



NEWS

Hillary Clinton's campaign makes a Metroplex stop in downtown Fort Worth today.

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FEATURES

A local musician shares his story.

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SPORTS

Baseball kicks off its season today against Cal State Fullerton

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TCU

DAILY SKIFF



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2008

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BYX fraternity's decision to join Greek Life in limbo

By MICHELLE ANDERSON
Staff Reporter

The Christian fraternity Brothers Under Christ remains undecided about joining the Fraternity and Sorority Life office, citing concerns about turning potential members away and creating too much work for officers, the group's president said.

BYX was invited to join Fraternity and Sorority Life at the beginning of the semester, and the fraternity is still considering if it will join, said Kurtis Freeman, BYX president.

Sarah Williamson, assistant director of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, said BYX would benefit from

the advertising and marketing the Fraternity and Sorority Life office can offer if it decides to join. Also, the fraternity will have greater protection by offering a higher authority to go to with any questions, she said.

Freeman said the fraternity doesn't want to turn men away by making BYX more

like other fraternities. The appeal of BYX to many men is that it's not like other fraternities, he said.

Freeman said there would be more paperwork for BYX officers to do on top of their other duties. Another concern is the BYX National Board, which must approve everything the chapter does

on campus. Joining Fraternity and Sorority Life has not been approved yet, he said.

BYX has not been given a time frame from Fraternity and Sorority Life to make a decision, Freeman said.

"Fraternity and Sorority Life would like us to be fully on board by now, but they are respecting our need to

pass this decision through the national office," he said. "I am hoping to get an overall view of how the fraternity feels over the next few weeks by a vote."

Freeman said he wants to leave the decision up to the fraternity, and most members, like Andrew Sullivan, a

See BYX, page 2

SHOWDOWN



Democratic presidential candidates Sen. Barack Obama, left, and Sen. Hillary Clinton wave to the crowd at the start of the CNN/Univision Texas Democratic Party Debate at the UT Recreation Center in Austin on Thursday. (Tom Pennington/Fort Worth Star-Telegram/MCT)

Senators square off in Lone Star debate

By MICHELLE ANDERSON and TIM BELLA
Staff Reporters

Sens. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama sought to score points with voters in one of the primary's key states Thursday at the CNN/Univision Democratic debate at the Recreational Sports Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

In what was perhaps the most crucial debate to date in the race for the

Democratic presidential nomination, Clinton and Obama talked about an array of topics ranging from Cuban relations post-Fidel Castro to Obama's use of specific rhetoric in some of his speeches.

Both senators agreed on the importance of opening the U.S. to diplomatic negotiations with Cuba and every other country. Both were critical of the Bush administration's way of dealing

with foreign diplomacy and say there is damage that needs mending.

See DEBATE, page 2

DAILYSKIFF.COM

Read a play-by-play recap of the debate in the politics blog and keep up with local weekend appearances.

Author to speak about death penalty, religion

By SHANNON BLEASE
Staff Reporter

Capital punishment is a criminal, social and religious issue that affects many, not just the people on death row, a religion professor said.

The death penalty will be the subject of a two-day workshop led by religion and sociology professors and guest speaker Virginia Stem Owens, said Jack Hill, associate professor of religion.

Edward McMahon, coordinator of the event, said Owens will be discussing her book "Living Next Door to the Death House," a personal memoir and series of interviews

with the residents of Huntsville, the nation's execution capital.

This two-day event will also include discussion about the prison and justice system in Texas, said Cathy Neece, vice president of development at Brite.

Hill said there is not a lot of careful thinking about the correlation between what the Bible says about capital punishment and what society believes.

"The Bible presents both issues dealing with the death penalty; in the Old Testament, they stoned people for their wrongdoings," he said. "But in the New Testament, See BRITE, page 2

By SHALEY SANDERS
Staff Reporter

After painting, landscaping and siding other houses for 216 hours, a single parent is ready to begin building her own home.

Olga Samano is the recipient of this year's FrogHouse, a home built primarily by TCU volunteers.

Before closing on her home, Samano must complete 300 hours building an area Habitat for Humanity project, said Diane Wolfe, spokeswoman for Trinity Habitat for Humanity.

"As of last Saturday, I have 84 hours left," Samano said.

Samano, who was chosen in November, will throw the ceremonial first pitch for TCU's season opener against Cal State Fullerton today, Wolfe said.

"Friday will be my first experience actually building a house," said Samano, who plans to continue building after she reaches her 300 hours.

Samano's homesite is about two miles southeast of TCU, said Jarod Cobb, assistant director of TCU Transitions.

Trinity Habitat for Humanity chooses the homeowner and homesite and sends professionals and trained volunteers to oversee the building project and help volunteers build the home, said Eric Tabone, executive director of FrogHouse and a senior finance/real estate major.

Labor is free, but house payments are made by the homeowner, Wolfe said.

FrogHouse volunteers consist pri-

marily of juniors, because it is their class project to act as responsible citizens, Tabone said.

This year's FrogHouse class raised \$41,000 for building expenses, the most money in the three-year history of the project, Tabone said.

"For a junior class and college students to get together to work on fundraising and then raise that much money is pretty miraculous," Cobb said.

The money was raised mainly from parents, previous donors and alumni, Tabone said.

FrogHouse shifts are scheduled for every Friday and Saturday until April 19 and during Spring Break to complete Samano's house in time for the dedication April 26, Cobb said.

Volunteer work earns mother home

By SHALEY SANDERS
Staff Reporter

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WEATHER

TODAY: Morning clouds, 56/37
TOMORROW: Sunny, 66/46
SUNDAY: Sunny, 66/48

PECULIAR FACT

MERRIMACK, N.H.—A woman who climbed into a fire truck at a station and refused to get out faces several charges, police say.

Associated Press

TODAY'S HEADLINES

SPORTS: Men's tennis star discusses team, page 4

OPINION: Study-abroad prices too high, page 3

SPORTS: Equestrian team looks for revenge, page 4

BYX

From page 1

junior radio-TV-film major, are excited to engage in open discussion.

"I think it is a good idea because it provides us an opportunity to be involved in Greek life while still maintaining our place as a religious organization," Sullivan said.

The Christian fraternity would not join Panhellenic, Interfraternity Council, Pan-Hellenic Council or the Multicultural Greek Council, Williamson said.

Other fraternities are supportive of BYX joining Fraternity and Sorority Life.

ing Fraternity and Sorority Life.

"They were involved with Greek Week last year, and they are not going to be a part of IFC so I don't see it as being a problem," said Matt Boaz, Pi Kappa Phi president.

Sigma Phi Epsilon also supports BYX joining, its president said.

"This is a great decision for the TCU Greek Community," said Brett Singer, SigEp president. "BYX is an outstanding fraternity on our campus. SigEp is very supportive of BYX joining Fraternity and Sorority Life."

BRITE

From page 1

Jesus preached about forgiveness and he who is without sin to cast the first stone."

Owens will take the audience inside Huntsville to show how one small room can affect so many lives, said McMahon, assistant dean of advanced studies.

Living in Huntsville, Owens was able to interview many people influenced by the prison system, from guards to victims' families, McMahon said.

The free event is sponsored by Brite Divinity School, the religion department and the Society of Biblical Literature, McMahon said.

DAILY SKIFF.COM

See the full workshop schedule online.

DEBATE

From page 1

But health care was the major issue of the night despite moderator Campbell Brown's attempts to move the discussion elsewhere.

Under Clinton's health care plan, everyone would be required to purchase insurance. She emphasized that Obama's plan would not work because purchasing insurance is not mandatory for everyone.

Obama instead focused on providing cheaper health insurance.

"My belief is the reason that people don't have it is not because they don't want it but because they can't afford it. And so I emphasize reducing costs," the Illinois senator said.

However, with 228 delegates up for grabs, Texas is seen as a major prize for the Democrats.

Although the candidates agreed on some policies, accusations flew at times.

Clinton made remarks about Obama's accomplishments as a senator, later accusing him of committing plagiarism.

"Lifting whole passages from someone else's speeches is not change you can believe in, it's change you can Xerox," Clinton said.

Obama defended himself, saying politics has gone into "silly season" where everyone goes after petty issues. He said one of his co-chairs gave him the line in his speech and encouraged him to use it.

Clinton, who emphasized her experience and accomplishments as a leader, has lost 11 straight primaries and caucuses to Obama, pushing him ahead of the New York senator in the delegate count, 1,336 to 1,251.

Standing up in front of many judging faces is invigorating for Brittany Richards, a sophomore actress and theater major.

"In my monologue, there are a lot of words I have never said before," Richards said.

She said most women relate to her monologue because it is universal and informative. She said the script showed her the importance of discussing the vagina.

De Veer said vagina is not a dirty word because it is everyone's passage into this life.

"So much of it is inside the body and much of it is not visible on the outside and the assumption is that it is quiet or it should be hidden, though, in terms of its power in life, it is pretty powerful," she said.

PLAY

From page 1

a very essential way," de Veer said.

Jo Andrews, a junior actress, returned from last year's cast to participate again but changed roles. She plays a dominatrix in the monologue "The Woman Who Likes to Make Vaginas Happy."

She said the actresses have to prepare for more than just their characters' personalities. Andrews had to perfect the range of her character's 15 different moans.

"I say vagina 20 times, clitoris seven times and orgasm five times," said Brooke LeBleu, a freshman actress. "As soon as you say these things, you know people will have an opinion one way or another."

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DEFINITELY, MAYBE: 12:05p 3:15p 6:30p 9:50p UNTRACEABLE: 12:50p 3:50p 6:50p 9:50p

FOOLS GOLD: 12:00p 3:00p 6:00p 9:00p VANTAGE POINT: 11:50a 2:30p 5:20p 8:10p 10:50p

JUMPER: 11:40a 2:10p 4:40p 7:20p 10:10p WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENKINS: 12:20p 3:20p 6:20p

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BASEBALL

STARTING PURPLE

Home opener against 2004 college champions

By BRETT LARSON AND MARCUS MURPHREE
Sports and Multimedia editors

America's pastime returns to Fort Worth today as the TCU baseball team takes on the Cal State Fullerton Titans for this season's home opener at Lupton Stadium.

This marks the fifth series between the two teams and it will be the first time the Titans travel to Fort Worth to take on the Horned Frogs.

Cal State Fullerton, the 2004 College World Series Champions, is ranked No. 16 by Collegiate Baseball and Rivals.com, No. 15 by the USA Today/ESPN Coaches and No. 14 by the National College Baseball Writers of America but were left off Baseball America's Preseason Top 25 for the first time in 10 years.

Last season the Horned Frogs were ranked at times in the top-20 in the USA Today/ESPN Coaches poll, but eventually fell out of the final rankings.

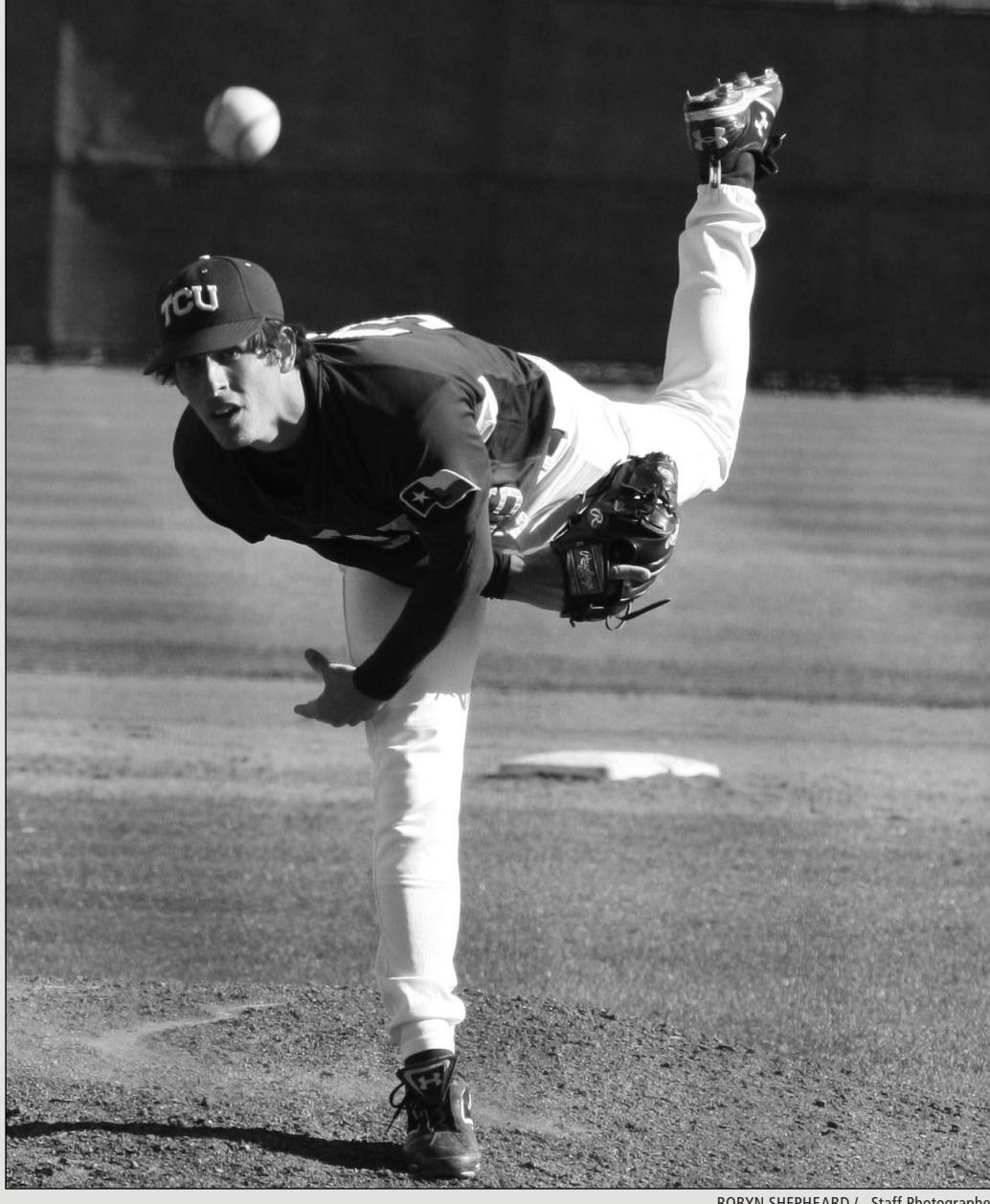
Practice was delayed for all NCAA teams this year, being held until Feb. 1 with today representing a true opening day for college baseball.

The Horned Frogs start this season unranked, having lost the core of the pitching staff and the heart of the batting order. The Major League Baseball draft took the bat of catcher Andrew Walker out of the lineup and closer Sam Demel away from the Horned Frogs' bullpen.

Although TCU's team is relatively young, it is still predicted to come out on top of the Mountain West Conference for the third year in a row.

Three of the Horned Frogs' players were named preseason All-Conference players: junior first baseman Matt Vern, shortstop Bryan Kervin and center fielder Clint Arnold. Arnold led the team in stolen bases last season and did not commit an error in the outfield. Vern held the hottest bat at home last season hitting .354 with three home runs and 21 RBIs while in the confines of Lupton Stadium.

Neither team features much power. TCU's projected starting lineup combined for 24 home runs last season while Fullerton's projected starters combine for five. Although TCU is sending a relatively young squad to the field, all but two members of the team played together during the 2007 season. Catcher Bryan Holaday is a transfer from North Cen-



ROBYN SHEPHEARD / Staff Photographer
Reliever Derek VerHagen is one of the few pitchers returning to the Horned Frogs' staff this season. Last year he was a situational reliever and made 13 appearances for 17 innings of work.

in Houston. The Titans have only five returning players slated to take the field tonight.

As far as pitching goes, TCU is projected to start junior right-hander Seth Garrison. Last season his season was cut short after having Tommy John surgery and he was granted a medical redshirt.

In the 23 innings Garrison did pitch last season, he posted a 1-0 record with a 1.96 ERA and 7.67 strikeout to walk ratio.

paign last season, which included two complete games. Kaplan finished the season 11-3 with a 3.30 ERA and 83 strikeouts.

During last season's home opening series, the Horned Frogs swept Oral Roberts University Eagles, a team that had knocked TCU out of the NCAA Regionals in 2004.

The first pitch is set for 6:30 p.m. at Lupton Stadium while Saturday and Sunday's games will be at 2 and 1 p.m., respectively.

MEN'S TENNIS

Q&A

Kriegler Brink

By BRETT LARSON
Sports Editor

As the only undefeated team at TCU, the men's tennis team sees itself as an unheralded squad looking to burn its mark as the season goes on.

Junior Kriegler Brink is one of the squads leading contributors

to a team now ranked No. 46 in the nation and that is 8-0.

Last fall Brink led the team with a 9-4 record in singles.

He is part of a dominating doubles team with senior Cosmin Cotet, which is now ranked No. 14 nationally, climbing from the No. 44 ranking.

The teammates are 6-1 on the season with their only loss against the No. 10-ranked Texas Tech duo Bojan Szumanski and Christian Rojmar.

This weekend, Brink said, the team faces two of its toughest tests against the University of Minnesota and Oklahoma State.

Q: How important are the matches against Minnesota and Oklahoma State this weekend in setting the tone for the season?

A: This Sunday should be a really tough one. Oklahoma State is a really good team and should be a tester.

Q: Are there any other matchups this season the team is particularly looking at?

A: Illinois is a top-10 team in the nation so they will show us what we're made of.

Q: Being the only undefeated team at TCU, does the team feel it is being represented well and getting the support it deserves?

A: Fan support could always improve but we have seen new people out there. There are a lot of new faces along with the old faces. I feel like the basketball team sometimes get too much attention when they're not doing as well as us,

but we're just trying to think about having fun.

Q: Since the team has played six of its eight matches at home this season, is it nervous at all about a rough second half of the season featuring 12 away games?

A: Playing in Fort Worth helps a lot. We're used to the courts and having friends at the matches helps a lot.

It will definitely be tougher once we go away.

Q: What is the team's main strength?

A: I would say doubles have improved a lot. We feel that we have a better chance of winning in doubles.

Q: You are from South Africa and the team also has freshman Emanu Brighiu and senior Cotet from Romania. What does that add to the team?

A: It brings more depth to the team and it strengthens it a lot. We're also friends and learning things about the rest of the world. Brighiu has been big time for us.

FOR YOUR INFO

Horned Frogs men's tennis

Who: Minnesota Gophers & Oklahoma State Cowboys
When: Saturday & Sunday at 2 p.m.
Where: Bayard H. Friedman Tennis Center
What: The Horned Frogs are undefeated in the spring season.

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EQUESTRIAN

Weekend loss can be avenged by Frog riders

By MEGAN MOWERY
Staff Reporter

The equestrian team has a chance to redeem itself today by playing the team it lost to Sunday.

The women will face Fresno State again today, this time on home soil.

TCU fell at Fresno State 7-4 in the championship game of the Best of the West Tournament.

Freshman Ashton Mickunas received her first MVP of the season in reining. It was her second trip with the team. Senior Kindel Huffman improved to 9-0 in the horsemanship event.

Despite the loss, the team is still 9-0 in Western style riding, making TCU the only undefeated team in this category in the nation.

Junior Carrie Von Uhlig, who is 5-1 in horsemanship, said there is a good chance for the Western team to be successful at Nationals this year.

This is the first year for recruits to play on the Hunt Seat team and the second year for the Western team.

The Hunt Seat team is getting better with every performance, freshman Tassie Munroe said.

"We are where the Western team was last year," Munroe said.

The top 12 Hunt Seat teams in the nation will go to Nationals, which are March 17 to 19, and TCU is hanging on in the 12th seed.

"There is definitely a need to win now more than ever in this part of the season," Munroe said.

Munroe, who is 5-3 in equitation over fences, said the team needs to take advantage of being at home and riding familiar horses.

Head coach Gary Reynolds said the team has been practicing at scrimmages and riding as many different horses as it can in order to prepare for the remainder of the season.

The team will compete in four more matches before Nationals begin in Waco.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"You better live your best and act your best and think your best today, for today is the sure preparation for tomorrow and all the other tomorrows that follow."

— Harriet Martineau

THE SKIFF VIEW

Vagina Monologues discusses topics important for women, men alike

It is a taboo avoided by men. Most people think only bra-burning feminists will be attending. However, everyone should go.

The Vagina Monologues will be at TCU during V-Week and is open to both sexes.

The play was started to stop and reduce violence against women. Contrary to what some people may think, it was not created out of hate toward men but as a way to inform women about their bodies. The Vagina Monologues deals with how society treats the topic of women's sexuality and what can happen to women in different situations that audience members can relate to.

Although negative portrayal of male-female sexual relationships are in the performance, it is not the subject of the play. The first way to stop violence against not only women, but also men is to educate, and that

is what The Vagina Monologues does.

The efforts TCU is taking to educate students about such a controversial topic is admirable. All students, both male and female, should take a minute out of their busy schedules to understand the topics and issues affecting the female gender.

Every person should respect that the purpose of the monologues are to empower women, make them feel equal, help them not to be ashamed of their sexuality and to make rape and violence against women known in order to stop it. That is a fantastic and admirable cause that should be supported.

It will not empty your wallet or make you fall asleep. Therefore, everyone should go spend \$5 and hear what exactly the voices of vaginas have to say.

Features editor Jordan Haygood for the editorial board.

HUMOR

Even when ridiculous, ads get people talking

Sometimes I like to think I'm too smart for the forces of the advertising industry. I flip through the pages of a magazine and think I'm above the tricks various companies use to sell their wares.

Take the March issue of Maxim Magazine.

I'm currently staring at an advertisement for a cologne named Diesel. It sports a shirtless, muscular guy holding a bottle of the fragrance and sporting a cocky look on his face that screams, "I just had sex with your girlfriend."

What is this ad supposed to make me think? If I use Diesel, will I become some sort of pompous jerk who makes bad fashion choices, such as wearing suspenders without a shirt?

C'mon.

Diesel also smells terrible. Think Tag Body Spray mixed with rancid tacos. An info box in the top right-hand corner of the ad

says the scent was originally invented by the Germans during World War I. They intended to use it against the Allied powers as a secret weapon, but deciding the stench was far too foul and inhumane, they settled for mustard gas instead. That's why Germany lost.

Wait, maybe the info box says that Diesel is available at Macy's, I can't really remember, but I've already turned the page and it's too late to go back now.

The next ad I've come across is one for the Schick Quattro disposable razor. It shows some shirtless guy, who has presumably just received a god-like level of smoothness from his Quattro, getting two naked babies rubbed across his face by two creepy scientists. Yes, you heard correctly.

The best part is the shirtless guy is just sitting there like he overdosed on muscle relaxers and is watching a NOVA special on jet propulsion. He doesn't seem at all phased that scientists are committing indecent acts with children's butts

on the side of his face. Apparently, if you shave with the Quattro, you'll achieve nirvana. Yeah, right.

A few pages further yields what is known as an "adver-torial," which is an advertisement designed to look like genuine magazine content. It's all about Irish Spring Body Wash.

It contains all sorts of nonsense, such as tips on how to pick up women and five steps to a "greener you." No, not green like eco-friendly. Green like Irish. The last tip is to use Irish Spring Body Wash.

If anyone you know follows all five of these useless tips, which include dyeing your beer green and dressing your dog up like a leprechaun, call an exorcist immediately. However, Irish Spring does score some points for being the first

ad with women instead of shirtless males I've come across in this "men's magazine."

The last advertisement I come across is an ad for 5 gum. A caption above the green and black pack

of 5 asks, "Ever tried lying on a thousand vibrating cell phones?"

Apparently, the ad people for 5 wanted to be edgy and cool by incorporating cell phones into the equation. Bad choice. If I ate a piece of gum that caused my body to vibrate violently, I would call poison control and have my body tested for arsenic. I would take 5 to court and sue for millions of dollars. Then I would donate some money to TCU and have them name a bookshelf in the library after me.

I, personally, found all of these ads to be terrible, but that proves in an ironic way that the advertising industry is still doing its job. Sure, we all love to hate stupid ads we see in print. But we stopped and talked about them, right? It's all about awareness.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have an insatiable desire to buy cologne, razors, body wash and gum. Anyone want to go to the drugstore?

David Hall is a sophomore news editorial journalism major from Kingwood.

"I personally found all of these ads to be terrible, but that proves in an ironic way that the advertising industry is still doing its job."

David Hall

Castro's step down will bring no change

In his resignation letter — printed on the front page of Cuba's state-run publication, Granma — Fidel Castro writes of his failing health and his inability to continue as Cuba's president. "This I say devoid of all drama," he writes.

It is a perfect description of how the news has been received, both in Cuba and stateside, and how the transition of power will occur in Cuba.

Despite front-page news of Castro's resignation, residents in Cuba were not celebrating in the streets. There were no large rallies, no battle cries and no protests.

The news was delivered and received, devoid of all drama.

In Miami, home to more Cubans and Cuban-Americans than any other U.S. city, the lack of celebration was similar. Modest gatherings were reported in Miami's Little Havana, but response to the news was largely sedate, especially compared to the celebrations in July 2006, when Castro temporarily ceded power to his brother,

Raul Castro, Cuba's Council of State's first vice president.

Castro's resignation marks the end of a political career for one of the longest-serving, most divisive leaders in the world, but it will not create a dramatically different Cuba.

Although the end of Castro's

defiant leadership will be mentioned in history books,

the chapter will remain largely unchanged.

"He's aware of his place in history, and he's going to keep on occupying that place in one way or another," said a Cuban retiree, according to a CNN.com article.

President Bush said Tuesday he hopes for a transition toward democracy for Cuba and vowed that the U.S. would be an ally in the process, according to a White House press release.

The possibility of a democratic transition for Cuba is weak, as Castro will have a continued presence in Cuba, likely through his brother, Raul, who has been publicly named as his successor.

If Raul Castro is named

the new president of Cuba,

it is unlikely that the country's government will see much change. Although he is widely viewed as more practical and down-to-earth than

his brother, Raul Castro has also been called his brother's enforcer, according to a 2006 article on Time.com. He may take a different approach toward the country's communist model, but he will not embrace democracy.

When he took temporary control of the country in July 2006, Raul Castro maintained the status quo. At the time, experts suggested that though he may be more interested in the Chinese model of Communism, which could ease restrictions on private businesses, he would also embrace China's hard line on political freedoms, according to Time.com.

State John Negroponte said Tuesday that the U.S. will not lift its embargo on Cuba, and he doesn't see a change in U.S. policy toward Cuba "happening any time soon," according to a CNN.com article.

Because Raul Castro will maintain his brother's connection to government and his oppressive political position, and because the U.S. plans to maintain its policy toward Cuba, life for Cuban residents and Cuban-Americans will remain much the same.

The transition will occur, devoid of all drama.

Kara Peterson is an advertising/public relation graduate student from Fort Worth.

students broadcasting their personal international experiences to prospective students.

Few disagree that studying abroad is beneficial. But, if the university is going to highly recommend and advertise studying abroad, it should do something to make the option more affordable.

The Center for International Studies Web site shows the multitude of TCU-tailored study-abroad programs and more generic options offered through partner programs in even more countries.

What does not make

sense, though, is the difference between the cost of the TCU-tailored programs and the more generic programs. For example, a TCU summer study-abroad session in Seville, Spain, costs \$3,052.

Add to that the cost of tuition — \$865 per credit hour for six hours — and the base price tag is \$8,242.

Now take a similar program through the Council on International Education Exchange, a separate study-abroad agency from which TCU accepts credit hours. Two CIEE summer sessions in Seville, the equivalent of six credit hours, cost \$5,670, about \$2,500 less than the TCU program.

So what is the difference in studying abroad through a TCU program that makes it worth so much more? Tracy Williams, associate director of The Center for International Studies, said in an e-mail that TCU provides special services

for its students, such as helping with enrollment and providing orientations.

"Academics, programmatic features and location aspects are all considered with the TCU student in mind," she wrote.

But the TCU study-abroad program prices are also higher than other school-specific programs. A summer in Italy with TCU costs \$8,415, almost \$750 more than Southern Methodist University's Italy program, which costs \$7,668, including a \$400 deposit.

Although the programs cannot be directly compared — they are based in different cities in Italy — the price difference is still notable.

Williams said summer study-abroad programs recently saw a 25-percent reduction in program fees. That's excellent, but clearly it's not enough.

If TCU is going to continue

to brag about its study abroad programs, it should make them more affordable.

I studied abroad in Madrid this past summer with IES, and it was one of the best experiences of my life. I don't feel like I missed out on anything not going with TCU. In fact, I think I learned more from it. I was able to meet and get to know students from universities across the U.S., from Wake Forest University to Harvard University.

Even if there were no cost difference in the two programs, I would still choose to study abroad with an affiliate program just to have a more diverse experience.

The benefits of studying abroad are clear, but if the TCU programs were not so expensive, more students would be able to enjoy them.

Managing editor Bailey Shiffler is a senior international communications major from Georgetown.

the left. The Skiff View is the collective opinion of the editorial board and may not reflect the views of the individual writers. Signed letters, columns and cartoons represent the opinion of the

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to OPINION@DAILYSKIFF.COM. Letters must include the author's classification, major and phone number. Skiff reserves the right to edit or reject letters for style, taste and size restrictions.

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HEAR HIM SING

Listen to Oklin Bloodworth and his sons jam, watch a slideshow and see video of Bloodworth singing at a local bar.

DAILYSKIFF.COM

Singing to live

81-year-old enthusiast revives local jazz scene

By SAEROM YOO
News Editor

Weaving through a smoky, dimly lit warehouse-turned-bar is an 81-year-old jazz singer. He is dressed in a sharply pressed pinstripe suit and a beret, carrying a tin pail labeled "Tips" scribbled in red ink. But he considers the pail merely an excuse to meet every newcomer in the crowd — by the end of the evening, he will remember every familiar face by first and last name.

The band is warming up and customers have turned away from their conversations for a moment, noticing the musicians on stage, who are busily plucking, drumming and whaling on their instruments. It is 11 p.m. on a Sunday night at Lola's, and Oklin Bloodworth does not exactly fit in with the rest of the largely 20- to 35-year-old crowd in jeans and T-shirts.

When he steps on to the stage, applause and hoots immediately sweep over the audience. Everybody knows him. He stiffly stands in front of the microphone with his arms hanging loosely by his sides and his left fingers clutching his car keys. His eyes glisten warmly in a childlike manner that is unfitting for a man his age. A broad smile cracks and spreads through his time-worn, leathery face. His presence changes everything.

The quick jerks in the stand-up bassist's hips turn into a slow sway. The fingers that were once frantically running up and down the keyboard now caress the ivory keys to create fluid, smooth melodies. The drummer raps lightly on the high hat. The customers turn their chairs around to face the stage directly; they will not be looking back at their friends for a while. All eyes land on the fragile, dark figure who gazes back from center stage. Flowing out of his creased lips is a slightly scratchy, deeply rich baritone voice that has been fermenting over the years like quality wine. This is the voice he has been using since he was 10 years old on the streets of his hometown, Marshall.

What You Won't Do For Love

Back then, he did not have a spotlight or a full band behind him. All he had were his shoe shine box, a harmonica and a stack of black newspapers that he sold "trying to make a dime." And this was only one of the countless jobs he held to provide for his family — to survive.

"I was what they call a hustler — a legal hustler," he says.

Life's more important priorities have kept Oklin Bloodworth from pursuing his first love professionally, but he always managed to keep it close to his side.

Because he was what he calls an "ill-conceived" child, he never knew his father. He grew up with his grandparents until his grandfather died when he was 10. Then he moved in with his mother and stepfather until he was 14. From then on, he quit school and lived in various people's homes, helping out with chores and working two jobs at a time.

So when his own three sons entered his life, he vowed to be there for his family.

"My daddy was alive but he wasn't a daddy to me," he said.

But the absence of hit albums, fame and glitz in his life does not mean music was absent also. He continued to play gigs at clubs not

unlike the ones at which he performs today, like J & J Blues Bar and 6th Street Live, recently renamed Lola's.

"I've always been a jammer," he says. "It's something I've done all my life."

His first son, Oklin Dewey Curtis Bloodworth, 58, says he remembers thinking his father could sing "as well as Ray Charles" when he was young.

"He kept going to clubs," his son recalls. "He got to sing at different places and people loved him. He just didn't pursue the Ray Charles type of life."

His son is now a children's singer with seven albums under his name.

Jesse Bloodworth, 55, his second son, fondly remembers the times his father and David "Fathead" Newman would jam out on the grassy area in front of his home.

"We would always listen to him play," Jesse Bloodworth said.

Influenced by his admiration of The Beatles' drummer Ringo Starr, Jesse Bloodworth learned to play the drums at nine or 10 years old. Jesse Bloodworth, the production specialist for Fresno County Office of Education in California, now plays 11 instruments and plays the bass guitar for Fresno First Baptist Church.

"He's a great vocalist," Jesse Bloodworth says. "Don't let him get on an instrument, though."

I was what they call a hustler — a legal hustler

After All

Being around since 1926 has given Oklin Bloodworth the opportunity to observe the transformation of music and its place in society.

His oldest son recalls that making music was something society had come to expect from black people.

"No matter what you were going through, you could always pick up a guitar and sing," he says.

The senior Oklin Bloodworth remembers the years of racial segregation as a "beautiful way of life."

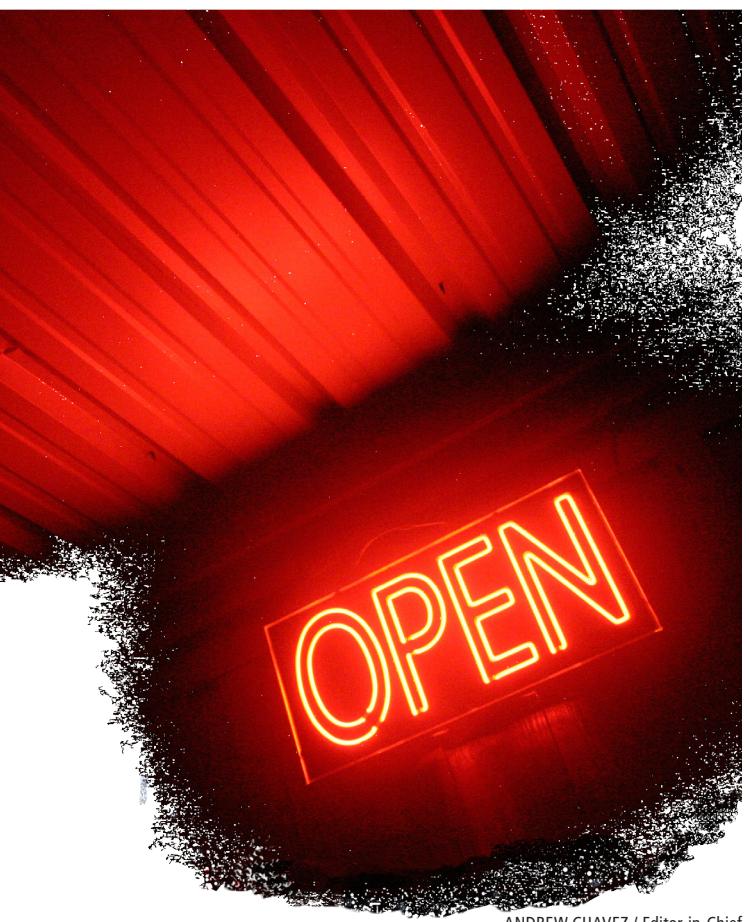
"We had our way and they had their way," he says. "I can live with the prejudice. I've done it."

And his way of life in his youth was hopping from one venue to another until sunrise, watching jazz shows and playing with whoever was willing. But jazz is no longer in the mainstream, and one could not hop from one jazz bar to another if he or she tried.

But Oklin Bloodworth is an ambassador to jazz as much as he is the ambassador to J & J Blues Bar. He has loyally stuck by his old love and become the means of which today's listeners can rediscover its value.

Joey Carter, a percussionist and lecturer of music at TCU, says Oklin Bloodworth makes the band's music more palatable to those who aren't familiar with the genre, and his honest, sincere presentation helps.

"He's not trying to prove anything with his voice," says Carter, a member of Lola's house band. "He just sings the songs. It's not like the 'American Idol' thing."



ANDREW CHAVEZ / Editor-in-Chief

Carter said he first met Oklin Bloodworth in 1994 when he sat in on a blues song with the band Carter was playing with at the time. They have been playing together regularly for about eight years.

Jesse Bloodworth says his father's sound has become a rarity.

"A lot of cats are dying out," he says. "You're just going to end up with crooners. You haven't heard anybody with a blues and a jazz type of sound — the authentic kind."

Oklin Bloodworth says he has accepted the new, but his love for the past doesn't falter.

"If it's something you love, don't quit it," he says. "Find something you love and stay there."

What a Wonderful World

Oklin Bloodworth does not need much. All he could ask is for his health to continue allowing him to sing.

"I don't build no mountains," he says. "I love what I already possess more than anything I could ever gain. I'm already living. What else would I want?"

Some of his favorite moments have been meeting and performing with some of the greatest jazz heroes of his era.

A few of the many that stand out are a performance in the '80s with Jimmy Smith, an organist who died last year, and a performance in the '50s with Buddy Johnson, who was a keyboard player.

He was able to meet these famous musicians simply because he was at the right place at the right time.

"Wherever music went, that's where I went," he says.

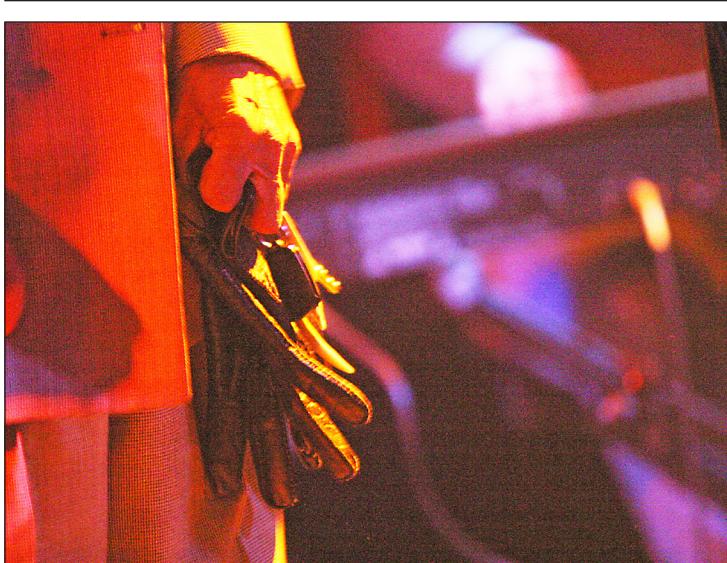
These treasured moments were not recorded, and Oklin Bloodworth cannot share it with others today, but he says, as he raises his hand to his chest, they're recorded in his heart.

"I couldn't have planned it any better," he says. "I might've had a few difficulties, but it's nothing compared to the joys that I've had."

Now, Oklin Bloodworth rarely gets out of his pajamas before 3:30 p.m. on weekdays. It is then he will stroll out of his living room, which is covered in photos and memorabilia of decades-old friendships. He doesn't have big plans. It's just time for his daily dosage of Lotto tickets.

It is during the weekends that he finds himself in his true element. It is during the late nights that his hips find a sway and his fingers recover their snaps, and from the look on his face, it is easy to believe him when he says this is what he looks forward to — what he lives for.

"He'll sing till the day he dies," Oklin Dewey Curtis Bloodworth says. "He's living the type of life he wants to live and he's saying, 'I'm not taking any less.'"



TOP LEFT: Oklin Bloodworth, an 81-year-old jazz singer, performs Sunday night at Lola's with the bar's house band. ABOVE: Bloodworth started singing when he was 10, playing the harmonica and selling newspapers on the streets of Marshall. BOTTOM LEFT: Oklin Bloodworth can consistently be found clutching his car keys when he is on stage. He says having them in his pocket makes him feel uncomfortable.

ANDREW CHAVEZ / Editor-in-Chief

BLAIR CULWELL / Designer