterful job” of ensuring everyone aboard Flight 1549 en route from LaGuardia Airport to Charlotte, N.C., made it out safely, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said, according to The Associated Press.

Of the 150 passengers, including an infant, and five crew members, 78 were hurt, but none of the injuries was life-threatening, officials said.

Gov. David A. Paterson described the emergency landing as a tragedy averted, The AP reported.

“We had a miracle on 34th Street. I believe now we have had a miracle on the Hudson,” he said.

The pilot told the mayor he checked the plane twice to make sure everyone was off, and was the last person off the plane.

The FBI said CNN reported that the pilot was Chesley B. “Sully” Sul-

lenberger III.

“This pilot did a wonderful job,” the mayor said.

At St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital Center, a husband and wife were being treated for hypothermia and a flight attendant was going into surgery for a leg fracture, CNN reported.

Twenty-five passengers were being triaged at Jersey City Medical Center, CNN said. At Palisades Medical Center in Bergen, N.J., 14 people were being treated, the network said.

Government officials said the plane hit the birds, disabling two engines.

“The left engine just blew,” said survivor Jeff Kolodjay, 31, of Norwalk, Conn. “I was looking right at it because I was right there.”

“We thought we were going to circle around, but we didn’t have time.”

He added, “The pilot said, ‘You’ve got to brace for a hard impact.’”

The flight had taken off from LaGuardia Airport shortly before 3:30 p.m., according to FAA spokeswoman Laura Brown.

Intrepid Museum president Bill White said museum staff imme-

diately ran up to the flight deck of the historic aircraft carrier to see the plane, which had come to rest in the river just north of the museum on 46th Street.

“They skillfully ditched the plane in the water so people could get out. Rafts were deployed,” White said. He said the strong outbound current quickly carried the plane and the rescue vessels around it from the upper 40s down to streets in the 20s.

“We saw a rescue swimmer jump from a helicopter into the water,” White said. “We could see almost a dozen people up on the left wing, which was pretty much above water when it went past the Intrepid.”

Alberto Panero, a passenger interviewed on CNN, said: “I actually grabbed one of the seats and some people grabbed the inflatable ones. It seemed like immediately there were folks coming to us.”

Media reports said people on ferries tossed life vests to the plane.

“They threw the jackets to us. At

first there was a little bit of panic,” Panero said.

Some people quickly took charge, he said.

“Once people realized that we were going to be OK, people calmed down,” Panero said.

Kolodjay said people hit their heads on the ceiling when the plane crashed.

“People were bleeding all over the place,” he said. “A couple of ladies got some pretty bad leg injuries.”

“At first, it was chaos,” he said. “But I said, ‘Relax, relax. Women and children first.’”

He said he thinks there were about five life rafts. Women and children got on first, followed by the men. “I think everybody made it on.”

Janis Krums, a passenger on a New Jersey-bound ferry diverted to pick up passengers from the plane, said: “We were the first ferry on the scene. We took about 30 to 40 people. We got them from the wings and the raft, and then took them to the 39th

Street ferry station in New York.

“It was freezing and they were a little shaken up, but everyone was lined up on the wings and waiting. We were there by chance.”

The Weehawken, N.J., ferry terminal quickly was turned into a makeshift medical center to treat 60 passengers, most suffering from hypothermia.

The most serious cases were transferred to the hospitals. Other passengers were taken to community centers to be reunited with their families.

“They’ll be fine within hours,” said Mickey MacCabe, Hudson County, N.J., EMS coordinator. “It’s a miracle.”

Many of the passengers were still shivering when they arrived at the terminal, said Dr. Berry Williams, a physician who responded to the scene after learning about the crash landing from one of his patients.

As they boarded a bus, some passengers credited the pilot with safely



landing the plane. “We all got out alive and well,” one passenger said.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Tennessee system might cut 700 jobs from roster

By Chloe White
The Knoxville (Tenn.) News Sentinel

A preliminary analysis indicates the University of Tennessee system could cut 700 filled and unfilled positions statewide as it faces a potential \$100 million budget shortfall, President John Petersen said Wednesday, and a 9 percent tuition increase at the main Knoxville campus is being considered.

“We’ve never had anything like this before,” Board of Trustees Vice Chairman Jim Murphy said. “I’m not sure there’s ever been this level of cuts, but I’m not sure there’s ever been a significant economic downturn like this since 1929.”

Petersen told the trustees’ Executive and Compensation Committee there already have been reductions in force. The administration will continue to look at reductions in force as well as elimination of vacant positions, but he wouldn’t speculate on how many positions would be cut at individual campuses statewide.

Murphy said trustees want those figures to be in place by the full board meeting in February.

“We don’t know how many of those positions actually have people in them,” Murphy said. “One of the things the board has been focusing on over the last year is to try to make sure that we eliminate the unfilled positions before we eliminate filled positions. The purpose of (Wednesday’s) meeting (was) to make sure that the administration knew exactly what to bring to the February meeting when it came time to discuss how those details are going to be implemented.”

The UT system has approximately 14,000 full-time and part-time regular employees, a UT spokeswoman said.

UT scrambled Wednesday

afternoon to clarify what she called a “speculative” 700-position figure.

“Campuses and institutes have turned in preliminary plans indicating various ways they might meet their budget reductions,” UT said in a statement. “Dr. Petersen speculated a number of vacant, unfilled and filled positions that could be affected based on those plans. No decisions about potential layoffs have been made. Of course, vacant positions would be eliminated before filled positions. We urge everyone to have patience while final decisions are being made.”

That 700-position figure doesn’t take into account \$25 million in state cuts that Gov. Phil Bredesen has warned are possible atop an initial estimate of \$66 million, a 13 percent systemwide reduction, which includes \$25.6 million in cuts at the Knoxville campus.

Petersen also said a 9 percent tuition increase is possible at Knoxville, along with a potential removal of a tuition cap, meaning that students will pay for courses by the credit hour.

The average student course load is 14 hours, and a full-time course load is 12 hours. A tuition cap provides a maximum amount charged for tuition regardless of credit hours.

Petersen called it an efficiency measure, aimed at discouraging students from registering for classes they may drop too late for other students to get enrolled.

“We’re very limited on what we can raise as far as tuition is concerned because of the economy,” Murphy said. “I anticipate there’s going to be some (increase), but the question is, can we keep that number as low as possible and not have a situation where we can make it where some cannot afford to pay increased tuition? That’s our goal.”

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FEATURES

Make good on your new year's resolution to eat healthy. Tuesday

TV 'Starr' Alumna wins 'The Amazing Race'

By Katie Ruppel
Staff Reporter

As a teenager, TCU alumna Starr Spangler and her brother Nick Spangler would watch every episode of the CBS reality show "The Amazing Race" together. Now 22 years old, Starr Spangler has competed in and won the race, and had viewers just like her hanging on the edge of their seats.

Starr Spangler said, like many things she does in life, applying for the race was quite spontaneous. When Starr Spangler turned 21, the minimum age required for the show, she looked online and the applications were due in a week.

Starr Spangler said she thought to herself, "Hey, it's now or never." She said she called Nick, who she knew would be a fantastic teammate, and they got their application and video together within the week.

After several callbacks and rounds of application processes, they were in.

But with a torn MCL, a major ligament of the knee, Starr Spangler said she could not prepare physically for the race as much as she wanted. However, she said she could mentally prepare by doing things from studying languages and currencies of different countries to basic geography.

The first leg of the race brought them to Brazil, where Starr Spangler said she recalls the most physically daunting task of the entire race: moving an 800-pound

boat from one side of the beach into the water by rolling it on logs.

The brother and sister duo won this contest as well as six others challenges, including the finale in Portland, Oregon. Starr Spangler said she remembers being in the taxi on the way to the finish line and knowing they were going to win.

"You are racing for a million dollars so it's very stressful," Starr Spangler said. "The luck that occurs in the race is incredible. A lot of it is skill and doing what you can do to move forward, but then there comes a point where you can't do anything."

In addition to luck, Starr Spangler said her and brother's relationship as siblings is what gave them an advantage over the other teams.

"We are best friends," she said. "We really balance each other out. Our characteristics are very different. It definitely gave us the edge because we are brother and sister and didn't fight once on the race. Family going in and family going out."

Their father, Jim Spangler, said watching his children compete was nerve-racking, but he was proud of how well they worked together and what they were able to accomplish at such a young age.

While attending TCU, Starr

Spangler was also a cheerleader for the Dallas Cowboys. She said cheerleading was something she wanted to do since she was a young girl, and it became her social atmosphere in place of a sorority.

Jessica Skillman, a fellow education major who graduated in the same class as Starr Spangler, said she remembers her practicing with the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders until 10 or 11 at night and still being prepared for class the next day without complaints.

"I've never met anybody as determined as her," Skillman said. "If she wanted to do something, she would just do it."

Starr Spangler said she is currently working at a medical research center for children as an analytical behavior analyst in Manhattan, New York. As for the million dollars, she said she is waiting until she finds a project she would like to spend the money on. She said she would also like to continue traveling and seeing more of the sites she only raced by in the contest.

Out of all her experiences, from balancing school and cheerleading to racing around the world with her brother, Starr Spangler said the most important thing she learned was to try.

"Nothing is unattainable," she said. "If you apply yourself, you can do whatever you want to."



Alex Lemon, a first-year English professor, juggles his job with something he says is more personal — more intimate. He is a published poet with a piece, "Being There" featured in the January issue of Esquire. "Mosquito," a collection published in 2006, focuses on his recovery from surgery removing a growth from his brainstem, which left him to relearn basic motor functions, such as speaking, reading and walking.

LIBBY DAVIS / Staff Reporter

Prof. balances teaching with passion

By Libby Davis
Staff Reporter

Alex Lemon, a first-year English professor at TCU, looks much younger in a wrinkled blue shirt, yellow paisley tie, brown suit jacket and jeans than the authors he reads.

But Lemon, who has written two books of poetry, "Mosquito" and "Hallelujah Blackout," and has a third on the way, didn't start writing seriously until he had a surgery in 1999 to remove an abnormal growth in his brainstem. The growth was removed and the bleeding in his brain was stopped, but deprived Lemon of the ability to speak, walk or see.

Lemon has recovered enough to see his poem "Being There" published in the January issue of Esquire.

"Everything shifted," Lemon said. "My realization about myself and my thoughts about the world all changed and cohered into a life that I hadn't imagined before."

Lemon said he had been a political science major at Macalester College and intended to go to law school before the surgery, but had to take off a year for his recovery. After getting encouragement from his professors, he decided to pursue writing at the University of Minnesota, Lemon said. His recovery marked a change in his future plans for writing, elevating it from his hobby to career, Lemon said.

Spenser Davis, a sophomore radio-TV-film and English major and one of Lemon's former students, said that being taught by a nationally-recognized writer helped him get excited about writing because it gave him a glimpse into the life of a professional writer.

Like most beginning authors, Lemon received many rejection letters before his collection "Mosquito" was published in 2006. The work focuses on his recovery from surgery and the emotional and physical effect it had on him, Lemon said.

"Writing is such an intimate thing and you invest everything you have in it, and it's so personal that it's hard to be rejected," Lemon said. "It feels like a rejection of the self, of the person instead of the writing."

Lemon's second collection, "Hallelujah Blackout," was published in 2008 by Milkweed Editions and he is working on a third collection of poems that will be more playful than his previous work, Lemon said. Lemon said he had to write about his experiences with brain surgery before he could move on to other parts of his life.

Jim Cihlar, managing editor of Milkweed Editions, said that Lemon's work is a unique mix of experiment and art.

"He brings a lot of energy to his writing, to the cause of poetry," Cihlar said.

"It's very powerful subject matter that deals directly with his violations, his sense of what that does to a poet's perception of the world," Cihlar said.

But unlike most poets, Cihlar said that Lemon does not only focus on the despair.

"Alex has a lot of darkness and a lot of anger and it's all very justifiable," Cihlar said, "But what really amazes me is his constant returning to the world and to life."

At no point, though, did Lemon encounter writer's block, he said. Lemon said he doesn't believe in the ailment because there is always something to chronicle. The greatest difficulty is finding the time to

write when he is spread between teaching and revising his old work, Lemon said.

Dan Williams, chairman of the English department, said he and his colleagues are extremely pleased to work with Lemon.

"He is a young poet of exceptional accomplishments," Williams said. "He has to this date established himself as one of the best emerging poets in the nation."

But Lemon said inspiration does not always come easily.

"I can't sit down and say 'okay, now I'm going to work on poetry,'" Lemon said.

Lemon jots down ideas for future poems using a voice recorder and revises old work, he said. After the surgery, Lemon said he never fully recovered the ability to write by hand, so he prefers to use a voice recorder to take down ideas.

In addition to teaching and writing, Lemon is also coordinating the Creative Writing Awards, which will be presented March 3 at the Dee J. Kelly Alumni Center. The event will feature Ray Gonzalez, one of Lemon's mentors from the University of Minnesota, as the keynote speaker and will contain the presentation of 27 awards for poetry, criticism and research paper writing.

Lemon said he doesn't think he'll ever be completely happy with any of his poems and plans to keep working for what he sees as the unattainable poem.

"I'm glad they are not the poems I'm striving for or I would stop writing," Lemon said.

"It's always a thrill to see something I've written be published," Lemon said. "I'm always amazed that people would want to read it. I'm just pretty happy to be alive," Lemon said.



CBS.COM

'Biggie' Biopic 'Notorious' covers rise and fall of rap icon

By Chance Welch
Features Editor

"Notorious" follows the life of Christopher "Biggie" Wallace as he ascends to rap superstardom in a short amount of time, and at the price of fame on relationships with family and friends. The film will cover his

collaborations with Sean "P. Diddy" Combs at Bad Boy Productions, his marriage to singer Faith Evans and his feud with West Coast rappers like Tupac Shakur leading up to his murder, which still remains unsolved.

Wallace only lived to see the release of his solo album "Ready to Die," which had an eerie prescience to the idea of impending death. Just as Wallace was making a name for himself in a rap game which fed off the gangster lifestyle, it was by that same token that he would be taken out of it too early.

Director George Tillman Jr. has previously found success with films like "Soul Food" and "Men of Honor." Newcomer Jamal Woolard plays Wallace and Derek Luke, who starred in Spike Lee's "Miracle at St. Anna" last year, will play Combs.

"Notorious" opens in theatres today.



AMANDA RINGEL / Staff Designer Graphic via SXCHU

FOX SEARCHLIGHT

SPORTS



See how the women's basketball team performed over the weekend.
Tuesday

SWIMMING AND DIVING

HOME STRETCH



TCU swimmer Ben Biefnes swims the backstroke during a meet against Utah on Jan. 9. He finished third in the men's 200-yard Individual Medley.

JASON FOCHTMAN / Multimedia Editor

Last home meet to feature conference foe

By Patrick Burns
Staff Reporter

The men's and women's swimming and diving teams will face off in a match with Mountain West Conference implications Saturday in the University Recreation Center.

The men will face Centenary College of Louisiana, while the women will oppose conference rival San Diego State and Centenary.

Both the men's and women's teams performed well against conference opponent Utah last week in a home meet. The men won their match 145-92 to improve to an overall record of 2-5, including a 1-4 mark in

conference.

The women tied their match with Utah 121.5-121.5. Their record stands at 4-3-1, and the tie puts their Mountain West record at 2-3-1.

Head coach Richard Sybesma said the men's squad failed to get intimidated by a confident Utah team.

"(Utah) did a cheer in our pool, and there's nothing wrong with that, but they walked around like it was their pool," Sybesma said. "They walked in single file around the pool and our guys weren't intimidated a bit."

Sybesma said the women's team had one of their best meets of the season, tying a Utah team

that owned a record of 7-0 coming into the meet.

Although disappointed in not getting a win, Sybesma said he will take the tie.

Sophomore Jeff Gettel said the squad performed well and was glad to get its first conference win this season.

"We've worked hard all year, so it's a good feeling getting that first conference win," Gettel said. "We got a tough opponent in Centenary, so hopefully we can continue that winning streak."

Senior swimmer Katie Rosen, who will participate in her last home meet Saturday, hopes to finish her last meet at TCU on top.

Meet Info

Who: TCU vs. SDSU Centenary
When: 1 p.m. Saturday
Where: University Recreation Center

"We just have to go into the match wanting to win and to really go after each other," Rosen said.

The women's next meet will be Jan. 23 at the University of New Mexico.

The men will not see any competitive action after battling Centenary until they travel to San Antonio for a meet against the University of the Incarnate Word on Feb. 7.

MEN'S BASKETBALL



PAIGE MCDARLE / Design Editor

TCU's Jason Ebie dribbles the ball against UNLV's Tre'Von Willis during the first half of the men's basketball game on Saturday. TCU beat UNLV 80-73 at Daniel-Meyer Coliseum.

Horned Frogs look to rebound from BYU loss

By Luke Urban
Staff Reporter

Next home game

What: TCU vs. Wyoming
When: 7 p.m. Wednesday
Where: Daniel-Meyer Coliseum

The Horned Frogs men's basketball team looks to bounce back from its first conference loss of the season as it heads to Colorado Springs, Colo. to face the Air Force Academy on Saturday.

The Horned Frogs lost to the Brigham Young University Cougars in Provo, Utah on Tuesday 73-61, dropping the Frogs to an 11-6 overall record and a 2-1 record in Mountain West Conference action.

Head coach Jim Christian said things won't get any easier for his team on the second road trip of the week.

"It's just mental, coming to play and understanding you have to compete for 40 minutes to have a chance to win on the road," Christian said. "I don't think with BYU we played the game with enough confidence. We can't afford to let it happen on the road."

Junior guard Keion Mitchem said he needs to be more vocal and get his team more focused on the road.

"As far as my play on the court, I need to be more aggressive,"

Mitchem said.

The Horned Frogs will have to work hard to exploit Air Force's strong scoring defense. Coming into the game, the Falcons possess a 9-7 overall record, but it includes an 0-3 start in conference play.

Christian said the Horned Frogs will need to execute their offense well and play defense the best they can in order to beat the Falcons.

Freshman guard Ronnie Moss said the key for the Horned Frogs through the rest of conference play is to play defense and to become more disciplined.

"When we play disciplined, you tend to do a lot of things better when things just flow your way and play like the good team we know that we are," Moss said.

The Horned Frogs will return home Jan. 21 to face the University of Wyoming Cowboys. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. in Daniel-Meyer Coliseum.

NFL PLAYOFF ANALYSIS

Weekend games to offer intrigue, drama

By Michael Carroll
Sports Editor

This weekend's matchups feature similarly talented teams, but certain strengths will help Eagles and Steelers rise above competition.

NFC Championship Game:
Philadelphia Eagles at Arizona Cardinals.

Sunday's first championship game features two teams that few could have predicted would meet at this point in the season.

Almost two months ago, Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb was benched during a 36-7 blowout loss to the Baltimore Ravens. His team fell to 5-5-1 with the loss.

With the quarterback position suddenly up in the air, any chance of acquiring a playoff berth seemed out of the question.

So much turmoil so late in the season makes the team's turnaround even more remarkable.

McNabb has thrown 11 touchdown passes and only four interceptions since his benching in late November, and the team has won six out of seven games, including convincing wins over the Minnesota Vikings and the New York Giants in the first two rounds of the playoffs.

The Arizona Cardinals, winners of the NFC West, have been a perennial laughing stock in the NFL and haven't made the playoffs since 1998.

But under the leadership of head coach Ken Whisenand and with the arm of two-time league MVP Kurt Warner, things have changed for the once hapless Cardinals.

They are coming off of a dominating win on the road against the Carolina Panthers and are hoping to continue their great play at home this weekend.

As far as the actual game is concerned, you can expect a high-scoring affair with each team attacking the other through the air. Weather will not be a factor thanks to the Cardinals' indoor stadium.

Look for Cardinals' wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald to have another dominating performance after exploding for 267 yards and two touchdowns in the team's first two playoff wins.

But despite the Cardinals' home-field advantage and high-flying offense, I still see the Eagles doing just enough on both sides of the ball to pull out the win. The team has been on too much of a roll to be stopped in Glendale.

Prediction: Eagles 27, Cardinals 24

AFC Championship Game:
Baltimore Ravens at Pittsburgh Steelers

In what is sure to be a smash-mouth, grind-it-out, old-school football game, Sunday's late matchup features two divisional foes as well as two of the league's

NFL playoffs

Teams competing for a trip to Florida for Super Bowl XLIII:

AFC Championship

Baltimore Ravens (6)
Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m.
at Pittsburgh Steelers (2)

in Tampa, Fla.
Feb. 1, 2009

NFC Championship

Philadelphia Eagles (6)
Jan. 18, 3 p.m.
at Arizona Cardinals (4)

Source: NFL

NOTE: All times are Eastern Standard

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best defenses.

Early weather forecasts call for temperatures in the 20s with a possibility of snow showers. The weather situation should benefit the Steelers, who have had their fair share of cold-weather games this season.

Look for each team to try to control the time of possession by running the football. If conditions end up being poor, the Ravens will rarely test the air with rookie quarterback Joe Flacco, who has done well managing games for his team in the playoffs. Flacco must not turn the ball over if Baltimore hopes to have any chance of winning the game.

Running will be the theme of this game, and I see the Steelers doing a better job than the Ravens of stopping it. A healthy Willie Parker, who ran for 146 yards and two touchdowns in last weekend's win over the San Diego Chargers, should give the Steelers an advantage when pounding

the football.

If the Ravens want to win Sunday's game, it's defense will have to come through on multiple occasions. Defensive touchdowns are a Raven specialty, especially with All-Pro safety Ed Reed patrolling the secondary.

Steeler quarterback Ben Roethlisberger's experience will give his team another added advantage. He may throw an interception or two, but the one thing Roethlisberger always seems to be able to do is win. As the youngest quarterback to ever win the Super Bowl, he has a 6-2 record in the postseason and has directed seventeen game-winning drives during his short career.

The Steelers are looking to down the Ravens for the third time this season. They won the previous two games by a combined seven points, so a similar result should be expected this time around.

Prediction: Steelers 16, Ravens 10

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