Horror
BE SCARED!

Road Trippin'

Prof. Dennis Covington
Snakes & Salvation in the South

Llano
One cool Texas Town worth visiting

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It is often said that college is among the most exciting years of one’s life. Reflecting on the past four years at Texas Tech, I can definitely agree with this statement. From those quirky professors we all know and love, to endless memories of good times with friends, to the feeling of learning something you actually will remember after the final – college certainly has given me more good memories than I could ask for. And to top it all off, the past two semesters I have had the opportunity to work on the Tech ImPRESSions staff. It has been such a thrill to work with other students and faculty advisers to produce a magazine that highlights the outstanding work of mass communications students. And, this issue is no different. From snake-charmed worship services to finding the best barbeque, there is something for everyone. I hope you enjoy this issue of Tech ImPRESSions, as I will be sad to leave it behind.

Thank you so much to all of those who make this magazine possible. Our wonderful photo editor Humberto and page designer Jill have done such an awesome job! Also, Kippra Hopper, Melissa Wofford, Pete Brevton, Randy Reddick, Todd Chambers and Liz Watts, I don’t know what we would have done without you. And of course, all the thanks in the world to Dean Hudson for his continuing support of the magazine. Last but not least, none of this could happen were it not for all of the outstanding mass communications students that put their hearts and souls into these stories and photographs—hats off to you guys. Have fun reading this issue of Tech ImPRESSions and Go Tech!

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CORRECTIONS:
Our apologies to Cory Ames of the Thrift Store Cowboys for misspelling his name in our last issue. Also, the cover photo of our last issue, pictured right, should have been credited to James Tye Stewart.

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Dennis Covington sits on the hood of his truck, photo by Erica Parzen.

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A thin man stands at the front of a crowded church in Alabama, tenderly gripping a poisonous rattlesnake between the fingers of his outstretched hands. Eyes closed, he lifts the snake into the air, oblivious to its motions as it winds and unwinds itself around his arms. He feels warmth in his chest. He feels the power of God coursing through his veins alongside the adrenaline from holding a creature that could deliver a fatal strike at any second. From handling poisonous snakes to being a war correspondent in El Salvador, Texas Tech University creative writing professor Dennis Covington always had something of a taste for danger.

In 1992, Covington began working for the New York Times, living in and covering events of the Southern United States. Little did he know at the time that one of his assignments soon would change his life.

"Every week I would call in (to my editors at the New York Times) and let them know if there were any stories in my area," Covington said. "On this particular day, it was a Friday afternoon, and I called and I told them there were three things. The story I wanted to cover was the possible federal indictment of a Reverend for attempting murder against his wife with rattlesnakes. I was the third one in this attempted-murder trial in north Alabama of this snake-handling church. It's about a religious practice called snake-handling, but into the world of this past of my own that had been hard for me to find an entrance that's like that, and that article changed my life.

While covering the trial, Covington used breaks in the proceedings to talk with some of the people who attended the proceedings to talk with some of the people who attended the service. He heard about snake handling, which involves holding poisonous snakes during religious ceremonies as a sign of penitence and trust in God.

"I became real interested because they seemed so sincere and intelligent and thoughtfull; they just didn't fall into the stereotypes that I thought they would," Covington said. "And one of them just asked me, 'Why don't you come to the service?' so I did."

During his interview, the Reverend said something to Covington that he will never forget. "The style of worship and the people who were worshiping, it was about, a personal journey, not only into the world of snake handling, but into the world of this past of my own that had found not only a deeper religiousness; he found himself."

After the trial concluded with the preacher's conviction and sentence of 99 years in prison, a book publisher saw Covington's articles and asked him to submit a proposal for a book about snake handling. Covington was hesitant at first, assuming that, like the New York Times editor, the book publisher merely wanted to make fun of poor, Southern, white people, but the publisher convinced Covington he truly was interested in the spiritual aspects of the snake-handling culture. With this focus in mind, Covington started head first into the assignment.

A New Religion

Covington and his wife, Vicki, were both raised in churches, and both left the churches during their teenage years. But for Covington, his experience with the snake-handling church opened his eyes religiously as well as culturally.

"My wife and I were drunks and nonbelievers and all kinds of crazy things," Covington said. "We sobered up about the same time in 1983, and started becoming interested in spiritual matters again, and started going back to church. We had two daughters, and we became active in our local church, and we were having a pretty good time of it. But when I went and hung out with the handlers, I realized that there was another dimension entirely of worship that was very much unlike sitting in a pew in a mainstream denominational church like we were in Birmingham, Ala. There was something … I came to the understanding that God was, as one of my snake-handling preacher friends used to say, wasn't no white-haired, old man up in the sky somewhere; he was a spirit. He was right there, he's right there with us, he's accessible. You can almost reach out and touch him. And that was something I'd never experienced before.

Covington's book about snake handling, titled "Salvation on Sand Mountain," gave him an unprecedented opportunity to share his newfound religiousness with the world.

"After that first worship session, I apologized to the minister for taking notes during the service," Covington said. "I explained that I was a writer, and I was going to write a book about snake handling, and he said, 'Oh that's fine, as long as you tell the truth. Because the Bible says that Jesus won't come again until the gospel has been spread all around the world, and this book may be a means of that happening, so go ahead.' He essentially said, 'You're part of it now; you're going to be spreading the gospel!' I thought, 'Yeah right, sure, you're crazy.' In retrospect, though, of course, that is what happened. I was fortunate enough to be able to go all over the country talking about Jesus in public places that would never have been accessible to anybody else, because I was a writer. I was a journalist; I'd written this book about this phenomenon, and people wanted to hear about it, so consequently, they got a big dose of the gospel as well.

Although experiencing the religiousness of the snake handlers changed Covington's life and views in many aspects, including religion, he no longer attends church.

"I haven't in a number of years, but that's another story entirely," Covington said. "It doesn't really have anything to do with my beliefs; my beliefs are the same, it's just the circumstances have changed. It's been hard for me to find an environment that's like that, and I don't go back to snake-handling services simply because I don't want to commit suicide — I don't want to get bit. I don't want to watch anybody do that; that's horrifying to me to think of somebody dying in church.

Covington said some of his first pricklings of fear about snake handling came from a late-night phone call.

"There were little moments along the way that I talk about in the book," Covington said. "One of them was when I got a late night call from one of my preacher friends telling me that one of our guys up in West Virginia had been horribly bit and was likely to die. He didn't die, but that was the first time I started wondering, 'Wait a minute; what have I gotten myself into? Maybe I'm in too deep.' And then of course, my editor was on my back saying, 'Dennis, you're supposed to be writing a book.' And I was actually handling serpents and flirted with the idea of becoming a snake handling preacher and all that kind of stuff. And so he was urging me to step back.

As it turned out, after Covington left the church, both his preacher and his preacher's wife died of rattlesnake bites.

Finding Himself

Through his experience with the snake handlers, Covington found not only a deeper religiousness; he found himself. "The style of worship and the people who were worshipping were part of who I was, and that became part of what the book was about, a personal journey, not only into the world of snake handling, but into the world of this past of my own that had
After Covington left the church, both his preacher and his preacher's wife died of rattlesnake bites.

been closed off to me,” Covington said. “I didn’t know who my my people were, and in the course of hanging out with the handlers and doing some genealogical research, I found out who we are: white trash, hillbillies come down from the mountains. And it was a revelation, and consequently, I think that’s what attracted me to the book, the fact that it’s an inside account of an ethnic group that has largely been ignored or misunderstood by the general public.”

Because he felt like a part of that ethnic group, Covington soon began to resent the condescending attitudes he assumed he had sparked the interest of people like the New York Times editor and the book publisher.

“The book, I say that poor, Southern whites are the only ethnic group in America not permitted to have a history,” Covington said. “We’re the last group of Americans to be made fun of with- out anybody complaining about it. Everybody else, it’s always ‘Oh, don’t say that, you’re going to offend somebody.’ Who thinks about offending white trash? Nobody. I mean, the very name that people have given us is enough. Trash, you’re just trash. You’re just white trash. You can detect a bit of anger in that.”

Covington’s concern for underprivileged people does not stop with the plight of poor Southern whites, said Lynn DiPier, a graduate student in the creative writing department and friend of Covington.

“He has a windmill he’s trying to design so that it can be ac- commodated to be an inexpensive way to help the Third World countries that don’t have potable water,” DiPier said. “He’s one of his projects. Somehow I got dragged into that. I’m not really sure how that happened except that my father had a windmill on the roof when I was a teenager, and somehow that connection was just forged. I think that was one of the things that really bonded us, too, was that we both have a real strong sense of environment, not wasting water and people who need water should have water; sort of an egalitarian thing there. Everybody should have potable water; everybody should have a roof over their head. We just think in similar ways.”

Part of his sympathy for underrepresented groups and ethnicities may come from a racial experience Covington had during his teaching career.

Covington got his first teaching job at Miles College, a historically black college in Birmingham, Ala. He had walked off the street into the office of the director of freshman English, asking if the office had an opening for a freshman English teacher. Luckily, an opening was available, and Covington immediately got the position. After working there for two years, his next job came to him in a very strange way.

“A little college in Ohio, a very fine college called the Col- legiate of Wooster, had hired a director of Freshman English, but he was white, and there was a reaction from the faculty,” Covington said. “They thought it was time to have a black director of the freshman writing program, and so they called my boss at Miles College in Alabama and asked him to refer somebody to them. Well, he referred me, and I’m white. They assumed I would be black, since it was an all-black school. And so they were very surprised when I showed up, up there.

“The Miles College job was nice, but it was clearly not going to lead anywhere normally. The job at the College of Wooster, on the other hand, was a very prestigious sort of job and would have eventually led me anywhere I wanted to go. But I never would have been interviewed for that job if they’d known I was white. So I was kind of the beneficiary of affirmative action in a real weird way.”

The Home Front

Although Covington’s snake handling behavior could have led some people to question his devotion to his family, DiPier said one thing many people may not know about Covington is what an amazing father he is. Covington’s family was by his side all the time he was involved with the snake handlers. Despite the dan- ger involved with snake handling, Covington said he was never concerned about the safety of his wife or two young daughters, Ashley and Laura, although other people frequently voiced their concerns about the situation.

“Ashley, my older daughter, wrote in it her journal at school, and one of her teachers called my wife and me in for a meeting,” Covington said. “She opened the journal and put it in front of us and said, ‘Do you want to explain this?’ Because (Ash- ley) was saying ‘My parents took me to a snake handling church service’ and all that. I think it worried other people more than it worried us. I wasn’t concerned about their safety. And Vicki, when she was asked, ‘What do you think about Dennis going to these snake handling services?’, she would say ‘Well at least he’s not in Central America.’ She’d been used to me going off to war, to cover wars, even when the kids were young.”

Despite everything else that has happened in his life, Covington said the birth of his daughters was “clearly the biggest thing that’s ever happened to me.”

El Salvador War Correspondent

Before his time with the snake handlers, in 1983, Covington made a rather drastic decision that would impact the rest of his life. He decided to go to El Salvador to see first-hand what was going on in the wars happening there at the time.

“I was not a journalist; I had never written before, so I couldn’t speak Spanish, I’d never been out of the country, but I wanted to see what a war was like,” Covington said, “so I called the guy at the New York Times who was covering El Salvador at the time, and I explained my interest and asked him what I should do. He said, ‘go to your local newspaper. Persuade the editor to give you a letter saying that you work for them, because that’s the only way you’re going to get credentials down there with a letter,’ and he said, ‘and just remember: don’t go out at night, don’t go out alone, and the only people that can help you are going to be your fellow journalists,’ which was great advice.”

After pestering the editor of the Birmingham Post-Herald for several magazines.

“Some magazine articles gave Covington the chance to work for the New York Times, which then led to his book deal. Covington said he does not have any regrets about writing “Salvation on Sand Mountain” or the events that led him to write the book, which was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1995.

“My editor told me at the time, he said, ‘Dennis, this is a book you were born to write,’ and I believe that,” Covington said. “There’ll never be another one for me. There was just a convergence of spirituality, love for snakes – you know, I’ve always loved snakes, danger – it appealed to that side of me that craves that ele- ment of risk that’s involved, and I got to write about it. I mean, it couldn’t have been better.”

After Covington’s experience as a snake handler and war correspondent, being an English professor may sound like quite a boring job, but he has found ways to spice up even that aspect of his life.

When he was a young teacher, Covington found himself assisting a professor at the College of Wooster to teach first-year journalism students how to write about violent acts they witnessed.

“It was 1976, and there had not been any school shootings or anything like that,” Covington said. “One of the senior professors wanted me to, because I was young, pretend to be a student in his intro. to Journalism class. We were to get into this little argument, and at one point I was to pull out a gun and shoot him, and he would fall dead, and I would run out of the room. We used a gun and some blanks from the theater department, did it, and of course, the students were absolutely horrified. It was very realistic; this guy was a good actor. Then, he roused himself and got up off the floor, and said, ‘OR, write it up. You saw it happen; tell me what you saw?’ It was a great assignment, but of course, nowadays, we would have been arrested and sued and fired and everything else.”

From handling poisonous snakes to reporting on wars in far- away countries, and even in teaching, Covington always has had a taste for excitement and danger. And though many people never would know it by looking at the seemingly quiet, passive man, a side of him always will strive for the next thing to get his blood rushing.
As I stood staring up at a giant blue head towering over my 5’2” frame, I felt dwarfed by its size. I wondered how many students have come and gone through Texas Tech University and had not taken this chance to be stared at by an extremely large head in the quiet corner of the Museum of Texas Tech. I looked at the other finds in the same room: dinosaur bones, African art and modern sculpture.

The building on the corner of Fourth Street and Indiana Avenue has housed the artwork of both Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol. Inside a large hall, the skeletons of several dinosaurs are proffered shelter. The Museum also houses an extensive collection of Texas Tech memorabilia.

Patrice Fay, the museum education specialist, said that although the kids come to the museum to see the dinosaurs, the big draw for college students are the laser shows at the Museum of Texas Tech. Several pictures of the first Texas Tech athletic teams are housed between museum walls, as are some interactive maps showing timelines of the establishment and growth of the university and the surrounding town.

“There’s a lot coming up,” said Fay, mentioning that the museum is completely booked until 2010. For more information, visit www.depts.ttu.edu/museum for an exhibition list, Moody Planetarium show times, and an events schedule.

Another great (and free) way to spend free time in Lubbock is to take a tour of some of the local wineries. The Caprock Winery and Llano Estacado Winery, among others, are the laser shows at the Museum’s place.

“The Museum of Texas Tech is the only general museum in 200 miles. We have art, science and history.”—Patrice Fay

The first time I visited the Museum of Texas Tech, I did not go by choice. In fact, I groaned the entire drive, cursing my professor silently for making me sacrifice my Saturday for a school project. I have been back during the past three years to consider myself quite the connoisseur of cheap entertainment as I have developed a list of unusual or economical activities to do with friends or on a date in Lubbock. Some are free, others are cheap.

The Museum of Texas Tech University is always free to the public, and was located in Holden Hall until the 1970s. A visit to the museum is a great way to learn about Lubbock and Texas Tech. Several pictures of the first Texas Tech athletic teams are housed between museum walls, as are some interactive maps showing timelines of the establishment and growth of the university and the surrounding town.

Although some may scoff at the idea, the Prairie Dog Town ranks fifth on the list of places that tourists want to see in Lubbock.

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The tours of the building and grape fields of each winery can be both informative and romantic as a guide takes one through damp and sweet-smelling rooms, teaching about the making of wine. At the end of each tour, free samples of several wines are offered to guests.

For more information about either winery or to get tour times, visit www.llanowine.com or www.caprockwinery.com.

Picture-perfect days in Lubbock provide the ideal occasion to partake in plenty of fun and free outdoor activities in Lubbock. The first is an odyssey called Legacy Play Village. Nancy Neill, public relations official for the Lubbock Parks and Recreation Department, said the play village was funded and built by the Junior League of Lubbock.

“It is a community playground built by children and their parents, for the children of Lubbock,” said Neill. “It is a very special place.”

The Village has fort-style, wooden structures and medieval bridges. Each section of the castle is equipped with turrets, dungeons and lookout areas. The park has plenty of room to run and hide and is the perfect location for a game of hide-and-go-seek. The scene may remind a college student of his or her childhood, and nothing brings those memories flooding back better than the adult-sized swings. The best time to visit the park is when one feels playful and needs a break from grown-up life for a while.

Another great way to spend time outdoors is by taking a trip to Prairie Dog Town. Although the idea of a Prairie Dog habitat protected by the city is not a unique concept in West Texas, the one in Lubbock is still something everyone needs to see. The park is complete with a viewing area, a picnic table, and plenty of scurrying critters to watch. Although some may scoff at the idea, the Prairie Dog Town ranks fifth on the list of places that tourists want to see in Lubbock.

“I remember when I was growing up, if we had relatives coming in, we would usually take them out to Prairie Dog Town,” Neill said. Texas Tech students will not want to miss the chance to experience something that is so wonderfully, typically West Texas.

Prairie Dog Town, located inside Mackenzie Park, is not the only exciting thing to do in the area. Mackenzie Park is also the location of a highly recognized Frisbee golf course, as well as a perfect spot for feeding Lubbock’s seasonal visitors, the Canada Geese. Feeding the geese is a great date idea, costing as little as a loaf of bread. The park always has ducks to feed, but the best time to see the Canada Geese is between the first week in November and late February.”The geese are very brave, they’ll come up and peck you if
they think you’ve got food in your hand,” Neill said, smiling.

Students might be surprised at how often they want to go back to Mackenzie Park. Several other little-known locations around Lubbock may be of interest to college students looking for some outdoor recreation. Multiple Lubbock lakes are stocked with fish, and with a valid fishing license, anyone is allowed to take advantage of the various species that live in the waters. Some lakes allow fishing from a canoe or kayak on the water.

On the opposite end of the spectrum are the two skateboarding parks that have been built in Lubbock. One is located in McAlister Park, and the other, Strubbs. Both are equipped with all the skating essentials. For more information about all 75 of Lubbock’s parks, visit www.playlubbock.com.

A Main Event was built recently on the outskirts of Lubbock off of Brownfield Highway. Main Event features glow golf, laser tag, bowling and games, but is a little pricey for a college budget. Luckily, Main Event has two very good deals. One is on Monday night, when every activity is unlimited from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. after a $10 entry fee. The other is on Tuesday night, when every activity is half-off. These nights can make a very expensive evening turn into a very inexpensive evening, and Main Event also can be a great place for a date. The interior has a casual atmosphere, and laser tag is a good way to exhibit athletic abilities. Another good place to showcase astounding sports skills are the batting cages located at Putt-Putt Golf, off of 29th Drive and Slide Avenue, where the games are inexpensive and all of the equipment for the cages is provided. One token gets 25 balls, and five tokens cost $5. An extended visit can include Putt-Putt miniature golf and Go-Karts. For hours of operation and pricing for Main Event and Putt-Putt locations, visit www.maineventusa.net or www.zumafuncenters.com.

The Science Spectrum and Omni Theater: Featuring movies like “Dinosaurs Alive” and “Wild Chimpanzees” on the giant screen, the films have elements of education and adventure. Although the Science Spectrum is geared toward children, the Science Spectrum has many activities for those who are ‘kids at heart.’ Visit www.sciencespectrum.com for details.

Stars and Stripes Drive-In Theater: A cheaper version of the traditional theater, this movie location only charges $5 a person for a double feature. With a car full of snacks and a working radio, this adventure is inexpensive and very fun. To learn the rules and get the location, go to www.driveinusa.com.

The Haven Animal Shelter has several programs for volunteers that include visiting and playing with the pets of the shelter while serving as much-needed assistance to the full-time staff. When college students are not ready to make the commitment of getting a dog or cat of their own, a great way to get some animal time is with the no-kill shelter in Lubbock. Haven sponsors a foster home program that allows participants to take a pet home for a week. To get details about volunteering at the Haven, visit www.havenc.acs.org.

The Underwood Center for the Arts caters to students who are in touch with their artistic sides. The art scene in Lubbock is great, and the Underwood Center is the West Texas home to a variety of artistic endeavors. With six visual art galleries and programs for performance art, theater, literature and film, the Underwood Center has a hand in all aspects of the creative world. To get involved with the many events sponsored by the Underwood Center, visit www.lluac.org.
It's near sundown. A young, naked girl sprints into the ocean for a swim. Her boyfriend lies peacefully on the beach. The camera zooms in under water, showing her legs flapping back and forth. Then, as she is just above the water, she is jerked under a few times. When she comes up, she screams loudly, but no one hears her cries. Finally, she is sucked under the water by an unknown source, until locals are attacked by a huge shark. The movie “Jaws” kept people off the white sands of the beach for a while.

Society likes a good scare. Fear occurs when “people attempt to explain mysteries beyond their understanding,” writes E. Edwards, from James B. Weaver's book, “Horror Films: Current Research on Audience Preferences and Reactions.” Horror began with 18th century gothic novels and moved onto the 19th century stage. Stage became so popular because plays were able to incorporate fog, darkness and live villains—enough to cause a chill in the audience. Edgar Allen Poe, one of the early authors of horror, wrote some terrifying novels that would mark the beginning of entertainment horror. Modern day novelist Stephen King is the most popular author alive today and is known for his thriller-horror novels, several of which have been made into films. His work continues to be adapted into films. His work continues to be adapted to the screen.

Glenn Cummins, an electronic media and communications professor in the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech University, wrote his master’s dissertation on horror films and studied the negative effects they had on society, such as the violence and sexual content that comes with the films. Society, he says, enjoys the suspense of horror films.

“One of the things with the research that I’ve looked at is the generation of suspense and the fact that we actually enjoy suspense. We enjoy the resolution of suspense,” he said. “Horror films are an excellent way of exercising that, building suspense and then giving people that payoff at the end. A lot of research looks at the physiological arousal we get from experiencing suspense and the resolution of that suspense.”

Cummins is not the only professor at Texas Tech who specializes in horror films.

Stephen Graham Jones, an associate English professor at Texas Tech, is a successful author in the horror genre and says even if he sees a bad horror movie, he always gets something from the film. He believes horror is one of the most honest genres because our fears are activated and fear is what makes us human. “We develop these big old brains, but the claws and teeth and sense of smell and everything,” he says. “I think through the evolution, we’ve been terrified of being eaten.”

Horror films with the most blood and gore are called “slasher” movies. Slasher movies are those films in which a “psycho killer … slashes to death a string of mostly female victims, one by one, until he is subdued and killed, usually by the one girl who has survived,” writes C.J. Clover, from Weaver’s book. Women seem to be targets in slasher films such as the “Scream” trilogy and “I Know What You Did Last Summer.” Such weapons as chainsaws, knives, saws, axes and other tools are used to emit splatter, which makes the gore even gorier. According to New York Times film critic Janet Maslin, “The carnage is usually preceded by some sort of erotic prelude: footage of pretty young bodies in the shower, or teens changing into nighties for the slumber party, or anything that otherwise wills the audience into a mildly sensual mood.” The fact that sexual content and violent content are related causes Cummins to call movies, such as “Hostel” and “Saw,” “torture porn.”

Cummins says sexual content in horror films is the biggest red flag, especially because sexual and violent content are so nearly related in horror films. They are related most often when a scene of sexual content comes before a scene with violent content but are not thematically related. Cummins says research has shown that viewers are more aroused when watching some violence because sexual content has preceded the scenes.

“You really like roller coasters when you’re younger, not when you’re older. That might work for horror, too.”

—Stephen Graham Jones
“T
there are some good horror movies and horror novels that end
sadly, but generally, if you want quality, you have to capture the
audience’s imagination. We need to see evil conquered, I think. It’s
something we need, like a religion. It satisfies us really deeply.”
—Stephen Graham Jones

“I think there’s the idea that you grow out of horror. You finally
grow up and become a true person, so you don’t watch slashers
anymore,” he says. “It’s the same thing with roller coasters. Some
people don’t want to ride roller coasters anymore. You get the vis-
cerall thrill, the rush of it, without the real danger. You really like
roller coasters when you’re younger, not when you’re older. That
might work for horror, too.”

Tutor says in Weaver’s book that one of the biggest thrills audi-
ences get out of horror films is asking themselves the question,
“Who will the central villain get next and by what method?” Cum-
mings says horror films are formulaic in that they have been re-
peated for decades. The audience knows what is going to happen
in horror films because the audience is mostly male. He says the
audience that watches the horror film genre is about 60 percent
male, and the films are more focused toward adolescents and those
in their early 20s.

Jones quotes Dario Argento, an Italian film director, producer
and screenwriter. When Argento was asked why he has so many
beautiful women killed in his films, he said, “Well, if I had to choose
between seeing a beautiful woman killed on screen and a woman
who’s not beautiful killed on screen, I would choose a beautiful
woman.” Jones believes one last woman always is left in horror
films to conquer the villain. He says objectification of women is not
fair and that a bigger twist is when the girl becomes the warrior
and takes down the alien at the end of a horror film because the
plot shows a reversal in societal roles. “Men are assigned the role of
protector and soldier, where women are assigned to be the nurtur-
ers and the caregivers,” he explains. “But then, to have a woman
step into that male role is a lot bigger narrative reversal than if you
have a guy do it.” Jones believes the victims are normally female
in horror films because the audience is mostly male. He says the
audience that watches the horror film genre is about 60 percent
male, and the films are more focused toward adolescents and those
in their early 20s.

People are normal in being afraid of the villains, but they also
are liked in the same way a soap opera star or a character from
the sitcom “Friends” is liked, Cummins says. “A lot of people look
at those relationships and it’s interesting to see the same types of
relationships with horror villains because those are the bad guys.
Normally, you don’t see that type of relationship being developed
with those types of characters, than with liked characters,” he says.
“Horror films are in paradox in that people cheer for the bad guy.
They cheer for Freddy Kruger or Jason Borghese or any of those
types of characters. There’s a certain audience for horror films that
enjoy the creativity involved in horror.”

Jones says the creators of the horror genre, the screenwriters
and the novelists, must be inclined to generate horror because at
one point in their lives, they must have been afraid of something,

mity. When people go to the movies, they go for a good scare. They
go for entertainment. However, a character, such as Freddy Kruger,
naturally would make anyone cautious, especially if he is chasing
you with his multiple knife-like fingers and a burned face.

In addition to the plot of a villain chasing his victims, outside
agents help the suspense, such as eerie music, as was the case in
both Bernard Herrmann’s “Psycho” theme and John Williams’ “Jaws”
score. Every horror film may have a certain common element that
when the viewer hears the music, their senses are triggered and
they immediately can relate that element with fear or terror.
Peter Martins, an assistant professor of music theory in Texas
Tech’s School of Music, says music can enhance a mood that the
visuals are projecting on screen but also can create a mood or pre-
dispose an audience to a feeling that has not yet been confirmed.

Just the opening credits of a horror film, even if it’s just white
letters on a black background—that music will tell you that scary
“When people hear it, they associate that sound, the half step, the low register, they associate that with ‘Jaws,’” Martens says.

“Suddenly, the symphony that has absolutely nothing to do with sharks makes people think of ‘Jaws,’ and it makes people scared.”

—Peter Martens

Martens says music from ‘Jaws’ or ‘Psycho’ is so memorable to audiences because of the association with the visual from each movie.

“When people hear it, they associate that sound, the half step, the low register, they associate that with ‘Jaws,’” he says. “Suddenly, the symphony that has absolutely nothing to do with sharks makes people think of ‘Jaws,’ and it makes people scared. The ‘Psycho’ music is like that kind of streaking string sound that’s just a very unique tambour and set of pitches, and so it gets in your head pretty quickly.”

He believes string instruments are effective in horror films because they have a continuous pitch and can produce something odd and disturbing. He also says any kind of percussion instrument works because percussion is the “special effects section” of an orchestra. “Sounds that you can make under the (percussion) heading are so diverse, you can basically bang on anything and it can fit in the percussion section. You can get all kinds of strange sounds,” he says. “As far as jolt, the brass section of an orchestra is going to give a punch, so I guess that might figure in to it.”

Because music in horror films contributes to the frightful feeling audiences often receive, children do not often watch horror films. Cummins says some of the research done with children and horror films focuses on their fright reactions and how they respond to fright. “Sometimes horror films have very lasting impressions,” he says.

Research shows that children age 3 to 8 are frightened by animals, the dark, supernatural beings, such as ghosts, monsters, and witches, and anything that looks strange or moves suddenly. Children age 9 to 12 have fears related to personal injury, physical destruction and death of relatives. Adolescents, age 13 and older, fear personal injury and physical destruction, school fears, and fears regarding political, economic and global issues. Much of the research focuses on children and their cognitive development and how children respond more to visceral monsters as opposed to intangible things, Cummins says. “A good example of that, in the mid-’80s, there was a made-for-TV movie about nuclear war and youngest
children weren’t bothered in the least by that because nuclear holocaust isn’t something a small child can grasp,” he said. “Whereas the older children who were able to understand what happened had much stronger responses to it because when you have that greater cognitive development, you see them responding to different types of horror and different types of fear.”

Martens said he knows of research that has been done on music in films. “My field of research is music perception, and there are people who do studies with film music and will take a scene from a horror movie and put different music with it and engage people’s responses to it,” he says. “It is a field of psychological experimentation that exists.”

A lot of research in horror focuses on looking at the negative effects of films in society, Cummins says. One popular piece of research looks at adolescents and their gender-role socialization. Horror films, in essence, give young adult males the ability to be brave, and they can display courage when faced with fright. Young adult females can display fear and be afraid, but are able to lean on males for safety and develop romantic relationships. The reason horror films are so popular and will never die out is because a new fresh face of adolescents always will want to see a new and modernized version of a horror movie.

“That’s why you see remakes like the Texas Chainsaw Massacre - because young adults at that age weren’t alive 20 years ago when the first one was made (and have never seen the movie), even though it is formulaic. They are using the same formulas over and over again, and you’ve got new audiences every year that are willing to go see these types of films who may not be quite as familiar with those formulas.”

Every now and then, society will see a horror film that tries to go against convention and that formula, Cummins says. Currently, more traditional horror films are being made, but in a few years, the films will change again. People who talk about how “Saw” and “Hostel” are extremely violent and extremely misogynistic are not seeing anything new because horror was similar to present-day films in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Jones believes society has changed its view of death and horror because of the visual images in horror films, becoming desensitized to the violence. In the movie “Psycho,” seeing the blood going down the drain would have freaked people out when it was made in 1960, but the scary scenes would just be a joke now. Movies like “Saw” and “Hostel” are commonplace in the amount of blood and gore that exists in horror films today.

“Jaws” is just one of the many movies that give society a good scare and makes audiences think twice about going into the ocean. Similarly, studies have shown that many women were afraid to take showers after they saw “Psycho,” and they would peak behind the shower curtain just to make sure no one was waiting for them with a knife.

Some of the themes of horror include abandonment, not having control over one’s life, revenge, cannibalism, and a dependency to distrust our fellow humans, Jones says. “Horror is one of the most redemptive. After slogging through a 100-page novel with 95 pages of blood and gore and guts and death, betrayal and everything, just to shape the story properly, you’ve got to give the reader five pages of sunlight, so most always ends happily,” he says. “There are some good horror movies and horror novels that end sadly, but generally, if you want quality, you have to capture the audience’s imagination. We need to see evil conquered, I think. It’s something we need, like a religion. It satisfies us really deeply.”

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Llano: City of Beauty

Llano, located 75 miles northwest of Austin on the Llano River along Texas Highway 71 in the Hill Country, is the largest town in Llano County. A town full of history, Llano offers visitors an opportunity to escape the fast-paced, hustle 'n bustle atmosphere of the big-city life. A hunter's utopia, Llano is the deer capital of Texas, and according to the Texas Hill Country Visitor Center Web site, the Llano Basin has the greatest density of deer in the United States. The town is home to many historic buildings, as well as antique shops, clothing shops and a variety of family-owned restaurants.

Driving into Llano going east on Texas Highway 71 is truly a scenic trip. It is a small taste of what natural and pure landscape is left in Texas, untouched and uncorrupted by modern-day urban development and expansion. Out here, there is no construction, no major three-lane highways, and no gallery malls. The area has a very rustic, tranquil feel. One can look for miles and see only country landscape and sky. The town itself is a very agreeable size. A census taken in 2000 revealed the population of Llano was just 3,325 residents.

Arriving on the west side of town, the sweet, unmistakable scent of hickory-smoked barbeque fills and flavors the air, leaving no trace. The meat itself is moist and tender. The smoked flavor is a small taste of heaven to those who eat at Cooper's religiously.

Cooper's is a very rustic, rural place to eat. Visitors sit to dine on picnic tables. The floors are concrete, and the dining area is not at all fancy. The simplicity of Cooper's creates a very enjoyable, comfortable atmosphere for customers to enjoy their barbeque. On the east side of town, Lairds, another barbeque restaurant, serves smoked brisket and sausage sandwiches. As the barbeque capital of the world, Llano promises not to disappoint.

Llano is full of family-owned restaurants, several located along Main Street across from the town square. Some of these popular food stops include Arnez on the Square, Stonewell's Pizza, and Wings and Things. Stonewell's offers a small-town atmosphere, with reasonable prices and a variety of foods. For those wanting fast food, Llano also has several fast-food joints spread throughout town, such as Sonic, Dairy Queen and Subway.

Llano is a popular destination for hunters during the winter months, evident by the “Welcome Hunters” banners hung over the streets coming into town. The region is abundant in deer and other wildlife. Rarely can I drive around town at night without sighting at least a couple of deer, who also sometimes can be seen during the daytime. At night, the car headlights reflect off their eyes and sometimes are the only warning or indication that deer are in the area. Llano has many lodging locations tailored to satisfy hunters visiting the town. Outside the Super 8 grocery store, hunting stands sit out for sale.

Many outdoor recreational opportunities are available in and around Llano. Aside from hunting, visitors and Llanites can enjoy fishing in the Llano River during the fall. As well, the Llano River provides plenty of recreational opportunities during the summer months, such as canoeing and kayaking. During the summer, residents can enjoy a relaxing time by the riverside. Kayaking down the river is a unique experience, a peaceful, solitary adventure where one can enjoy the simplicity and tranquility of nature. As the water laps against the rocks on the river bank, the sounds calm and soothe the soul in a therapeutic feeling.

The river flows through the center of town. The Roy Inks Bridge connects the northern and southern sections of town. The bridge, named after former Llano Mayor Roy Inks, was built in 1935 after the original bridge was swept away in a flood in 1892, according to texascoupons.com. Below the bridge is a concrete dam running across the river. The dam creates a steady flow of water over the small waterfall splashing over the dam wall. The view below and around the bridge is very picturesque.

One thing that makes Llano so unique from other towns is its location. In Robinson City Park, two miles west of downtown Llano, the sunset magnifies the beauty of the river during the summertime. The golden-orange light reflects off the water creating a glow, illuminating the river’s surroundings. The warmth of the light creates a warm, lonely feel to the river. Wildlife around the river is abundant. Around the park, geese waddle near the river bank, squawking at intruders. The park is a wonderful setting for a family picnic, providing many shaded areas with picnic tables and playgrounds close by. Areas are designated in the park for both fishing and swimming during the warmer months. The river runs through the center of town, acting as the heart of Llano, sustaining the life of wildlife and residents. The river is lined with granite boulders, cactus and sand.

Another outdoor opportunity available to those in Llano is exploring the Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, which is located north of Fredericksburg on the line between Gillespie and Llano County. Visitors can hike to the peak of Enchanted Rock, as well as camp out in the surrounding area. At the peak of Enchanted Rock, the picturesque view goes for miles. The top is very quiet and solitary. The whispering wind fills my ears as the green landscape floods my eyes, creating quite a breathtaking sight during the summer months. According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Web site, the rock’s elevation is 425 feet high from ground level, or 1,825 feet above sea level.

One thing that makes Llano so unique from other towns is its location.
Llano has a rich supply of various mineral deposits. According to the llanotx.com website, Llano County has 241 different types of rocks, including garnet, quartz, amethyst and traces of gold. Llano also has a unique type of granite, called “Opalene,” better known as “Llanite.” Llanite is “brown granite with blue crystals and rusty-pink feldspar,” according to hillcountryinfo.com. The different types of granites all have a red or pink color spotted throughout the rocks. Some granite rocks are dark gray or black with red spots. Other types of granite are mostly a reddish-pink color with black and white spots.

Llano is a place in which history lives in the present. History is around every corner. History is treasured and preserved here. The town was founded Feb. 1, 1856, when Llano County was established, according to the Handbook of Texas Online. After a series of fires during the late 1890s, several historical places were destroyed. The fire was assumed to have been set in order to collect insurance on unprofitable properties. However, many historical buildings and landmarks are still in place today.

The Badu House, originally Llano’s First National Bank, was built in 1891, and was purchased later in 1898 by N.J. Badu, noted mineralogist who discovered the rare form of granite, Llanite. The Badu House has been renovated and is now utilized as a restaurant, bar and events facility. The building is built with granite and red brick, and it has a gated backyard area for outdoor events, such as weddings and parties. In the backyard, the peaceful sounds of trickling water can be heard from a small fountain, formed out of the same rocks used to make the wall enclosing the backyard. Little longhorn decorations are present throughout the property. The longhorn head is on the tops of the metal fence surrounding part of the backyard and is imprinted on the wooden bar area.

Another historical building is the old jailhouse, which is now closed. The jailhouse was erected in 1895. The gray granite used to build the exterior walls of the jailhouse actually were quarried in Llano County, according to a plaque on the property. The nickname given to the jailhouse by many former prisoners was the “Red-Top,” which referred to the red roof of the building. Today, the four-story, old jailhouse sits fenced in at the corner of Oatman and E. Hayne Street. Some other historical locations and markers around town include the Llano County Granite Industry, the Frank Teich monument works at the Llano Courthouse, the Llano County family album and the Llano County Historical Museum.

Llano is a place where history is kept alive, natural landscape is treasured and preserved, and the town is welcoming and accommodating to all visitors. The rugged beauty of the Texas Hill Country mixed with the friendly, small-town atmosphere is the perfect escape from modern-day, fast-paced city life.

Kayaking down the river is a unique experience, a peaceful, solitary adventure where one can enjoy the simplicity and tranquility of nature.

Llano Historical Information:

- www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/LL/hgl9.html
- www.llanochamber.org/
- www.texasescapes.com/TexasHillCountryTowns/LLanoTexas/LlanoTexas.htm
- www.hillcountryinfo.com/texas_towns/llano.html
- www.llanotx.com/tourism/LlanoRiver1.htm
I was on my way to do photography for a class project. The Caprock Canyons were my destination, and I was going to find a hotel to bunk in before rising early to capture the beauty of the Canyons. The rocks were a dirty red and left a glow as the sun hit them on its way down for the night. I needed to get away, see new places that were different from what I see every day.

What I thought was murderers and rapists turned out to be beautiful green pastures with irrigation systems hovering over them, and families of cows and horses who were munching on the grass. As I stood at the top of a huge canyon, I felt a sense of freedom. On the way back to the hotel after photographing, I realized that last night's dark drive had falsely led me to believe that I was surrounded by danger. I asked if he knew about the hotel, he immediately called and had "his ol' buddy" open it up for me. At this point, it was much past dark, and I was starting to worry what I was getting myself into. I took a breath, subdued my fears, and went forth to my final destination, Hotel Turkey.

When I went to the doors this time, they were open, and I walked in to a completely dark room except for the light beaming from the one computer at a small checkout desk. I walked up to the tech imPRESSions

A weathered sign hung on the left side of the road, its white paint chipping, and read "Hotel Turkey, A Country Bed and breakfast." I turned down the bumpy road, my chances for getting a hotel in this town were lacking, I drove on. Ten miles up a scary, dark road, I reached my destination in Turkey, Texas. A weathered sign hung on the left side of the road, its white paint chipping, and read "Hotel Turkey, A Country Bed and breakfast." I turned down the bumpy road, and drove up to a dark, red brick building with American and Texas flags waving proudly from the building. After finding the doors locked, I was forced to go to a gas station for help. A big man at the gas station was wearing grease-stained overalls. When I asked if he knew about the hotel, he immediately called and had "his ol' buddy" open it up for me. At this point, it was much past dark, and I was starting to worry what I was getting myself into. I took a breath, subdued my fears, and went forth to my final destination, Hotel Turkey.

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Finally, I creaked back up the stairs to my room so that I could get ready. For the first time, I really took notice of my surroundings because it was light in the room, and I was not rushing in and out. The upstairs lobby was very cozy and reminded me a bit of my grandmother's house. The decorations consisted of old dolls and dresses that sat on big chests or hung on the ceiling. The dresses looked as though they had been hand sewn many years ago, and the dolls' faces were faded. Many doors led to different rooms, and each one had a mini chalkboard hanging outside it with the number of the room scribbled on it.

Back in room No. 7, I took the time to look at the place that kept me so safe that night before. The decorations around the room told a story. Quilts covered the ceilings of each room, each one different than the last. In room No. 7, a white quilt had pink flowers on it, and then another multicolor quilt was hung from the ceilings above. Across from the bed, a paper with words on it hung framed on the wall. The story was about a doctor who lived in Turkey, and actually lived many years in the very room I was staying in and became family to the owners of the hotel. After passing away, his wife stayed in touch with the hotel personnel and eventually gave many of his work tools and memorable belongings to them. This memoir of Texas. A weathered sign hung on the left side of the road, its white paint chipping, and read "Hotel Turkey, A Country Bed and breakfast." I turned down the bumpy road, and drove up to a dark, red brick building with American and Texas flags waving proudly from the building. After finding the doors locked, I was forced to go to a gas station for help. A big man at the gas station was wearing grease-stained overalls. When I asked if he knew about the hotel, he immediately called and had "his ol' buddy" open it up for me. At this point, it was much past dark, and I was starting to worry what I was getting myself into. I took a breath, subdued my fears, and went forth to my final destination, Hotel Turkey.

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Decorations in the dining room at Hotel Turkey.
the corner of the room. The bathtub was not attached to any walls, but rather had legs and set off the wall a little. While different from what I was used to, I had no trouble at all with trying it out before heading home.

After soaking in what seemed to me to be the best bath I had ever experienced, I finally dragged myself out of the tub, finished packing and closed the door to room No. 7 of Hotel Turkey. On my way out, I couldn’t help but notice that the doors to most of the other rooms were open as most guests already had headed home. Being nosey, I decided to peek in those rooms and see what stories they had to tell. One room reminded me of a ranch house with its western feel and wooden furniture. Another room was American-themed, and another had a feel that brought me back to Granny’s house. Each room came to life in its own way and brought me a new adventure.

It turned out that Hotel Turkey did in fact have a history. The hotel was built in 1927 and brought a safe, cozy place for traveling salesmen to sleep when passing through. In more recent years, and through a switch in owners, Hotel Turkey has been refurbished and now functions as a bed and breakfast as well as a museum for those who stay there. The actual town of Turkey even has a history in that it is the proud home of the “King of Western Swing,” Bob Wills. The town celebrates him through a museum, a monument, and a day that is dedicated to his life.

As I creaked down the steps one last time on my way out to the car, I could not help but feel that I now had my camera in hand to snap some memories of this wonderful place. Upon entering the dining room, the grinning man continued singing, accompanied by a new woman who had apparently recently joined him. Three young teens were sitting at a table relaxed as if they had been there every day of their lives. I snapped a few shots, nodded my head as a goodbye and turned toward the door, but a sign caught my eye and I glanced back to read it. The sign read, “He who enters here is a stranger but once.” It was true, I felt like I was no longer a stranger at all. What I had thought was a place leading to my death turned out to be a place I wish that I too could call home, just like the doctor who had once graced room No. 7.

I jumped in my car with a sense of sadness as I turned away from the red brick hotel and down the road. I passed the white paint sign that was chipped and headed back toward Lubbock. Who knew that in one day I could experience so much: canyons that were full of captivating beauty, and a little hotel that made me feel safe and that made me wish I did not have to go. The tall man’s smile flashed through once more as I drove on back to Lubbock singing a Frank Sinatra tune in my head.
According to the Census Bureau, Lubbock's cost of living index score of 204.3, Manhattan's per capita money income is 18.8 percent lower than the national average, while its per capita money income is 18.8 percent lower than the rest of the nation, according to the United States Census.

According to the Census Bureau, the cost of living index is based on 2005 information that factors in the cost of groceries, health care, housing, transportation, utilities, and miscellaneous expenses in selected metropolitan areas in the country. The national average cost of living is given a base score of 100 and selected metropolitan areas are given a percentile score based on the national score, with Lubbock receiving an 84.8, according to the Census Bureau.

While lower than the national average, Lubbock's cost of living also is approximately 9.3 percent lower than the average of the six Big 12 Conference cities with available data, including: Austin, Texas; Boulder, Colo.; Denver metropolitan area; Lawrence, Kan.; Norman, Okla.; Oklahoma City metropolitan area; and Waco, Texas, according to the Census Bureau.

Peter Summers, an assistant professor of economics at Texas Tech, said he believes a cost of living index can be an effective tool for a person with a particular job or income level considering relocating. "It may not be the most important thing, but certainly, say if you're comparing a similar sort of job in a couple of different areas, and if you've got options, then cost of living is one thing that certainly people look at in making that decision," he said.

However, Summers said factors like average expected income also should be considered when comparing cities that can differ drastically.

According to the Census Bureau, though the cost of living in Manhattan in New York City is almost two and a half times higher than Lubbock's $17,511.

Lubbock's per capita money income is 18.8 percent less than the national average of $21,587, and 11.6 percent less than the six Big 12 cities average of $19,805.83, compared to Lubbock's 9.3 percent lower cost of living than the Big 12, according to the Census Bureau.

The Lubbock Chamber of Commerce also puts ACCRA's cost of living index to use when designing pamphlets with relocation information for families and businesses, said Shelby Shaw, communications director for the Chamber of Commerce.

While comparing the cost of living in different communities can help narrow a person's or business's choices of where to relocate, Shaw said she believes other factors can sometimes play a bigger role depending on each individual circumstance. "The cost of living is probably factored into (an individual's, family's, or business's) decision to relocate and move here," she said. "At the same time, though, I think things like good jobs, property taxes and good schools can play as big, if not a bigger part, in that decision."

Shaw said she also believes measuring the cost of living by itself can be misleading due to other factors, including the varying average income in each city, which is not accounted for in the cost of living.

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The Chamber of Commerce also references information from the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, including the cost of doing business in the Hub City, when comparing Lubbock to other cities, said Shaw.

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Texas Tech students considering moving to another city after graduation may find their money will not buy them as much elsewhere.
At first glance, Gina Garcia seems to be walking the beaten path of her fellow college students: a path lined with academics, football games, and social gatherings. Still, such trademarks of collegiate life barely scratch the surface of the avenue Garcia has paved for herself. Like a handful of Texas Tech University students, Garcia balances her schoolwork with marriage and children.

Lane Powell, Ph.D., an expert on marriage education with Texas Tech’s Department of Human Development and Family Studies, said she observes some of her students marrying young, and she has advice for them. Young newlyweds, she said, should learn to be flexible because personality and priorities are not always firm in the early adulthood stage. Planning special time to spend together as husband and wife amid busy schedules can aid in a progressive and healthy marriage.

Garcia, a senior human development and family studies major from Lubbock, married her husband, Martin, three years ago, when she was 23 years old and he was 25 years old.

“We spent all our time together and couldn’t see ourselves with anyone else,” she smiled. “Almost from the very beginning, he became my best friend. It got to the point of, ‘let’s do it.’”

Garcia’s mother was thrilled with the news of the young couple’s engagement, and the family members who initially viewed the pair as too young to take the plunge are now happy with the union. Yet, Garcia said juggling college with a blossoming family can be a challenge.

“I see life a little differently than before. There are someone’s needs and wants that come first. No matter if I have a test, I put Ryllie first.”

—Gina Garcia

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“The biggest struggle for me is wanting to enjoy college and also putting someone else before me,” she said. The balance of wanting to study while also wanting to be with her partner can be tricky, she commented.

Shortly after the couple tied the knot, Garcia became pregnant with Ryllie, a bundle of joy, she said, who added a new dynamic to her already tight schedule. Although Garcia was challenged with tending to her classes while being pregnant, she laughed when she said perhaps the situation foreshadowed the birth of a clever daughter. “I joke that (Ryllie) is so smart because I was pregnant when I was at school, and she learned from osmosis,” Garcia chuckled, saying that when she studies, she tends to hold her textbooks close to her stomach.

Ryllie’s birth meant Garcia had to put her education on hold; she chose to take a semester off to care for her newborn daughter. Now back in school, Garcia expects to graduate in December 2008, yet the new mom will not hesitate to postpone the date for her daughter. “I see life a little differently than before,” she said. “There are someone’s needs and wants that come first. No matter if I have a test, I put (Ryllie) first.”

Garcia said juggling schoolwork with her young family is a worthy balancing act — and one that soon will get a little more difficult. Garcia is pregnant with her second child, and her small clan is about to be
expanded into a foursome. While Garcia’s family members support her, she said she
often is met with strange looks when she tells her peers at Texas Tech she is married
with kids. On the other hand, her professors treat her exactly as they do her classmates. “For
the most part, they treat me like everyone else, and sometimes I’m like, ‘My kid was
sick last night,’” she sighed, noting that professors expect her to work a little hard-
er than everyone else because she is a little older.
Garcia said she is used to working harder than everyone else. In addition to
tending to her schoolwork, marriage and
daughter, she cuts hair at Command Per-
formance Salon to help support her family.

“Ryllie just loves books and movies; she
is very alive. She has places to go and
people to see. She is just very aware of the
world and very interested,” Garcia said. “I
just think sometimes people don’t realize
the responsibilities of raising kids, being
married, and going to school.”
While both Garcia and Schoneweis deal
deal with their respective responsibilities, they
are similar in that they are living the col-
lege life and the married life simultane-
ously. They are examples for future Texas
Tech students who wish to pave the road of
balancing parties and homework with
romance and wedding bells.

“We have many young couples who
made commitments to be abstinent until
marriage and want to abide by that,” she
said. “They have values of marriage as a
sacred commitment.”

Powell said she believes other students
choose to marry early because central
components of their future plans revolve
around having children early in life and be-
coming relatively young parents.

Although the wedding buzz almost can
seem deafening at times on the Texas Tech
campus, more young people actually are
postponing the dates of their ceremonies
until after graduation. According to sta-
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Web site https://task.census.gov, the median
age of both men and women when they
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since 1956. In 2003, the median age for a
male to marry was 27.1 years old, while the
median age for a female to tie the knot
was 25.3 years old. In 1956, the median
age for men to marry was 22.5, while the
median age for women was 20.1 – almostive years younger than the median for
both genders in 2003.
Garcia said she has some ideas as to why
today’s lovebirds are putting their wedding
bells on pause. “I think a lot of people are
waiting to get married and have kids be-
cause they are putting their careers in front
of their families,” she said.

Neither Garcia nor Schoneweis voiced
any opposition to marrying young if both
commitment and love are present in the
relationship.

Schoneweis said age is just a number,
and gauging how young is too young for
marriage can be difficult. “It really just de-
pends on the individuals,” she said, men-
tioning that she sees no steadfast rules
about deciding the right time to wed.

Garcia said she believes people know
when the time is right to take the plunge,
but they still must be prepared for the road
ahead. “If you are ready to get married,
just know that you cannot be selfish, and
you cannot do the same things as before,”
she said. “The other person is not your par-
tner, you are part of a team.”

Garcia is proud to play for her team.
The joy her daughter and husband bring
her was etched in her smile as she talked
enthusiastically about everything from how
she and her husband met to Ryllie’s energy
and intelligence.

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They’re not your typical students. They leave their books at home. They wear a uniform to class. They don’t take notes, they take orders.

Restaurant, Hotel and Institutional Management (RHIM) majors at Texas Tech spend hours every week running Skyviews Restaurant, where they say they get not only an education, but also a glimpse of the real world.

“You get to go behind the scenes and see what it really takes,” said Trey Hart, a senior RHIM major.

Skyviews, set above the treetops on the sixth floor of the Bank of America building, is almost entirely student-run. In addition to the view, the restaurant offers a fine dining atmosphere to patrons, and a venue where RHIM students learn restaurant management from the inside out.

“We try to train them for every scenario,” said J.B. Ward, administrator for Skyviews, “because when you get out in the real world you’re going to see every scenario that you can think of.”

This means students’ duties run the gamut – from chopping brightly colored vegetables in the kitchen, to planning diverse and sometimes daring menus, to washing the windows overlooking the Texas Tech campus. Students rotate in shifts through the jobs, taking turns as waiters, servers, cooks and even janitors. Leigh Kiselis, executive chef at Skyviews, said the wide range of experience is invaluable for the students.

“You’re more bankable that way,” she said. “If you can walk into an interview and say ‘I can do it all’, I’d be impressed. I’d say ‘great, you’re hired.”

Kiselis and Ward are two of the four full-time staff members who oversee the students’ work.

“We’re here as a buffer, they’re supposed to run this restaurant,” Ward said. “We’re standing back and putting out small fires so to speak. Not literally.”

Students who work as the kitchen manager and service manager for the night at Skyviews, and at similar restaurants at other colleges, have an edge when it comes to finding that job, said Margaret Binkley, assistant professor of nutrition, hospitality and retailing.

“It’s great for recruiters to know the schools that do this,” she said.

Most larger RHIM programs include a student-run restaurant, Ward said, and some even have a hotel.

But right now, the focus of students and recruiters alike seems to be more on the restaurant aspect. Binkley said the timing is perfect for majors who want to go on to work in a restaurant because of the continuing growth of the industry.

Graduates of the RHIM program work at restaurants all over the world – from New York to London to Dallas to Amsterdam. Binkley said Skyviews is a big part of the students’ ability to find good jobs.

“We try to give them the real-life experience so they’re prepared when they go out into the industry,” she said.

And in the meantime, students say they’re enjoying the experience.

“I’m so glad I’m in the major I’m in,” Hart said, “because it’s more hands-on, rather than sitting behind a book.”

The lunch menu changes daily and often is the product of the student’s own culinary skills.

“It’ll start with a piece of chicken, and I’ll say ‘what’s next?’” Kiselis said. “So they pretty much get to create their own dish too.”

Kiselis, who graduated from the culinary school at the Art Institute of Dallas, said she tries to encourage students to take a creative approach toward their cooking – but a cautiously creative one.

“They have to be cognizant that they’re going to be serving it to customers that are going to be paying for it in about an hour,” she said.

While there’s plenty to do in the first two labs, Ward said the third, the Dinner Series lab, is the pressure cooker.

“Every night, you have one chance to make it right,” he said.

Dinner is served just three times a week at Skyviews, and each dinner is planned, administrated and presented by a team of two students who work as the kitchen manager and service manager for the night.

“They start from zero and work their way up to staffing the restaurant,” Kiselis said. “I’m usually more hands-on with them because that’s the last class they take here before they go out into the real world and perform their own job.”

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—J.B. Ward, Skyviews Administrator
The production of alternative fuels and forms of renewable energy is a growing area of industry, research and planning on the South Plains. However, there is a deeper discussion of which forms of alternative fuels and renewable energy are best for West Texans and the region’s economy.

From ethanol and biodiesel production to wind energy and economic planning, Lubbock and the surrounding area are embracing several ideas regarding energy that step off the beaten path.

Sam Sacco, general manager of Levelland Hockley County Ethanol, said he sees the ethanol business as a benefit for the region’s environment and economy: “Not only are we producing something that can be used for blended fuels, which is great for our environment,” Sacco said, “we are giving area farmers a new outlet to success.”

Sacco said growing the corn needed to produce ethanol also helps improve cotton yields and protects the soil. Rotating from cotton to corn gives the land a break and ultimately improves the quality of crops, Sacco said. “We are not trying to compete with the cotton industry,” he said. “In fact, the ethanol industry will help cotton farmers because of higher yields and the fact that growing corn for ethanol is a profitable agenda.”

Sacco said two years ago, the average price of corn was barely $2. Today, Sacco said farmers are getting around $3.85 a bushel. “We are not trying to compete with the cotton industry,” he said. “In fact, the ethanol industry will help cotton farmers because of higher yields and the fact that growing corn for ethanol is a profitable agenda.”

Sacco said two years ago, the average price of corn was barely $2. Today, Sacco said farmers are getting around $3.85 a bushel. Sacco said a bushel equals 56 pounds of corn, which makes corn 14.5 cents a pound at its current price. Aside from the ethanol plant, Sacco said the ethanol plant will provide jobs for area citizens. Sacco said he will need to hire at least 35 employees to work at the plant before it opens, sometime in 2005.

Sacco said planning and construction for the $65 million plant began in 2002, and the money to build came from local investors. “The fact that local business owners are invested in this is a great help,” Sacco said. “The community is involved, and they want this to succeed.”

Along with the ethanol, Sacco said the plant will use the leftover corn products to make a high-protein feed for animals. Sacco said the feed will be distributed to area farmers and ranchers, and the ethanol most likely will be shipped to Dallas or the West Coast where it then will be blended into fuel.

Sacco said the plant will produce 46 million gallons of ethanol and 128,000 tons of feed a year. Sacco said this will be achieved by processing around 46 trucks a day, which is approximately 41,000 bushels, or roughly 2 million pounds of corn.

When extracting ethanol, which Sacco said is essentially a 200-proof alcohol, large amounts of carbon dioxide produced are sometimes vented into the atmosphere. But, Sacco said this plant will cap the carbon dioxide for use on Texas oil wells and help the environment by preventing it from entering the atmosphere.

Sacco said, overall, producing ethanol will be an excellent way to bring back grain to the region’s agricultural agenda and provide safer alternative fuel. “This operation will be a great success,” Sacco said. “Not only will it benefit the area’s economy, but it is a useful and important product for the American consumer.”

According to a report by the U.S. Department of Energy, from the years 1995 to 2004, the number of ethanol-powered vehicles experienced an average annual growth rate of 79 percent. The closest comparable growth rate was electric-powered vehicles at 39 percent, according to the report.

“Ethanol is the good versus the bad”

Charlie Stenholm, former congressman and current lobbyist for Olsson, Frank and Weeda law firm in Washington, D.C., said he thinks ethanol production is a good idea, but he wants things to remain market-oriented.

“I used to oppose ethanol and the subsidy of it,” Stenholm said, “but we are consuming 25 percent of the world’s oil, and now more than ever before, we need to produce all the energy we can.” Stenholm said he currently is working to pass a new and improved U.S. farm bill that will include adequate funding for the production of ethanol. Stenholm said the government does not need to over-subsidize ethanol, or the market could suffer.

Bill Pentak, director of corporate communications and investor relations for Panda Ethanol in Dallas, said the fundamentals of the ethanol industry are good, but there are short-term problems. Pentak said ethanol stocks are down 60 percent this year vs. last year. This decrease is because of a projected oversupply of corn, Pentak said.

“Stocks are down right now because of squeezing numbers,” Pentak said. “There is a concern of a surplus, so a lot of companies are hitting the brakes when it comes to funding for ethanol plants.”

Pentak said Panda Ethanol is set to open the largest biomass-fueled ethanol plant in the country in Hereford, Texas, sometime this year. The plant’s energy and power source to produce ethanol will operate solely off manure provided by local feed yards and farmers, Pentak said.

Using manure to fuel the plant will be environmentally cleaner and energy-efficient, Pentak said. “Manure is one thing we will not run out of any time soon,” Pentak said, “so it is logical to use this to power our ethanol plant in Hereford.”

Looking at the ethanol business down the road, Pentak said things should smooth out as the economy adjusts. But, Pentak said this adjustment only will occur if the government increases their interaction. “The Senate has to expand the renewable fuel standard,” Pentak said. “This will help us continue the shift to using more ethanol and decrease our international oil dependence.”

Pentak said if the government creates a level playing field, the ethanol industry will thrive, create jobs and help the national economy as a whole.

Don Ethridge, professor of agricultural and applied economics and associate director of the Cotton Economics Research Institute, said there is something to the idea of a projected oversupply of corn.

Ethridge said the large capacity to produce ethanol is overwhelming the rest of the industry, specifically regarding the refineries that blend the ethanol into other fuels. Ethridge said the ethanol plants are ready to produce more ethanol, the farmers are ready to produce corn, but the rest of the system of actually blending and distributing ethanol is behind. The amount of ethanol produced could easily supersede the amount of ethanol needed. But, Ethridge said this argument is not one easily defined.

“It’s a pretty complex mixture of forces, and it’s hard to unravel those forces clearly,” Ethridge said.

With the demand for ethanol by the petroleum market down, corn prices will remain high, Ethridge said. This relationship between the food market and the fuel market is more pronounced than ever before, Ethridge said. “From here on out, food commod-ity markets and fuel markets are and will be tied together more closely than we have ever seen in this country.”

Regarding subsidy, Ethridge said he believes the issue involves national security more than anything else. “The rationalization behind subsidizing alternative fuels is mostly driven by national security issues,” Ethridge said. “We know we are dependent on foreign oil, and so the question becomes – how dependent can we afford to be?”

Ethridge said he thinks all alternative fuels will be needed for this technology is not new; it’s been used by Brooke.

“The academic community is somewhat behind when it comes to alternative fuels and energy. But, this is a very important issue, especially when it comes to its integration into our society and economy. With time, these problems will garner enough attention to have definite solutions from researchers.”

—Don Ethridge

ETHANOL: THE GOOD VS. THE BAD

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—Charlie Stenholm

WIND ENERGY BRINGS CRUCIAL CHANGE FOR WEST TEXAS

Andrew Swift, research director of Texas Tech’s Wind Science and Engineering Research Center, said using the wind as a renewable energy source is crucial for West Texas. “The price of gas keeps going up, but the price of wind never changes,” Swift said.

Swift said his team of researchers is looking at the effects of extreme and unusual winds on the performance and reliability of wind generators, the application to use wind power to desalinate water from the Ogallala Aquifer and they are working with Texas Tech to investigate putting in a wind farm to power the university.

Each of these goals will help West Texas become more energy efficient as well as create jobs, Swift said. According to the DOE, wind energy saw a 156 percent increase in consumption from 2001 to 2005.

Building and using wind generators to produce energy is the cheapest bulk power generation source on the planet at this time, and it is a clean way to produce energy, Swift said. “Wind energy is an important thing to pursue because it really is in the future of energy production,” Swift said. “Wind energy holds an important place in the world of alternative energy sources.”

With the many different forms of energy being produced, re-searched and planned on the South Plains, it is interesting to imag-ine what our region may look like in 10 years. From wind energy turbines to ethanol plants, Lubbock and West Texas are seeing the beginning stages of some major changes regarding how we pro-duce and consume energy – changes that may be more complex than expected. Ti
Q&A

with Tech Democrat President Andrew Serrano and College Republican President Philip Lezar

Name, age and hometown?

Philip Lezar, 20, Dallas, Texas.
Andrew Serrano, 20, Odessa, Texas.

Year and major?

PL: Sophomore, economics.
AS: Junior, political science.

What are your predictions for the 2008 election?

PL: Republican victory.
AS: My personal prediction for the 2008 election is that Sen. Barack Obama will edge out Sen. Clinton to become the Democratic Party’s nominee. I have nothing but respect for Sen. John McCain, but I do expect Sen. Obama to beat McCain in the general election in November. John McCain appears as if he will only provide the Bush Administration with a “third term” in office, and as so many are becoming increasingly frustrated with the negative direction the Bush Administration has taken this country, I expect that Obama will pull out a win overall to become the next President of the United States. Obama sees the problems that we have in this country, from our failing health care system to our failing economy. He seems to honestly care about the everyday American people and wants to listen to us to help solve the problems that we face.

What have the Tech Democrats/Republicans done to increase student involvement in this year’s election?

PL: The College Republicans have worked actively this year to explain the candidates through question and answer sessions in our meetings and in the Free Speech Area. Also, we have done a lot of voter registration and will resume the registration drive in the fall.
AS: The Tech Democrats have been involved both on campus and in our community to try and increase the overall student involvement in this year’s election process in Lubbock. We have had local leadership reach out to our organization, and we have provided a venue for many local campaigns to come to our meetings and get their messages out concerning their bids for office. We have managed to get deputized and register a number of student voters on campus as well as get personally involved in both the Obama and Clinton campaigns. I have gone to calling sessions, canvassed, made signs, and everything in between with my fellow Tech Democrats to help spread the word about not only our candidates but the ideals of the Democratic Party.

Why is this year’s election different? What do students have to lose or gain by the decision made in the fall?

PL: This year’s election is different in the amount of college students who have already been mobilized to vote. College students tend to be apathetic in the realm of voting, but this year politicians have done a decent job of getting to the campuses and motivating kids to get out and vote. College students will be entering the workforce while the winner of this contest is in office, so economic policy will directly affect them. Whether that be incredibly high income tax sweeping away your money from Obama or Hillary or not.
AS: In a time when our country seems to be going in an increasingly negative direction, our future depends on the outcome of the 2008 election. The Democratic Party is sure to make history in this election because we will nominate the first African-American man for president or the first woman for president. The population as a whole seems to realize that we are at a real crossroads in history at the current moment because of all of the involvement in the political process that we have seen over the past year. Turnout rates on the Democratic side have seen record numbers as people seem to really want some change from what we have seen over the past seven years of the Bush Administration.

What are some issues affecting the Texas Tech community that need to be addressed by politicians that currently are not?

PL: The most important issue on the Tech campus is education. Politicians have done a decent job reaching out to students. But as with the rest of the country, decent is not 100 percent acceptable. We need to have more awareness of our state and federal politics, because it affects us all.
AS: One major issue that always seems to come up around election time that also always seems to fail to be completely addressed is the rising cost of tuition for the students of our university. The price of tuition has reached an almost ridiculous level, and it appears that over the next few years, the price will continue to rise. I realize that pursuing an education after high school can be expensive, but I also believe that it is time for colleges and universities across this country to start focusing on what they can teach their students rather than what they can take from them.

How will our generation affect the election, and how will it in turn affect us?

PL: The biggest impacts I believe on our generation from the next administration will be addressing social security, income tax and healthcare as well as the United States’ involvement around the world, not just in the Middle East, but elsewhere, in North Korea and China.
AS: Our generation has already had a tremendous impact on this election and will without a doubt continue to have an impact in November and beyond. We have seen a youth turnout for the Democratic candidates that has been unlike anything this country has ever seen. Overall, our generation and the country in general seem to really care about the future of our nation and the path that we are headed down, and they are showing this by coming to the polls in record numbers and getting actively involved in political campaigns that we have seen through groups such as the Tech Democrats.

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“I thoroughly enjoy walking, and have found that walking to class is much more relaxing than dealing with the hassles of commuting every day. This aspect has largely influenced my decision to live another year on campus. Since I do not yet have a job, money is scarce and I believe that making apartment or house payments would be too stressful at this point in my college career. Plus, who can resist the almost endless hot water?”

Lisa Atkins
Sophomore, Microbiology
Gordon Hall

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