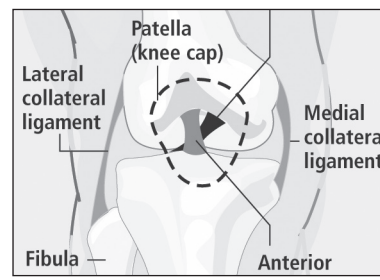




FEATURES | Coming tomorrow

LIGHTS, CAMERA ...

At home and abroad, radio-TV-film students fulfill their moviemaking dreams. One group went to Italy to create their own masterpiece.



SPORTS | 4

TORN UP

The injury sidelines athletes for entire seasons, but what really happens when an ACL tears?

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2006

VOL. 104, ISSUE 5

Project tries to recreate Earth

Organisms cannot sustain life in systems that are reconstructed, professor, scientist says

By Talia Sampson
Staff Reporter

Tony Burgess learned that the smallest things could make the biggest difference in the ecosystem during his 19-year experience with the Biosphere 2 project.

Burgess, a professor of professional practice with the TCU Institute of Environmental Studies, spoke about the Biosphere 2 project, which he said was an attempt to see if it was possible for man to create a self-sustaining community of organisms that the physical environment would sustain.

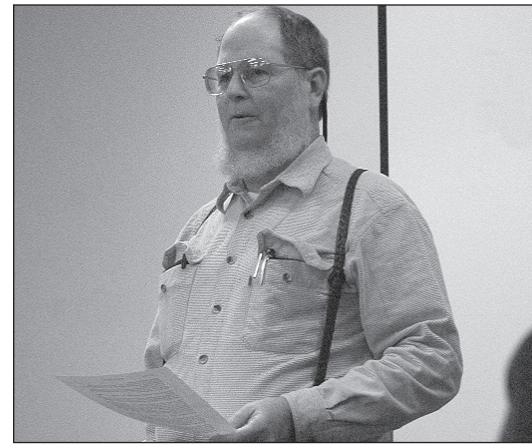
"The microbes ran everything," Burgess said at a luncheon Monday hosted by Chi Delta Mu, a student organization for religion majors and minors.

Microbes are small organisms, such as bacteria or fungi, that are impossible to see with an unaided eye, Burgess said.

The biosphere was an attempt to re-create Earth, he said.

"(Biosphere 2) was a learning tool, which it was hoped could one day lead to the creation of a biosphere for use on Mars," Burgess said.

However, the project was a failure, Burgess said, due to lack of



MICHAEL BOU-NACKLIE / Photographer
Tony Burgess, professor in the Institute of Environmental Studies, speaks on the Biosphere at the Chi Delta Mu weekly luncheon Monday afternoon in the Student Center.

HEALTH

Experts: Flu shot may avert sickness

Vaccine available at Health Center

By BRE'ANNA EMMITT
Staff Reporter

Paying to get stuck with a needle may seem far from enjoyable, but experts say the benefits of the flu shot are worth the initial sting.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site, 5 percent to 20 percent of Americans get the flu each year and the best prevention from getting the bug is to get a vaccination every fall.

Laura Crawley, assistant dean of Campus Life for health promotions, said students need to get a yearly flu shot.

"If students haven't gotten a flu shot this year, then get to the Health Center and get one," Crawley said. "The season starts in the early fall, but doesn't peak until winter and we see cases even into April and May."

Crawley said the vaccine is 90 percent effective for healthy young adults and 400 TCU students have already been vaccinated this year at the Health Center. She said the Health Center and clinics all around Tarrant County have many vaccines left.

"The availability of flu shots is different from last year," Crawley said. "Last year we ran out in late fall, but this year we have more than enough."

Crawley said the demand for the vaccine varies each year because of factors including the specific strain of influenza and how widespread the virus is.

Crawley said Tarrant County has not yet seen a high incidence of the flu, but stressed that the season is not over and incidence levels can easily rise.

"The problem is that TCU students come from every-

See **FLU**, page 2

STAYING HEALTHY

- Get a flu shot
- Wash hands routinely
- Stay away from others when you're sick
- Stay away from others when they're sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze and cough
- Good nutrition
- Avoid spitting in public places

— CAMPUS LIFE

Web classes impersonal, students say

By LESLIE HONEY
Staff Reporter

Despite the fact that several Texas universities make undergraduate online courses available, TCU decides not to offer them, said a coordinator for electronic learning.

Public schools such as the University of Texas, Texas A&M University and the University of North Texas all offer online courses to undergraduates.

Many private universities, including TCU, have chosen to keep their universities personal by only offering on-site classes, said Romy Hughes, coordinator of eLearning in the Center for Teaching Excellence.

"It's not like we're the only university not offering online classes with a sore thumb sticking out," she said.

Bill Moncrief, senior associate dean of the School of Business, said the school offered an online marketing course three years ago in which students met once a week in the classroom and once a week online. However, Moncrief said, there was not a student demand for the class.

"Frankly, students didn't like it," he said.

Hughes said TCU students have spoken out against online courses.

"In 2003, a handful of students were invited to attend a Vision in Action meeting," she said. "The feedback was that students want a traditional face-to-face environment."

Preston DuBose, marketing coordinator for distance education at A&M, said it has seen many advantages to offering online courses.

"By offering online classes, students can work during the day and get in all their required courses," he said. "It also helps with scheduling conflicts."

Ali Castellano, a sophomore movement science major, took an online biology course last summer at a community college in St. Louis and said some students learn better by themselves.

"It was definitely nice because you didn't have to go to class and you could focus on the material instead of worrying about class," she said. "You're taking twice as much time by going to class and doing the work at home."

Online courses have their disadvantages as well, DuBose said.

See **ONLINE**, page 2

"We're going to need a few weeks of rain to make up what we've lost."

— Vick Corbelli, National Weather Service representative



M.L. GRAY / Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Stephenville Fire Chief Jimmy Chew (left) keeps an eye on the progress of an advancing fire Jan. 2 from the ridgeline property where resident Christal Carey (right) lives. The fire was a restart of a fire that burned the night before in the area about 3 miles directly west of Hannibal.

Official: Drought looms despite rain

By JESSICA ST. JOHN
Staff Reporter

The drought in the Dallas/Fort Worth area has caused many widespread wildfires, but the region could soon face more serious effects even after Sunday's rain, said representatives from the National Weather Service.

Steve Fano, a representative of the National Weather Service's Fort Worth office, said that aside from the apparent wildfires, the region is beginning to see other major problems caused by the drought.

"Ranchers are being forced to move their cattle out of the area or truck in

hay," Fano said. "Without rain, they can't grow an adequate food supply."

Vick Corbelli, another representative of the National Weather Service, said Sunday's rainfall really will not change the drought situation.

"We're going to need a few weeks of rain to make up what we've lost," Corbelli said.

Fano said recreation on area lakes is also becoming difficult because lake levels are too low to access the ramps.

Although there are no current water rationing rules in effect, Fano said, they will be a certainty in the next few months if the amount of rainfall does not increase.

Forecasters say the area has several chances for more rain in the next week.

Fano said this drought is comparable to severe droughts in the past.

"This is not something we haven't seen before, but it's been about 10 years," Fano said.

According to the Texas Water Development Board, the last two major droughts occurred in this region in 1996 and 1998.

Michael Slattery, an associate professor of geology and director of the environmental science program, said

See **DROUGHT**, page 2

CAMPUS EXPANSION

Berry Street construction part of larger goal

By JOHN-LAURENT TRONCHE
Staff Reporter

Students and local residents can expect at least another 18 months of construction on and around Berry Street as Fort Worth moves toward an entire reworking of the TCU area.

The construction is part of the Berry Street Initiative and a larger effort to transform Berry Street into the "college community fabric," said Fort

Worth City Council member Wendy Davis.

The Berry Street Initiative is a group of local residents, volunteers and private investors working to revitalize the Berry Street area, said Kristi Wiseman, council aide to Davis.

"We want to create a pedestrian environment," Davis said.

The current six lanes of traffic will be reduced to two lanes in either

direction, separated by a tree-lined median, Davis said. Also included in the construction plan, she said, are tree-lined sidewalks and parallel parking spaces.

Tony Sholola, engineering manager for the city's engineering department, said the finished product will contribute a "much nicer entrance to the campus."

See **BERRY**, page 2



WEATHER

TODAY: Sunny, 64/38
WEDNESDAY: Mostly cloudy, 63/41
THURSDAY: Showers, 60/50

FUN FACT

A pet parrot, Sunshine, attacked a drunken man who broke into its owner's apartment, and the bite and blood marks helped police identify a suspect. —ASSOCIATED PRESS

TODAY'S HEADLINES

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CONTACT US

Send your questions, compliments, complaints and hot tips to the staff at NEWS2SKIFF@TCU.EDU