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Ministers bless pets in honor of St. Francis

Students bring animals for God's touch

By JENNIFER BICKERSTAFF
Staff Reporter

Every dog has its day, and today Nova, the German Shepherd, enjoyed her blessing and treats at the TCU Blessing of the Animals.

Nova was one of the many animals at the blessing, includ-

ing chickens, cats and rabbits. All the animals mingled for an hour without too much disruption.

The blessing was a gathering of owners and pets to celebrate the lives of animals and creation.

Nova, and her owner, Leah Metzger, a junior biology major, attended the pet blessing at 5:15 p.m. outside Robert Carr Chapel.

"I'm from Alabama and hav-

ing Nova blessed makes me feel like she is protected here," Metzger said.

The blessing was in honor of Saint Francis, patron saint of animals, and on Nova's collar was an emblem of St. Francis.

The ceremony was a brief service including creation praise songs, a short sermon from Ann Smith, the TCU Ministries intern for worship, spiritual life and

pastoral care, The Prayer of St. Francis and the blessing of the animals by the Rev. Angela Kaufman and the Rev. Katie Low.

"If you think about the unconditional love your dog has for you, it's a lot like God's love," Smith said in her sermon.

The sermon was followed by individual pet blessings. Each pet trotted forward to



Jennifer Bickerstaff / Staff Reporter
Leah Metzger, a junior biology major, has her dog, Nova, blessed by the Rev. Angela Kaufman on Wednesday at TCU's first Blessing of the Animals at Robert Carr Chapel.

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Babies on board

Students work to balance academics, parenthood

By TASHA HAYTON
Staff Reporter

College can be stressful. Pregnancy during college adds even more stress. Although student pregnancies are not common at TCU, they do occur.

Jean Giles-Sims, professor of sociology, said she sees few student pregnancies a year.

"Maybe two in 500 students a year," Giles-Sims said.

Mike Russel, associate dean of Campus Life, said he deals with approximately one or two cases a year, which is not enough to require a program to help pregnant students.

"We respond case by case," Russel said.

Bethany Shields, a senior chemistry major, was pregnant during the spring 2004 semester.

She did not attend the fall 2004 semester, because she did not want people to stare.

"I consider myself a strong person, but I still did not want to deal with people looking at me and judging me," Shields said.

After having her son, Cameron, Shields returned for the spring 2005 semester, but she had to drop her classes because of an illness in her family.

Shields should have graduated in May 2005, but she now needs extra semesters to graduate because she missed a year. Currently, she is taking 10 hours.

"(Chemistry) can be quite demanding, so I am not taking a full class load," she said.

When Shields first learned that she was pregnant, she was worried about what was going to happen and afraid that she had thrown her life away. But she said that she is happy to have her life the way it is with her son and husband.

To pregnant students, she said, "Four or



Emily Goodson / Photo Editor
Senior chemistry major Bethany Shields holds her 10-month-old son, Cameron, on Wednesday in the Moudy atrium.

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Students return home to aid with recruiting

Frogs use break to promote TCU at high schools

By AMY KITCHEL
Staff Reporter

Students will visit their high schools during upcoming breaks to raise interest and awareness about the university as part of the TCU Ambassadors program.

The students will answer questions and hand out TCU literature as part of the hometown recruiting program through TCU Ambassadors, the student-run group that promotes the university.

"We get to share our experiences at TCU and communicate them at our home high schools," said Courtney Klink, TCU Ambassadors president.

Kelsey Hughes, a sophomore nursing major, said she plans to participate when she visits her hometown, Monument, Colo., this month.

"I want to go to my high school because there aren't enough people who know about TCU in my town," Hughes said. "Nobody looks out of state for college. I want them to know how great it is."

Hughes said she plans to attend a college fair at her high school.

"I think people will remember me and feel comfortable asking me questions," Hughes said.

Klink said 25 to 30 students took part in the hometown recruiting program last year.

This year, hometown recruiting organizer Nina Byers, a junior nursing major, said she hopes more will get involved.

"The hope is that high school students will relate to the ambassador and see how they have grown since leaving, and hear stories from their experience at TCU," Byers said.

Byers said she thinks hometown recruiters are important because they can answer high school students' questions.

"A lot of times, students don't feel comfortable asking admissions counselors questions about social life or dorm life," Byers said.

Klink echoed her sentiment.

"A lot of students interact with admissions counselors, but they can't be everywhere," Klink said. "We, as ambassadors, are a resource at home high schools to talk about TCU."

The bulk of hometown recruiting takes place over

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Writing Center adds section

Graduate students to receive help from professionals

By LANA HUNT
Staff Reporter

The Writing Center is doing something new this fall.

The center created a graduate writing program that caters to students working on in-depth works such as theses and dissertations, the associate director of the Writing Center said.

"I was happy to hear a specific graduate section was formalized," said Katie Low, a doctoral student at Brite Divinity School.

Graduate students used the Writing Center in the past and contributed to last year's number of tutorials, which was more than 4,000, said Dave Kuhne, associate director of the Writing Center.

"There was a demand for it, so we decided to put a structure around it," Kuhne said.

Low said she uses what she learned at the Writing Center every time she puts words on paper.

"The most helpful advice I received was on how to use a variety of verb forms," Low said. "Now I use what I learned from the consultants every time I write."

Students from a wide range of disciplines have received help from the Writing Center, including graduate students in Brite and students studying history, English and chemistry, Kuhne said.

"One of our goals is to get more graduate students in here," Billie Hara, a writing consultant, said. "And now we are offering longer time slots, so we can work with them more."

Kuhne said the writing consultants are available by

appointment to offer suggestions and advice, not to proof-read or edit the paper.

"The paper is theirs; we just make suggestions," Kuhne said. "Sometimes all they need is someone else's eye."

The consultants said they want students to know they are available to help them.

"Our reason for formalizing the graduate writing center was so graduate students could work with professionals who have been through the same thing," Kuhne said.

When working with graduates, consultants focus more on the organization of ideas, style, documentation and clarity, according to the Writing Center's September 2005 newsletter.

"We look at things that they, as writers, don't always look at," Hara said.

The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the University Recreation Center

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Allergies bug campus

Pollen, dust mites are among pests

By ADRIENNE LANG
Staff Reporter

Beautiful flowers and neatly cut grass come at a price — not just a monetary one. Their pollens cause millions to suffer from allergies each year and have for thousands of years, allergists say.

"Allergy is a sign of immune strength, not weakness. It may signify those people who have ancestors that survived parasites," said Bob Lanier, an allergist and clinical professor for the University of North Texas.

Allergies are one of the most common self-reported health issues in Fort Worth, and as many as 42 percent of Fort Worth residents suffer from them every year, according to a Fort Worth Public

Health Department press release.

TCU students are no exception.

"So far, during the spring-time at TCU, my allergies never fail to bother me," said Nick McLemore, a junior finance major. "Usually I just start sneezing and have a runny nose."

Robert Rogers, an area allergist, said Fort Worth harbors many common airborne allergens such as pollens, mold spores, dust mites and pet dander — all of which can found on campus.

"We have lots of allergens because our climate is so mild," Rogers said. "Our pollenation seasons overlap so much, we cover 10 months out of the year."

Lanier said the current allergy season in Texas is weed season.

Ragweed is the most prev-

alent weed, especially in uncultivated areas, and contains very small pollen particles that travel as far as 500 miles, he said. The allergen's presence in winter months is due to Mountain Cedar trees, which have pollen that blows up from Mexico, Lanier said.

Rogers attributed allergic reactions to a mistake made by the immune system — too much immunity.

The immune system in someone with allergies interprets the shape of harmless proteins as invaders, and it makes antibodies to fight what it interprets as harmful, he said.

"The immune system is supposed to look at a measles virus and think, 'We need to fight that,'" Rogers said, "and it's supposed to look at a dust mite and think, 'We

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