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COMPLEX

From Page 1

ing them about the attack and offering safety tips to remember at home and while driving and walking.

Many residents said they've heard others talk about or plan to move from the complex in response to the Sunday attack.

The victim and her two roommates — also TCU students — are also leaving Westcliff Manor.

"I can only say what everyone else has said: Be cautious, and be protected," one roommate said, while hurriedly packing her belongings into her vehicle.

TCU and police officials have been giving the same advice since last spring, when the string of sexual assaults in the TCU area began. Police have a vague description of the suspect, who has dressed in black, worn a black ski mask and covered his hands in the attacks.

J.A. Jenson, the FWPD courtesy officer who lives at Westcliff Manor and was the first to respond to the victim's call early Sunday morning, said the suspect may make the victim wait until after he has left to call police.

The victim was home alone when she was attacked, he said.

"Every lead that the department has, they are following up on," Jenson said.

Following the attack, officers scoured the area for anyone walking or driving in the area. No one suspicious was found.

Westcliff Manor managers, who were "very upset" by news of the attack, plan to bulk up security and may hire additional officers to increase its presence, Jenson said.

He added that Westcliff may be considering closing off one of two front entrances and adding a key access-only gate in the rear of the complex.

According to residents, boosting security has been a major concern since the first attack at the apartment complex in April, when a woman was assaulted outside her apartment after she gathered personal belongings from her car. The woman escaped unharmed.

"I don't know what (Westcliff) is doing for security," said Kelly Newmon, a resident and junior elementary education major. "Some of the locks on the doors and windows we added."

Newmon said when she and her roommate, Alyshia Neil, a junior deaf education major, recently moved into their apartment, they added a chain lock to their front and back doors and "thumb

lock" devices to their windows. It was further security for themselves and their apartment, located near the site of the first attack.

"(The assault) was on our minds," Newmon said. "I don't know if we would've done it otherwise."

The roommates said they are taking well-lighted paths and every precaution possible.

"I couldn't stay here by myself at night," Neil said.

In light of any concerns about resident safety, Jenson said the apartment complex was not negligent about its security leading up to the attacks.

Westcliff Manor will hold a crime watch meeting and discussion about personal protection and security within the next few days, Jenson said. And he hopes the meeting will be well-attended — especially by female residents who are students.

After last spring's attack, apartment managers held a meeting for all residents, but only a handful of students showed up.

"I think they take their security for granted," Jenson said. "We want to discuss those issues."



Kelly Newmon, a junior elementary education major, shows a chain lock she installed after moving into Westcliff Manor Apartments. She hasn't seen much of a security presence at the complex, she said.

Safety precautions

1. Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
2. Walk in pairs or call a campus police escort, ext. 7777.
3. If walking at night is necessary, walk in well-lighted areas.
4. Keep doors and windows locked, blinds closed and curtains drawn.
5. Leave an outside light on overnight.
6. Notify police of any suspicious people or harassing phone calls.

HISTORY

From Page 1

Swaim said the rules were created according to the social dictates of the times.

"Boys and girls couldn't hold hands and couldn't associate with each other," she said. "The girls were fewer than the males and lived with a wife of one of the Clark brothers. It was very strict, yet I think they had fun."

According to the book, "History of Texas Christian University," written in 1947 by former chancellor Colby D. Hall, one girl was reprimanded by the faculty for walking across the campus with a boy. After the girl explained that the boy was her brother, the faculty told her that other students wouldn't know about the relation-

ship and that she "must avoid the appearance of evil."

Tucker said the first students were given books of expectations they must follow to attend the school.

"If a boy was sitting in a chair and got up, it was unacceptable for a girl to sit in that chair immediately because the heat from his body could then be felt by the girl," he said.

"Strict rules were enforced. The whole culture was different. There was a rigid approach to college; a rigidity that we now find laughable for good reason," he said.

In the following years, Add-Ran College struggled to stay open after financial strains forced many

other schools in the nation to close.

"It was just a little struggling college of which there were many on the frontier," Tucker said.

"Many colleges were started but not sustained."

Tucker said the school would not have survived without the help of the Clark women, Hetty DeSpain Clark and Sallie McQuigg Clark.

"Addison and Randolph strug-

gled and put all their resources into the school and had to finally rely on the property of their

wives," Tucker said. "There needs to be another statue to honor the Clark women. They were just as involved as their husbands."

Tuition rates were too low to provide a good source of income for the school, according to Hall. For the first nine months students paid \$50, a rate that

dropped to \$40 by 1876. Students of the Intermediate school paid \$40 and Primary school tuition was only \$20. The brothers began seeking financial assistance from community members.

In 1889, the brothers finally turned the school over to the Christian Churches of Texas, who changed the name to Add-Ran Christian University.

A board of trustees, headed by J.J. Jarvis, was created to take charge of the school. According to Hall, Jarvis and his wife, Ida Van Zandt Jarvis, donated much of their time and money to keep the college alive.

By the end of the 19th century, the school was moved to Waco,

which had several railroad outlets and allowed more students to attend the college. Two years later, the school that began with just \$9,000 and sat surrounded by the grassy plains to avoid the evils of a city became Texas Christian University located in the heart of Waco, Texas.

Without the perseverance of the Clark brothers, TCU would have ended with the crumbled ruins of the Add-Ran College in Thorp Spring, Swaim said.

"The brothers and their wives made a great sacrifice financially and emotionally for this school," Swaim said. "They gave it a good start, otherwise we wouldn't be around today."

"It was just a little struggling college of which there were many on the frontier."

— William E. Tucker, former chancellor

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TOWNHALL

From Page 1

said any off-campus TCU student can request a security survey of his or her residence. Security surveys include inspection of lighting, shrubbery and locks, as well as a discussion of psychological safety tips. There is no charge for the survey, Welch said.

Although officials were unable to discuss the details of the case, Fort Worth Police Det. Don Hanlon said they believe the rapist is entering the residences in a burglary style. They also believe the suspect is the same man involved in sexual assaults last year.

Hanlon said he feels sure the rapist will be caught.

"One thing I do want to say is that we have developed evidence that we are confident will catch this individual," he said.

After the three sexual assaults that occurred between Jan. 4 and April 22, 1998, police formulated a written description of the suspect based on information from victims and witnesses.

In light of the most recent attacks, students are once again worried about their security.

Rene Jacobs, a senior marketing major, said she continues to feel concerned about campus security.

"I have a night class, and I worry about

walking out to my car," she said. "I don't see a lot of heightened security."

Leon Reed, a senior political science major, expressed concern about the treatment of black male students following the sexual assaults of last year, especially with a broad suspect description.

"I don't want people thinking ... there goes 'the rapist,'" he said. "It's not a comfortable feeling."

Reed said he was stopped last spring at an area gas station by a Fort Worth police officer after he left the Student Center. Reed said the officer asked him, "Have you raped anyone lately?" and told him he was the

"spitting image" of the suspect.

"I didn't appreciate it," Reed said.

At Thursday's meeting, Reed asked if TCU would provide legal counsel to defend the rights of black male students who say they have felt harassed by police officers.

Mills recommended concerned students speak to the attorney retained by the House of Student Representatives for free legal counsel.

"TCU does not become either your protector or someone who is investigating you," Mills said. "We won't interfere with the police investigation."

While students expressed their concerns

over various aspects of the assaults, staff members remain optimistic about student security.

Roger Fisher, director of Residential Services, said he thinks campus security is working well, and the real challenge is educating students about personal safety.

"I think our challenge - residential services' and the RAs' - is to keep student awareness up," he said.

Williams denied rumors that an attack had occurred on campus.

"We have not had a student injured or assaulted on campus, especially in the last couple of days," he said.

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NBA must live without Jordan

It's a sad state of affairs we are in. The National Basketball Association is on its way down, and the worst thing (for the NBA) is nobody cares.

In early January, NBA Commissioner David Stern and NBA Players Association representative Billy Hunter came to a last minute agreement to end a lockout that started at the beginning of last summer. Stern and Hunter agreed on the eve of the drop-dead date — the deadline Stern set to cancel the season.

While this was big news on all the sports channels, I was content watching my cartoons that day. I

couldn't care less what the NBA was doing. And I know there are plenty of other sports fans that share my sentiment. In fact, I was looking forward to Stern canning the 1999 season.

The kicker to this whole situation, though, is the retirement of Chicago Bulls superstar Michael Jordan. Jordan decided to hang up his Nikes for the last time and pursue other interests such as his golf game and possibly a career in business.

The NBA now faces the arduous and uphill battle of rebuilding a league that is tarnished in the eyes of the fans. Player-fan relationships and player-owner relationships are now strained. Even though it was the owners who locked out the players, it is the players who are going to suffer the abuse night in and night out on the court.

Of course, the players aren't exactly helping their own cause. One player was quoted as saying

that they would have to go out and do things that they don't particularly like doing, such as signing autographs. I'm sure those owners just love signing those multi-million dollar paychecks, too.

I plan on watching opening night just to see what the fans have in store for the players, then I'm going to switch back to college basketball, where the real action is this year.

Teams will play a 50-game season starting Feb. 5. Without Jordan. While I am tired of seeing the Bulls win every championship they can get their rich hands on, it was fun watching Jordan make his own highlight film every night.

It will be interesting to see how the NBA will try to replace Jordan. I've heard of rumors that Philadelphia's Allen Iverson will try to take the throne as king of the basketball world. While Iverson may have one-tenth the skills that No. 23 does on the court, he just doesn't

compare to Jordan off the court. You never heard of Jordan getting arrested for drugs or guns or asking his coach to make him captain of the team.

Maybe the NBA will try to make Los Angeles Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal the next ambassador of the NBA. The guy is 7-1, 300 pounds and he can dunk with the power of a grizzly bear. Why that impresses everybody, I don't know. If I was that big, wouldn't I be expected to do that? What will impress me is when he finally commits himself to basketball and starts learning another shot, something like a free throw or a jumper. O'Neal is just too one-dimensional on the court to be considered in the same league as Jordan.

The list goes on. Everybody from Laker guard Kobe Bryant to college phenom Steve Francis has been mentioned as heirs to the throne that Air himself built, but I just don't see

anybody stepping up to fill the hole Jordan left behind.

Jordan is a unique person in a unique situation. Not too many athletes get to leave their sport at the top of their game. Not too many players can — not with the money and the success involved. But Jordan has done it all. He has accomplished all he can on the court; the only thing left for him now is the Hall of Fame.

Jordan is the only real winner here. The NBA loses its icon; the Bulls lose their leader; but more importantly the fans lose the chance to see Jordan perform his magic with the basketball night in and night out. Granted, the NBA will become more competitive without Mike, but there are pretty big shoes to fill out there.

Matt Welnick is a sophomore news-editorial journalism major from San Antonio.



MATT WELNICK

Frogs ground Falcons, get easy WAC win

By David Quinlan
STAFF REPORTER

TCU dished out more than the Falcons could handle Thursday night, as the Frogs routed Air Force 114-87 at Daniel-Meyer Coliseum.

After jumping out to an impressive first half lead, the Frogs seemed a little sloppy in the second half. TCU turned the ball over 27 times.

"I just thought we were out of the game in the second half," head coach Billy Tubbs said. "I wasn't happy with the game."

The Frogs struggled defensively despite forcing 36 Air Force turnovers. At times the Frogs look like they were taking a beating on the inside game. Shannon Long was clothed in a TCU retaliation.

"We wanted to retaliate," senior center Lee Nailon said. "But it's basketball, and it happens."

The Frogs (15-3, 3-1) jumped out to a 7-0 run in the first three minutes of play. Sophomore guard Ryan Carroll was six of eight from the field cashing in 15 first half points. The six-foot-four forward finished the night with 25 points and 10 boards.

"I think we pressed well in the first half," Carroll said. "We just need to keep up the intensity in the second half."

TCU continued to run over the Falcons, stretching its lead to 21 after sophomore guard Vladimir Jaksic hit a three with 8:08 remaining in the first half. The Frogs would end the half leading 53-32.

"It was a wild game to say the least," Tubbs said. "We went out of what we were supposed to be doing. We got a little too cute."

TCU's win tonight was its third conference victory. The Frogs, coming off a nail-biting win against Colorado State last Saturday, exceeded 100 points for the second time this season.

"I'm getting tired of these close games," Carroll said. "It felt good to blow somebody out."

Nailon led the Frogs offensive attack in the second half. The senior had another double-double night, tallying 26 points and 11 boards. Thirteen of those points came from the line.

"I knew they were trying to get me out of the game," Nailon said. "I just kept my head in and we had a good night."

Both Long and junior forward Marquise Gainous also had big nights, picking up 16 points each.

The Falcons were dry from the field, only hitting nine of 32 in the first half.

"We got to make shots," Air Force head coach Reggie Minton said. "But they have a great team."

Air Force dropped to 8-7 and will travel to Southern Methodist on Saturday. Last night's game was the Falcon's first of a two-game road trip.

TCU concludes their homestand on Saturday when Nevada-Las Vegas comes to town. The Rebels feature one of the toughest team's in the league. Tubbs said tonight's game was good preparation for Saturday's game.

"They (UNLV) bring a lot of talent," Tubbs said. "It's going to be a tough game."

Tip-off at Daniel-Meyer Coliseum is scheduled for 7:05 p.m.

Strong strokes Teams remain confident after loss

By Rusty Simmons
SKIFF STAFF

Rather than the popular sports phrase, 'a game of inches,' swimming proved to be a game of milliseconds for the TCU swimming team over the holiday break.

The final relay in the three-team TCU Speedo Swim Classic proved to be the deciding event of the meet. After grabbing a small lead on the first day of competition, the Horned Frogs watched their lead slowly dwindle in the final day. Four milliseconds before junior Adrian Velasquez touched the wall to end the 200-yard freestyle relay, North Carolina State's anchor finished the comeback for the Wolfpack and solidified the 239-233 victory.

"It was tough to watch, because you feel so helpless," sophomore Michael Willis said. "It will make for a better meet next year."

Even with this in mind, Willis did not wait until next year to have a good meet. He won the 100-yard back stroke and was part of the two top finishing TCU relays, the 200-yard medley relay and the 400-yard medley relay.

"The 200-yard medley relay is a tough event," sophomore Mike O'Connor said. "They have to be so precise and work so well together."

The other components of the precision relay are senior Jason Flint, junior Brent Hendrix, and Velasquez.

Flint also added support individually by

continuing his dominance in the 200-yard breast stroke, and winning the 100-yard breast stroke.

"He's such a team leader," Willis said. "He's a guy you count on to win, because he hates to lose."

Velasquez added a first place score in the 50-yard free style, but even with the Horned Frogs' six first place finishes, N.C. State outlasted them.

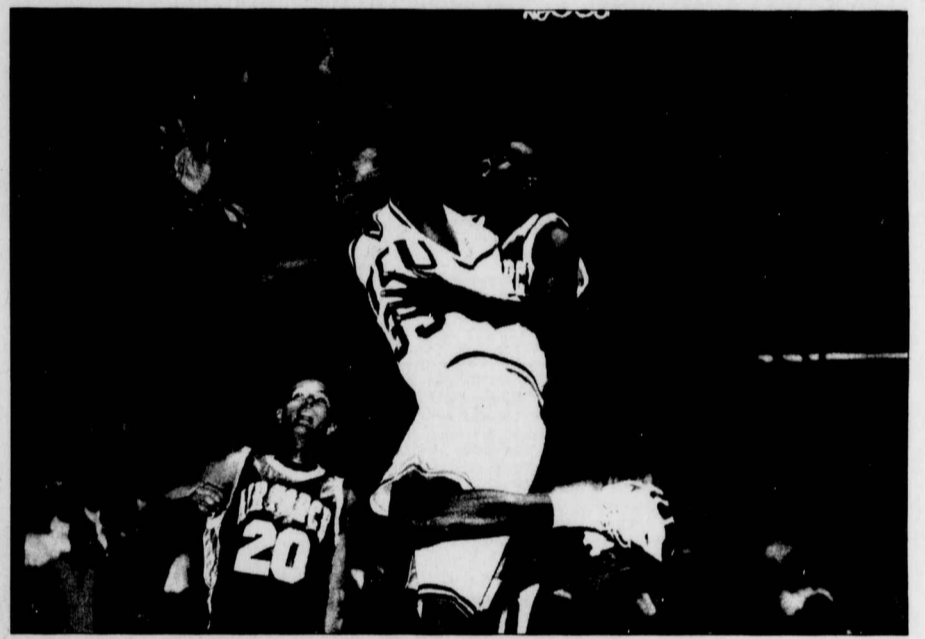
"We got back from Hawaii a day before the meet," O'Connor said. "I think we beat them 80 or 90-percent of the time if we're rested."

The women's half of the squad endured a similar fate as meet hosts. Just nine points separated the Frogs from top finisher N.C. State.

Despite four first-place finishes by freshman Jamie MacCurdy, three by sophomore Sarah Shepard, and two by both freshman Marisa Schenke and senior Maggie Topolski, TCU could not hold off N.C. State. The Horned Frogs were able to wrap up a second place finish over Northeast Louisiana and North Texas.

The men's TCU squad will be pitted against nationally ranked Tennessee this weekend while the ladies take on North Texas, but neither squad's confidence is altered after the tough holiday action.

"No matter what our ranking is, you don't swim on paper," O'Connor said. "We go into every meet with confidence that we can win."



David Dumas/SKIFF STAFF

The Air Force Falcons came to Daniel-Meyer Coliseum Thursday night and played a physical game with the Frogs (above), but they weren't able to stop TCU's offense led by senior center Lee Nailon (left). TCU defeated Air Force 114-87 in the Frogs' first Western Athletic Conference home game. They play their next home game at 7:05 p.m. Saturday against Nevada-Las Vegas before hitting the road again next week.



Rodman not revealing plans for next season

By Greg Beecham
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY — Dennis Rodman has played a mercenary killer in the movies and a rebounding machine for three NBA teams.

Now, he's just playing coy.

Rodman's agent, Dwight Manley, said Thursday that the mercurial star won't sign with any club before next week. Instead, he will appear on "The Tonight Show" in Los Angeles on Friday, where he is expected to hint at which teams he would be interested in joining.

So goes the latest chapter in the flamboyant forward's week of confusion, which has included his retirement on Tuesday, a return to the game on Wednesday and a declaration on his website that he wouldn't mind even playing overseas.

Manley was in Salt Lake on Thursday for a press conference with another of his players, former Rodman wrestling opponent, Karl Malone. But Manley kept one ear on the Mailman's words and another on his constantly ringing cell phone, fielding what he said were inquiries from teams about Rodman's services.

"I've been getting a ton of calls," Manley said, though he declined to name specific teams.

Though Manley wouldn't confirm it, Rodman seems to be waiting to see which teams strike out in the free agent market. The 37-year-old would then be a prized commodity

for a number of contenders looking to add the final piece to their rosters.

Manley flew to Toronto late Thursday to discuss a contract for another client, Doug Christie, with Raptors officials. After a Friday breakfast meeting in Canada, the agent said he would return to Los Angeles and speak with Rodman after he appeared on "The Tonight Show."

"I was learning things about the situation from reading the papers this morning," said Manley, who said he last spoke with Rodman on Wednesday.

It has been rumored since last season that Rodman would be interested in joining the Lakers, and living in Los Angeles would obviously suit his style.

But the Lakers say they aren't interested, and the Knicks general manager Ernie Grunfeld said Thursday that any talk of Rodman coming to New York was "wild rumors."

Manley indicated that interest in Rodman likely will only increase after Thursday's free agent-signing derby calms down. The Bulls may even want Rodman back in Chicago, but their status as a non-contender makes it unlikely.

"I've been reviewing my options," Rodman wrote in his website message, "and those options still include playing in the NBA this season with a contender. Chicago, New York and L.A. are all cities I'd like to play in. Playing overseas could be pretty cool, too."

RUDY

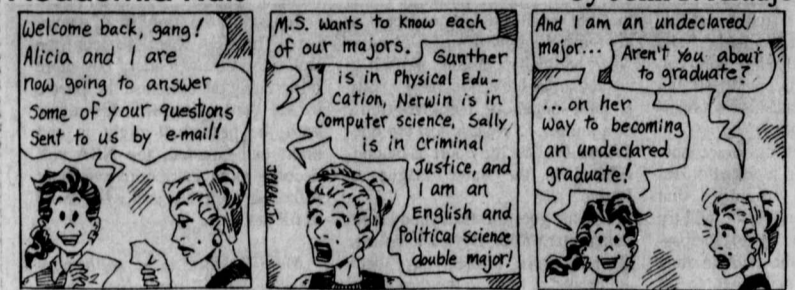
by Aaron Brown Chaos

by Brian Shuster



Academia Nuts

by John P. Araujo



AcademiaN@aol.com

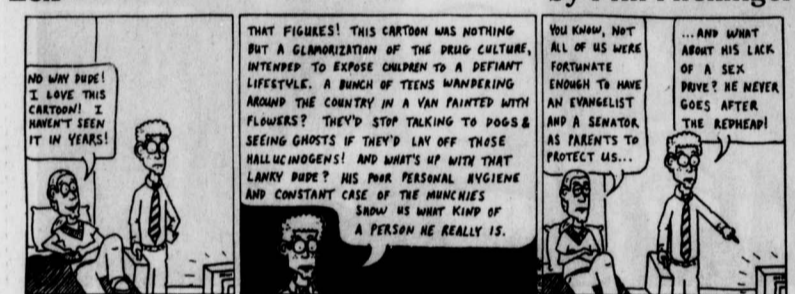
Texas Critter University

by Jamie Elizabeth Brinkman



Lex

by Phil Flickinger



lexcartoon@yahoo.com

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Vegetable dish
- Luge
- Himalayan monk
- Subdivision of a people
- Increase staff
- Actor Sharif
- Bancroft and Meara
- Send out
- Low character
- Ultimate cost
- Ballet bend
- Pinball goof
- Double-check text
- Security mission
- Scandinavian capital
- Hodgepodge
- School official
- G-sharp
- Philanthropist
- Segment of a circle
- Family member
- Take care of
- Procedure element
- Togo's capital
- Quasi-religious group
- Ryan and Cara
- Revived
- Nile queen, casually
- Off-base GI
- Car surface
- Train track
- Whopper
- Juliet's beau
- Gumbo veggie
- Adam's grandson
- Ultraviolet filter
- Lascivious gander
- Bears' lairs
- Affirmatives

DOWN

- Use a stiletto
- Pisa's river
- Bellybutton collection?
- Shelter a criminal, e.g.
- Explorer Hernando
- Outer covering
- Set a maximum
- Moran of "Happy Days"
- Discourages
- Keep a ___ (be inconspicuous)
- Soap substitute
- "West Side Story" song
- Packing a rod
- Temperate
- Vivacity
- Whale groups
- Hand-cream ingredient
- Prong
- Underground pit
- Formerly
- Bridge position
- Knack
- Writer Uris
- Peak
- Golf-ball holders
- Embarrassing loss
- Docking place
- Propelled in a high arc
- Whisky cocktail
- Entertainer
- Channing
- Get up!
- Watered silk fabric
- Intestine segment
- Windblown soil
- Country road
- Slow flow
- Old Testament book
- M. Descartes
- Accomplishes

By Dorothy B. Martin Highland Park, MI 1/22/99

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

VEAL METAL ETTA
ARLO ATRIA LORD
PAINTHETETOWNRED
OTB ITES OINKS
ROISTER PEON
LTD BELLOWED
STOOL PLEA ERA
PERPETUALMOTION
ALE ELIS PARSE
SEMESTER LIN
LIES SENSUAL
SATAN LOGE PGA
ANYPORTINASTORM
TIPS AIMAT ALEE
SLOE GENRE RUED

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For more information check out Weekend, pages 4 & 5.

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	5:30-6:20pm	Instructor Choice
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Weekend

Volume 1, Issue 13

Friday, January 22, 1999

ALIENS AMONG US

Erin Brinkman argues
the influence of science
fiction on popular culture
Pages 4 & 5.

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Page 2

Varsity Blues
Page 6

TCU DAILY
Skiff

New naughty dog pushes limits

By Guy Bickers
SKIFF STAFF

Naughty Dog has done it again!

That's pretty much all you need to know about the third offering from this new software giant. "Crash 3: Warped," the third in the immensely popular Crash Bandicoot series of PlayStation platform games, sets new highs in gameplay while pushing Sony's console to its limits. Before we launch into the new stuff, however, a brief history of the series is required.

Game

"Crash Bandicoot," the first game from Naughty Dog, hit the PlayStation three years ago. It was different from the other platformers of the day because it used 3D graphics to enhance its 2D gameplay. It looked pretty and played great.

"Crash Bandicoot 2" came out a year later with few changes. Instead of a linear system, which forced you to play the levels in order, it introduced a hub system thereby allowing some choices in how you played the game.

"Crash 3" blows the other two out of the water. There are now racing-style elements added. (These were introduced via the amusing commercials you either loved or hated last fall.) There are levels including scuba gear, airplanes, baby tigers, motorcycles and lots of other stuff. Crash dives, rides and runs alongside another new addition: his sister Coco. She actually does most of the rac-

ing thus leaving her brother to take care of the really dirty work.

The story involves the bad guy, Dr. Neo Cortex, returning to threaten the world again, this time aided by an evil mask. Gameplay is the typical run-jump-land-on-stuff action we're used to, with the added flair of Crash's trademark spin. However, players now have the option of gaining new moves (the belly flop is hilarious) as the game progresses.

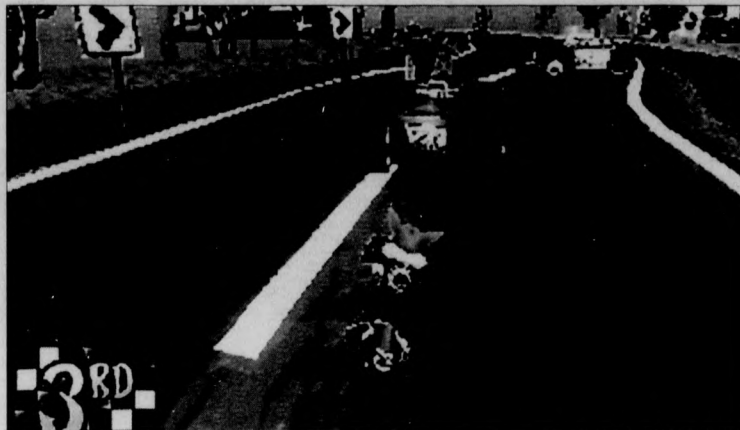
"So, how does it play?" you ask.

Incredibly! This incarnation includes analog support as well as support for the DualShock controller. Moving is simple and the controls are as intuitive as possible. The only other game on the PlayStation with this level of control is "Castlevania: Symphony of the Night."

"OK, now it probably looks horrible since the PlayStation is almost five years old."

Wrong! This is possibly the best-looking game on the system. There are thousands of vibrant colors and all of the environments look beautiful. It may not be realistic, but Crash looks nothing like a bandicoot either. "Sound?"

Good. Not wonderful, but not exactly bad. Only the bad guys seem to have voices, and they are well done, but the repetitiveness of the stock sounds (trotting, spinning, breaking boxes) gets old pretty quickly. I play with my PlayStation hooked into the Dolby Digital sound system and "Crash 3" does little for it. However, it won't have your neighbors banging on your dorm wall shouting at



SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF

DAYS OF THUNDER. "Crash Bandicoot: Warped" is the latest PlayStation game to feature the mascot.

you to turn it down.

"Will it challenge me at all, or is it harder for me to avoid turtles chasing me?"

Sadly, this is one place "Crash 3" is a bit lacking. You run through levels collecting colored gems to unlock bosses. This is not hard. One of my friends beat the entire game in a single day. To combat this, Naughty Dog has added some extras after you blast Cortex into the great beyond. First, you have the option of running through a time trial version of each level, getting extras each time you beat the clock. In addition, if you break

every box on a level you get a colored gem. This is hard — very hard — but ultimately rewarding.

"Why should I buy this then, if it isn't going to challenge me?"

Because its FUN! Most people liked "The Rock" for its brainless suspension of disbelief. "Crash 3" is like that, but without the 80 gallons of blood, guns, or Michael Biehn playing another SEAL getting waxed. OK, maybe they aren't the same, but it's a great ride. This is one I won't be selling back for a long, long time. **Grade: B+**

Do ya wanna be Willis for a day?

By Mitch Youngblood
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Fans of violence-heavy Hollywood flicks like "Die Hard" and "Commando" worship the ground walked on by 1980s icons such as Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and may have often wondered what it would be like to actually spend a day at the office wasting bad guys with reckless abandon.

Game

Wonder no longer.

Thanks be to Activision for releasing "Apocalypse" for the Sony PlayStation. When you look past the gloss and pretty explosions, it's basically a standard arcade-style shooter in which you blast everything in sight to complete each board. What sets it apart from the rest, however, is that you get to play as Bruce Willis, complete with voice and mannerisms. The thought of smoking a really ugly bad guy with a mean looking flame thrower just gives me goose bumps. Knowing that I'll here one of Willis' trademark witty quips after killing said villain just adds a warm and fuzzy feeling to the game.

Willis lent both his voice and likeness to the game, and it feels really cool to be saving the world in Willis' boots while firing off quips faster than you can pull the trigger. One thing "Apocalypse" never lets you forget for a second is that Willis is kicking butt with one wicked looking gun after another and an appro-

priate one-liner for every situation.

The trouble is that, after awhile, it gets sort of annoying to have Willis keep repeating the same quips over and over while you try not to get your head blown off by a random grenade or torn off by an evil zombie. By the 80th time he shouted, "Strap one on, it's time to jam," I wanted to reach in the game and strangle him until his head popped off. You have the option to turn off his voice, but by the time it gets really grating you'll be practically through the game.

"Apocalypse" is nothing, if not exciting. You play as Bruce... er, Trey Kincaid, a nanophysicist with a mean temper and a way with guns, who makes a major breakthrough in the field just as science is outlawed. Apparently a mysterious and highly influential figure calling himself the "Reverend" has taken control of the United States and outlawed science, thereby making it easier to control the masses. This new twist on the centuries old debate of science versus religion is a really neat idea to back up the non-stop mayhem.

The Reverend isn't content to just kick back and rule, he wants to destroy everything. Using Kincaid's discovery, the Reverend creates his own four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and unleashes them on the world. Since you don't hold the patent on this technology (thereby not getting any royalties) Bruce, er, Trey breaks out of prison and starts some royal butt kicking.

Between each level you get treated to a gorgeous cinematic sequence that

gives you a reason to get through each level, even the most insanely difficult ones like the White House board. It took me a day and a half to get through that one level because the sheer volumes of villains and weaponry aimed at me smeared me across the White House lawn more times than I care to admit. And why are the head bosses so blasted difficult? The Beast has something like four or five different health bars, and the third person perspective kept rotating so much I got dizzy.

At times, "Apocalypse" feels like you're playing in a Michael Bay film because the sound is deafening, the explosions are incessant, the soundtrack is deafening and Willis never shuts up. But if you're looking for an afternoon or three to kill some time with a genuine no-brainer, then "Apocalypse" is the way to go. The voice acting is terrific, even if Willis grates after board six or so, and the cameo by goth-rocker Poe is pretty cool. The cinematic featuring her is more of a rock video than a transition between levels, and the technique is effective.

"Apocalypse" sounds great, looks great, and plays great, but it is definitely for people who are in the mood for a 'kill everything' style of game. The controls are unique: the left control pad is for the directions you move in, the right four buttons are for the directions you shoot in. It takes some getting used to, but "Apocalypse" is cool enough to play for the sheer adrenaline rush. **Grade: A-**

TCU DAILY

Skiff

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Punk album gets groans of boredom

By Derek Roy
SKIFF STAFF

"Act Your Age," the latest release by the Southern California punk band HomeGrown, is full of loud power chords, fast-paced tempos, back beat drumming and everything else that has graced every punk rock record since the dawn of time. The band lacks any distinguishing features that would set them apart from any other California punk band.

Music

HomeGrown basically sounds like a slightly younger version of Green Day or the Descendents. The band experiments with the occasional ska guitar riff but mainly sticks with playing a brand of caffeine-filled punk rock. Even though the band member's average age is 22, they sound like they are still stuck in high school. HomeGrown is nothing more than the opening slot on next year's Vans Warped Tour.

HomeGrown's vocal responsibilities are shared by bassist Adam Lohrbach and guitarist John E. Trash. Trash's voice is very nasal and in-your-face for most of the album, while Lohrbach's voice is slightly higher and a little easier to bear. Lohrbach definitely outshines Trash throughout the album due to the fact Lohrbach can write clever and somewhat intelligent lyrics (for punk rock, that is). Trash has a tendency to write angst-ridden songs about every girl that ever hurt him, which gets old really fast because all of his songs sound the same.

Rounding up this punk rock quartet is Bob Herco on drums and Ian Cone on lead guitar. Herco plays drums exactly like every

other punk rock drummer, and there is nothing special about what he does behind the drum kit. However, Cone's guitar skills are impressive, and compared to most punk rockers, he could be considered a musical god.

HomeGrown's story, much like its sound, is nothing original. The band met while still in high school and just started playing together after school was over. HomeGrown, at that point, spent most of its time practicing in a garage. In 1995, after being featured on a punk compilation, HomeGrown recorded its debut album, "That's Business." The small success of that record gave the band the opportunity to open for some ska/punk bands such as Sublime, Save Ferris and Blink 182.

In 1996 the band was back in the studio to record the extended play single, "Wusappaning?!", which help them land a spot on the Operation Ivy tribute as well as a place on the movie soundtrack for "Half Baked." Then the band was signed to Outpost Records and began recording its major label debut, "Act Your Age."

"Act Your Age" begins with the Green Day sound-alike, "Nowhere Slow," a track that sets the stage for the rest of this average album. The song's upbeat tempo and loud guitars are nothing new, but there is a charm to Lohrbach's teenage-sounding voice.

One of HomeGrown's strong points is its good sense of humor. The song "She's Anti" is a hilarious tale of high school murder that sounds like the making of an after-school special. Trash delivers the funny lyrics, "With an AK in her right hand/ she shot the cheerleading squad and ran."

The ska-like guitar riffs of



'HOME' BOYS. HomeGrown members (from left) John E. Trash, Ian Cone, Bob Herco and Adam Lohrbach.

"Surfer Girl" sound way too much like the ska pop band, No Doubt (which is never a good thing). The song relays the story of a girl who left Lohrbach at the altar to catch a 10-wave down in Mexico.

While there maybe some high points throughout "Act Your Age," most of it is the same old stuff. When HomeGrown is at its best it possesses a cleverness that has been displayed by only a handful of

bands. All "Act Your Age" makes me want to do is go and listen to all the original punk rock bands that made this kind of music before it was popular or profitable to do so. **Grade: C-**

'Fear of Pop' is full of surprises but lacking in music

By Trisha Pickard
SKIFF STAFF

Some music just escapes categorization. That's OK. Not everything in life fits nicely into a neat little package. The debut effort of "Fear of Pop, Volume I," fits into the no-category category (if that makes any sense at all). This album is just like a circus, there is so much going on that you never know what freaky things you are going to see or hear next. By the time it's over, you have no idea what hit you.

Music

Ben Folds (of Ben Folds Five) and Caleb Southern comprise the production and recording team for this album, which is the product of their first session back in the stu-

dio since their 1996 effort "Whatever and Ever Amen" (which continues to be a huge hit for Ben Folds Five).

While this CD is a definite adventure, it really can't even be considered music. All of the songs, instruments, singing, and other noises can be credited to Folds with only a few minor exceptions. Ben Folds' signature style of witty lyrics and jazzy piano can be slightly detected in some of these songs (and I use the term "song" loosely), but if one were ignorant of his role with this album, these clues would be so extremely subtle that they would go unnoticed.

The title track has a good techno-style beat complicated by other eerie, unidentifiable noises and Folds periodically screeching "Fear of pop!" For a few seconds throughout the song, Folds suc-

cessfully dupes his listeners into believing that this album isn't too freakish and weird. There are moments when "Fear of Pop" resembles the music of the mellow alterna-rapper Beck, but these redeeming moments are too sparse to make the song great.

"In Love," track five, is one of the best because it is so funny. William Shatner plays the starring role of the unrequited lover and his soliloquy set to catchy music with Folds reflectively singing backup provides some very cynical, yet comical and entertaining insights into the mystery of falling in and out of love. This track could actually be considered music—and would probably be really good music—if Folds would sing the majority of the time and cut Shatner's part down to a maximum of 30 seconds.

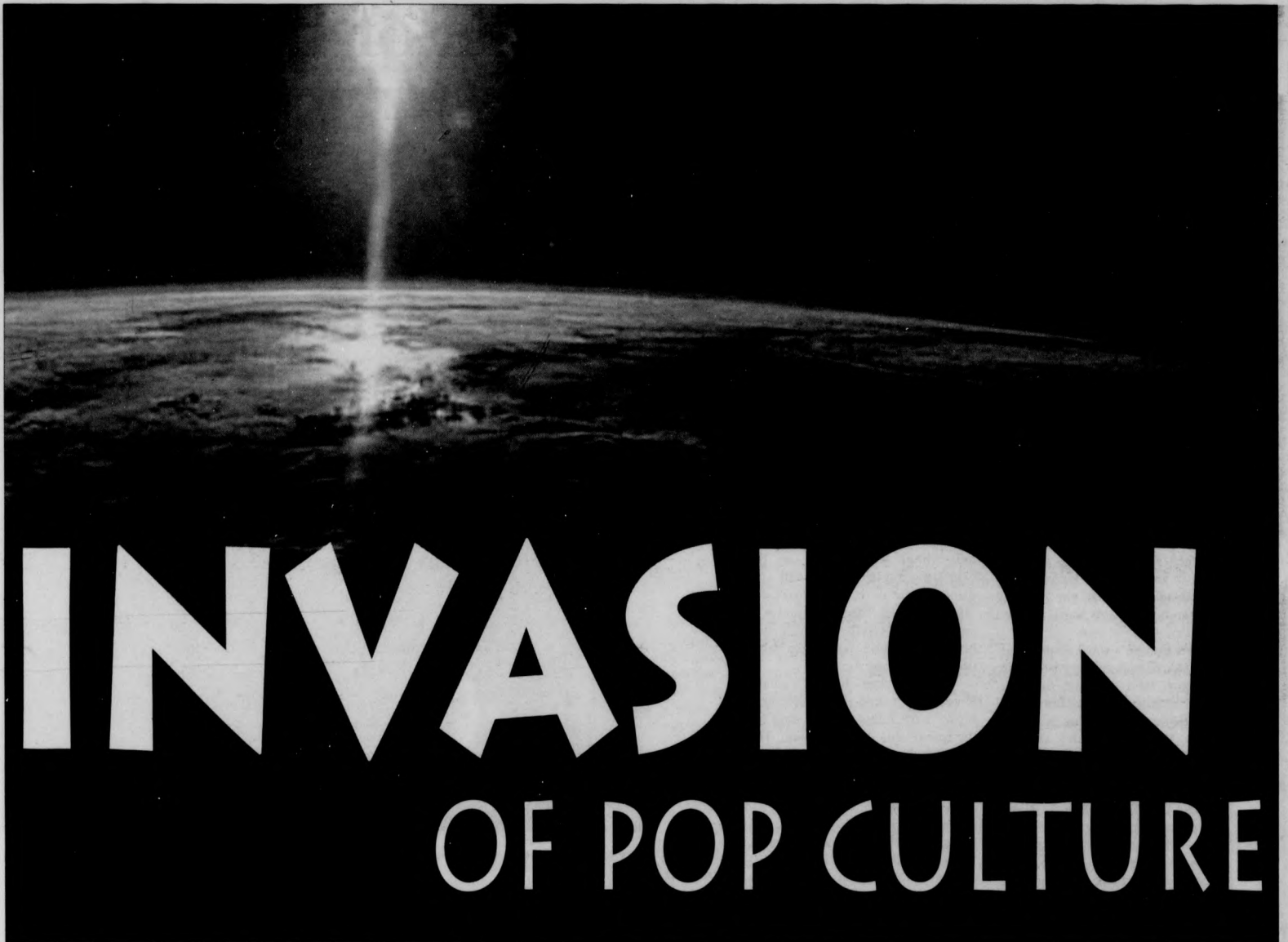
"Interlude," track six, concretely supports my theory that "Fear of Pop" is completely lacking of music. "Interlude" is only about 20 seconds long and is comprised entirely of old-time opera music and a man's monotone voice counting out dance steps repetitively like this: "One two three/ Two two three/ Three two three" and so on. This song is weird to say the least.

It is impossible to say for sure which song is the most disturbing on "Fear of Pop," but my money is on "Rubber Sled," track nine. I can't even begin to understand what is going on in this song. I did catch that it is the story of a guy who goes to a junkyard and leaves with a rubber sled (if that isn't enough to make a good song, I don't know what is). There are so many different sounds I can't iden-

tify, but I can safely say that this is the first time I have ever heard a barking soul singer, and I'm crossing my fingers that it will be the last because I have never been so annoyed.

One of the worst parts of "Fear of Pop" is the final song, "Still in Love," because Shatner plays his second and most obnoxious role on the album. This song is horrible. The pretty and sane violin music in the background betrays any expectations of the listener as Shatner begins to speak: "I could've/ I might've/ I thought/ What do I know." He keeps talking in this manner without ever forming a complete thought throughout the whole song. Horrible.

After listening to this album, I just couldn't help but wonder what Folds and Southern were smoking when they recorded it. **Grade: D+**



INVASION OF POP CULTURE

American popular culture has always been fluid, and over the years science fiction — a genre that was once one of the least popular — has risen to the top of the mix. For example, “Independence Day” was the top-grossing movie of 1996, earning \$306 million, but in 1976 no science fiction movies ranked in the top five.

In 1977 there was only one sci-fi movie in the top five, and that one was “Star Wars,” the top-grossing movie of all time before “Titanic” took the crown last year. This shows though sci-fi wasn’t as prevalent in pop culture in the ‘70s, the genre has always appealed to the public. This growth of sci-fi means there is now room for the contemplation of the many different aspects of sci-fi and how those aspects

relate to the society of today.

A working definition of science fiction can be a story that uses today’s science and technology as a basis for what we could have in the future. Because this definition is so broad, the sci-fi genre includes several traditional elements that can be combined: space ships, computers, robots and androids and, most importantly, the alien. The aliens in science fiction are numerous and can be broken down into five general categories, each with its own place in the genre — hostile, benevolent, interfering, humanoid and friendly.

The human desire for entertainment is a big part of pop culture, and many people find such entertainment in science fiction. Part of this entertainment is emotional release — when viewing a movie, laughter, tears, anger and fear

are important. These emotions help people escape from daily life without consequences. The emotional experience is controlled — it exists for a limited time and occurs in a safe place.

The hostile alien is one of the most popular and is seen in many sci-fi movies, such as “Invasion of the Body Snatchers” and “The Fifth Element,” in which evil aliens attempt to take over the world or destroy it. “Independence Day” is one of the best examples — the nations of Earth have to band together to defeat technologically superior beings trying to use up the planet’s resources.

The hostile alien often represents things people don’t want to represent about themselves. They illustrate humans’ bad points and then are easy to hate. According to John

Huntington’s essay, “The Social Dynamics of the Friendly Alien,” when people give hostile aliens qualities they want to deny in themselves, it’s easy to attack it without reservations. It’s then okay to be happy when the hostile aliens are dead. Audiences cheered when the gluttonous, environmentally hostile aliens in “Independence Day” exploded in their disk-like space ships.

In a world where political correctness is prevalent, hostile aliens are something safe to hate. Hating humans is now considered discrimination. Without the Soviets or the Nazis, screen writers must look to the skies for a new universal bad guy that will allow all humans to unite against a common foe. The way the nations in “Independence Day” united against

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TWO THUMBS UP. Two astronauts (played by Alexander Baluev, left, and Jon Favreau) try and destroy a deadly comet which is threatening the earth in "Deep Impact." The film from DreamWorks Pictures and Paramount Pictures was the first major hit of last summer, proving that despite a lame story and cardboard characters, the public will go for most sci-fi flicks. The public enjoys many types of films, but sci-fi seems to be the most popular following the success of "Star Wars."

the aliens, was similar to movies like "The Rocketeer," in which the United States and its allies united against the Nazis.

Different from the hostile alien, the benevolent alien reflects humans' need for God. This type of alien is superior, but has the best interests of humans at heart. The benevolent alien appears god-like, such as the alien in "Contact." This alien, in the guise of Ellie's (Jodie Foster) dead father, tells her they contacted humans to let the species know they were not alone.

These aliens are able to take care of humans because they are so technologically superior and highly evolved. The world today is uncertain, and many people hope there is someone out there who knows what is best for them. People long for something to be in awe of, and benevolent aliens can fill that position, at least for occasional two-hour increments. In his essay "Aliens in the Supermarket," George Guffey said the people who seek out this type of story "yearn for salvation in an age dominated by science and technology."

Another superior being, the interfering alien, is one of the least common in science fiction. "Star Trek"'s Q (John DeLancie) is a perfect example. Interfering aliens must be superior because life-changing interference (such as changing the course of human history) can't be accomplished if the alien doesn't have omnipotence, superior intelligence and/or advanced technology. Q was an omnipotent being who could do anything with a mere thought. He used his powers to wreak havoc on the Starship Enterprise. In the first episode of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," Q put Captain Picard (Patrick Stewart) on trial for the sins of

entire human race.

The staple of the interfering alien is that it believes it knows what is best for the human race, but instead of offering its insights as an option (like the benevolent alien), the interfering alien tries to force its will on humans. This kind of alien is god-like in power, but not in understanding, tolerance, benevolence or sensitivity. They are examples of what could happen if a flawed human was given the powers of a god. Humans are selfish, and it would be scary if one man or woman had the ability to determine all of our lives.

Real life examples of this are nations, like the United States, that started off as colonies of another nation and rebelled so they could run things the way they wanted to.

Perhaps today, Third World countries feel like the crew of the Enterprise when the United States swoops in, like Q, to take over their country, transform it into a democracy thereby making things "better" for them. Who's to say our better isn't their worst nightmare? When heroes in sci-fi stories defeat the interfering alien, people's fear of not

being in control are conquered.

The humanoid alien is the first type that is not superior to humans. They almost shouldn't be called aliens at all — they aren't very strange, different or foreign. They are pretty much like humans: bipedal, two arms, two legs, etc. They just aren't products of Earth. Some look just like humans (a la Princess Leia, Han Solo and Luke Skywalker from "Star Wars"), but most have distinguishing characteristics like many "Star Trek" aliens (the Trill have spots, Vulcans have pointed ears and Klingons have ridges on their foreheads).

This type of alien is someone sci-fi viewers can identify with. Humanoids have basically the same needs as humans, and, therefore, the same problems. If the hero is a big blob, like Jabba the Hut in "Return of the Jedi," the viewer would have a hard time sympathizing. In sci-fi, humanoids, along with the humans, are the heroes, heroines and main characters. They are friends — neither inferior nor superior — even if that friendship lasts only as long as the movie, TV show or book.

The final type of alien, the friendly alien, is inferior to humans. It is the child of the universe, and the best example is E.T. from the movie, "E.T. the Extra Terrestrial," in which the characters find and help the young alien.

The friendly alien represents human's need to nurture — it relates to

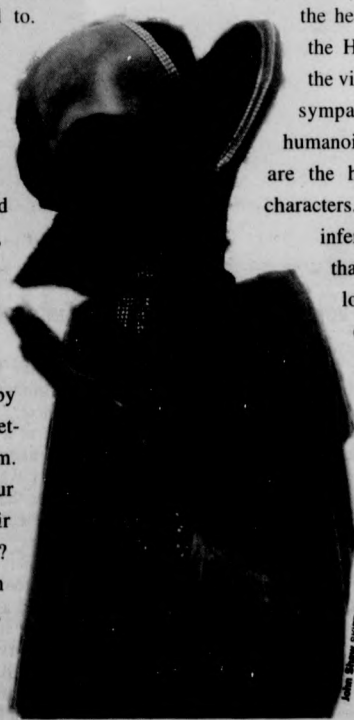
humans like a child, or even a pet. As a race, humans are more independent, focusing more on careers instead of raising a family. Some people remember the "good old days" when mothers stayed home with fondness, showing that somewhere underneath an independent exterior, today's people crave nurturing and have a need to nurture others.

In science fiction, humans get involved with friendly aliens, take them under their wing and help them. According to Huntington, this type of story shows humans have hearts after all and that we can overcome our differences to help each other.

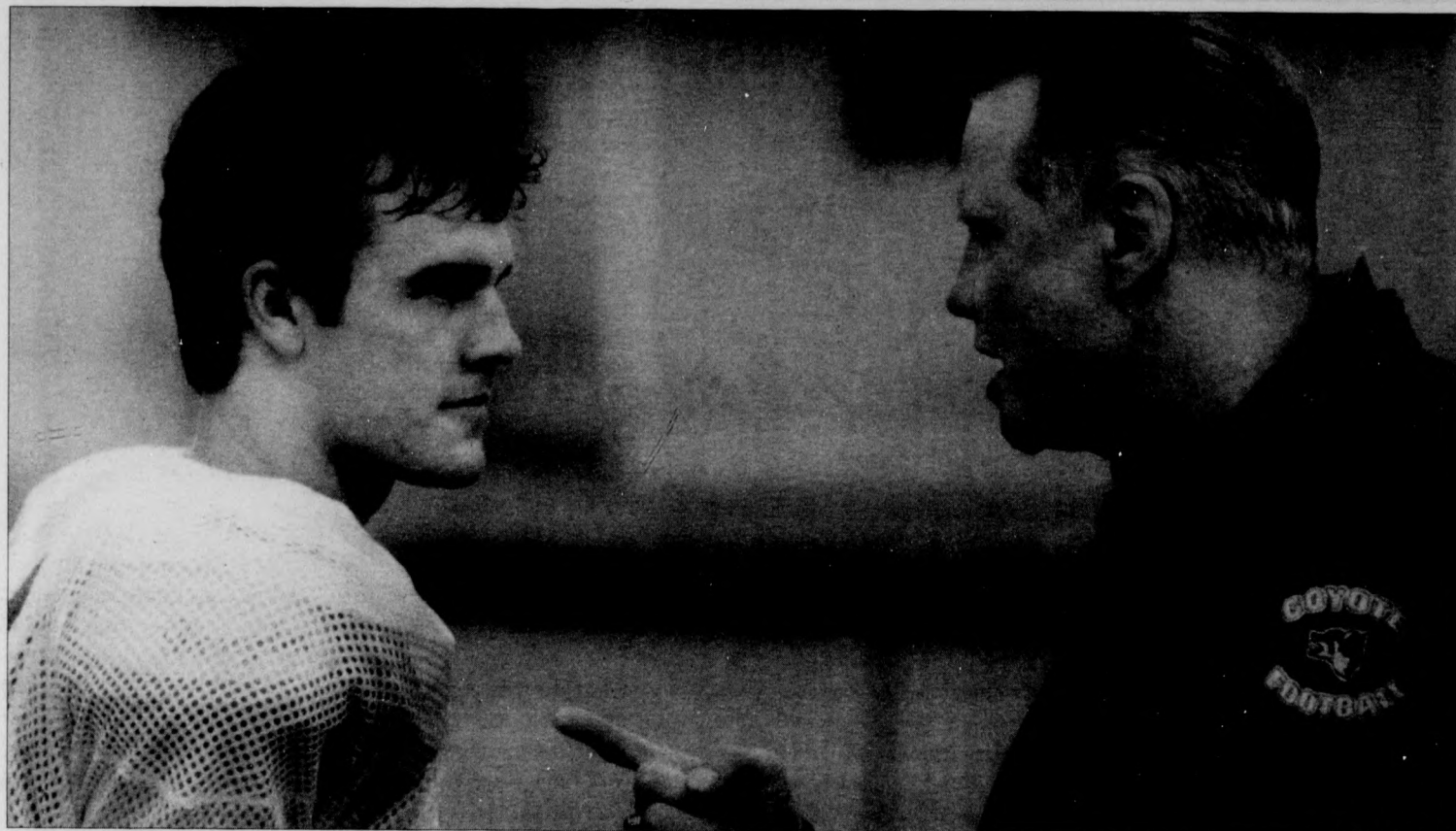
Since the gradual increase of sci-fi into pop culture, aliens have become more visible in society than ever before. They are seen in movies, on TV and on T-shirts; read about in magazines; and some people even talk about them with friends in person or on the Internet. Since the alien is more important to our culture, it is important that humans examine the five varieties to understand why these aliens exist in minds and stories.

By looking at the five types, it becomes clear that they are needed to provide an emotional experience in sci-fi viewers — be it an experience of hate, love, fear of control, identification or nurturing. And because these are the emotions people have chosen to invent aliens to inspire, it is obvious these are the needs today's society is not meeting, and pop culture — in the form of science fiction — is striving to fulfill.

STORY BY ERIN BRINKMAN
OPINION EDITOR



John B. Shaw/STAFF STAFF



PULL MY FINGER. James Van Der Beek (left) confronts his redneck coach in "Varsity Blues."

SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF

'Varsity' tackles Texas football issues

By Lindsay Williams
SKIFF STAFF

I not only had the privilege of seeing "Varsity Blues," but I was also able to interview the cast and director of this football flick.



Film

You've probably seen "Rudy," the story of the world of college football, and "Necessary Roughness," the story of the transitions of an awful college football team from worst to better. But for the first time, the story of what Texas high school football is like is being told.

As a Texas native, I know high school football is competitive. But in Texas, it's war. The cast and crew traveled to a small city outside Austin to film this movie, and they were very surprised at the way of life. Cast members had to adapt to their competitive environment by attending training camp like every football player. James Van Der Beek gained a whopping 15 pounds of muscle for his role as quarterback.

In the small city of West Canaan, TX, the West Canaan Coyotes control the social and athletic world, and quarterback Lance Harbor (Paul Walker) is king. A billboard is erected in his honor. He is worshipped by all the teenage girls in the city, and his girlfriend is the head cheerleader.

For Lance, life is good until a leg injury puts him on the sideline. During the start of a play, his right-hand man, Billy Bob, passes out—too many head injuries and beers—and Lance is tackled.

The torch is then passed to Jonathan Moxon (Van Der Beek). Although he is loved by his teammates, his coach feels otherwise, constantly bosses Moxon around and hates the fact that Moxon questions his plays.

The only reason Moxon stays on the team is because his father once was on the West Canaan football team also.

Another character is Moxon's girlfriend, Jules (Amy Smart), who is terrified that all of this publicity will go to his head.

So Moxon has pressure from his parents, his girlfriend, his coach, his friends and, worst of all, he must follow in Lance Harbor's footsteps. But he accepts the job gracefully and manages to take the team to victory several times.



SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF

JON VOIGHT.

Viewers know James Van Der Beek from "Dawson's Creek," in which he plays a high school intellectual and sometimes romantic movie buff. I was kind of worried about Van Der Beek's ability to believably pull off a macho quarterback. But he performed the part very nicely, and his Texas accent was impressive, too.

In my interview, he said he liked the atmosphere in Texas and had a lot of fun playing his character. For future roles, he said he was willing to try new things, including playing struggling characters who undergo transitions in their life.

The only job he wasn't willing



SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF

JAMES VAN DER BEEK.

to tackle was a role in a horror flick like his "Dawson" co-stars. Unfortunately, like his Dawson character, Van Der Beek is not much of a talker and did not say much about the movie.

Paul Walker, who plays Lance Harbor, has co-starred in movies like "Pleasantville" and "Meet the Deedles." The tall California blond acts much like his characters—goofy, yet sweet. He said he also had a blast playing football. Like his character in "Pleasantville," his role in "Varsity Blues" was about a boy who matures after learning the important lessons of life.

Tweeder is played by Scott Caan, son of actor James Caan. Caan debuts in his first studio film after starring in several independent movies. And he provides most of the comic relief on and off the camera.

Last, but not least, is Coach Bud Kilmer, played by legendary actor Jon Voight ("Heat," "The Rainmaker"). Kilmer, a redneck and racist coach, turns life into hell for all of his players, but has led his men to several state championships throughout his 25-year career. "A football coach is such an important leader in a young boy's life," Van Der Beek said. But Voight's character shows that this leadership can only go so far until his followers stop following.

I was very impressed with this Texas tale of football because it didn't focus on only one character or even the team, but on the whole town as well. It was realistic in showing the struggles of high school kids—not just when it came to football, but with drinking, smoking, sex and parents. No matter what other criticism you hear about "Varsity Blues," it's very funny, dramatic, and would most likely appeal to young adults only. It doesn't matter whether you're a sports fan or not; it's worth your time and money. **Grade: B+**

'Thin Red Line' is just some nice scenery

By Mitch Youngblood
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

I don't know what movie other film critics saw, but why publications like *Time*, *Newsweek* and *Entertainment Weekly* are hailing "The Thin Red Line" as one of the best films of 1998 is beyond me. Certainly it's one of the most pretentious, but it's far from one of the best. Granted the very nature of criticism is the voicing of an *opinion*, but this flick is a waste of three good hours of anyone's life.

Film

It's a waste of time, that is, unless you're looking for a documentary on wildlife and various types of plants and trees. The cinematography is the lone area where "The Thin Red Line" excels because writer-director Terence Malick, who hasn't made a film since 1978's "Days of Heaven," tries hard to contrast the serenity of nature to the brutality of war. A noble goal, but Malick drowns in his own self-rightness and takes every-

one with him. The film is set during the 1943 invasion of Guadalcanal by American forces. The island is of supreme tactical advantage to the Japanese, and they are heavily entrenched in the many hills and valleys. There are four or five stories being told (I honestly lost count because there are so many voice-overs) with the main focus being on Pvt. Witt (Jim Caviezel) who goes AWOL, his Sgt. Capt. James "Bugger" Staros (Elias Koteas) and their Lt. Cmdr. Colonel Gordon Tall (Nick Nolte). Another soldier, Pvt. Bell (Ben Chaplin) just wants to survive this mess and get home to his wife, and 1st Sgt. Edward Welsh (Sean Penn) waxes philosophically about the madness of war.

And that philosophy is what will wear you down after about an hour. For that first hour, I was completely enraptured by the beauty of Malick's lens. His cinematography is gorgeous, and his battle sequences have a ferocity to rival those in "Saving Private Ryan," but his storytelling



SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF

needs some serious work.

We get occasional flashbacks to Bell's time with his wife, thereby establishing him as the *lone* character with motivation. But the catch to his character is that his goal is taken away from him in the final half-hour of the film when she files for divorce. "The Thin Red Line" thus winds up being a three-hour exercise in static character development because no one changes.

I gave up trying to figure out what Witt was supposed to get out of the war, be it respect for life or how to be a good soldier. Staros always cares for his men and cares for them even more when he gets sent home after taking a village with his unit. What did he learn? I haven't a clue.

And don't go into this expecting the big name stars to rescue the film from its director. John Travolta appears for about three minutes at the beginning as a ship's captain then isn't seen again. George Clooney shows up for two minutes at the tail

end of the film to deliver a monologue to the men. Very little star power is emitted by any of the lesser known actors because they are given so little to work with and so little motivation.

Malick is, in my mind, the reason for what is so wrong with this film. A friend once told me there are no bad directors, only bad writers. If that's true then Malick the director should have fired Malick the writer at the get go. All of the voice-overs sound exactly alike, even the woman's, because Malick's prose is so static and boring. During one flashback, we see Bell and his wife together and hear Chaplin say, "We. We together. We together, apart." What in the name of the Almighty does that mean?

Maybe I didn't get it since I am neither a philosophy nor an English major. What I am is a radio-TV-film major and thus I can accurately claim to know a little bit about what makes a film worth of my student

discount. "The Thin Red Line" is nothing more than a thick black rip-off that wasted my morning and put me in a really foul mood. Decent acting rarely saves overly pretentious film making, and this flick is no exception. How those high-minded critics at large publications can call this melodramatic waste of celluloid excellent is so far beyond me I can't even see it.

You've been warned. "The Thin Red Line" is a waste of time, but with lovely cinematography that you could see on a nature documentary on the Discovery Channel any day of the week. Not only would it save you money but you'd get the same effect in fewer than three hours. Here's a personal note to Hollywood: Just because a person doesn't make a film for 20 years does not automatically qualify that person for genius stature. "The Thin Red Line" may have started as noble, but the final result is nothing more than a vanity project gone mad. **Grade: D**



SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE. John Cusack (top) shows courage under fire and takes orders from Nick Nolte (above) in "The Thin Red Line."

All hope is not lost "At First Sight"

By Marianne M. Graham
SKIFF STAFF

After seeing "At First Sight," one realizes that in the words of a wise blind woman, Helen Keller, "The best

Film

and most beautiful things of the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

"At First Sight" is not a fast-paced thriller, or even a romantic comedy, but it is a provocative venture into the obstacles life often presents. This film, based upon a true account by

neuropsychiatrist Oliver Sacks, won't be nominated for Best Picture, but it will be enjoyed by those who take the time to go and see it.

In a day and age when we are often presented with tightly packaged multi-million dollar movies, one may be disappointed with the realistic portrayal of a blind man falling in love with a sighted woman. This simple story unfolds very methodically, as director Irwin Winkler moves through the two hours and 20 minutes of film.

Amy Benic (Mira Sorvino) is a talented architect caught in a web of career stresses and a loss of direction. She resolves to take a weekend retreat

to a spa on the Hudson River. It's here where she meets Virgil Adamson (Val Kilmer).

Virgil, a masseur renowned for his skill, charm and wit, has learned to capitalize on his blindness and use it as a source of creativity. As a longtime resident of the town, he finds the support and assistance he needs in his fellow citizens and his sister Jennie (Kelly McGillis). By all accounts, Virgil lives a fairly comfortable and fulfilling life, but meeting Amy changes all this.

Virgil finds a new confidence with Amy's companionship. Amy finds a new way to experience the world

around her. She is fascinated with the vivid portraits painted by the palette of Virgil's enhanced sense of sound and feeling. Things she never seemed to notice, such as the rain, begin to entice her, as if she were a child seeing the world all for the first time. Virgil sees Amy better than any sighted man ever has and she finds herself escaping New York City to spend time with him.

During one of her visits, Amy stumbles upon an article highlighting a surgeon who supposedly could heal the blind. Excited by the opportunity that Virgil may be able to join her sighted world, Amy eagerly

begins to look further into this doctor's claims and eventually persuades Virgil to meet the doctor. Virgil is apprehensive; his sister Jennie is avidly against the hope she feels threatens Virgil's acceptance of being blind. Virgil decides to go through with the surgery despite Jennie's reservations.

The surgery is a success by all medical definitions. The consequences of the medical miracle, however, present a variety of discoveries, obstacles, disappointments and triumphs. But ultimately, it is Virgil's own acceptance that bring peace to his life again. **Grade: B+**

TCU Bookstore book of the week

By Kristina Iodice
SKIFF STAFF

Flawlessly weaving together the story of a family dealing with the wealth, power, corruption and struggles that result from owning a massive tract of land, "A Thousand Acres" grasps the interest of the reader and refuses to release it.

The novel is an investigation into the human heart, looking at the lives of the Cook family and at their land, the almost mythic amount of a thousand acres. Jane Smiley has written an exceptional story about a family and their trials in a rural American heartland community.

"A Thousand Acres" is the story of the Cook family as it breaks apart, and the human cost involved when trying to conquer the land. It is a moving and compelling novel that includes such diverse topics as family dysfunction and farming as practiced on large industrial farms.

The novel and the story is divided into six books (and a brief but important epilogue), braiding the lives of Larry Cook, Rose, Pete, Ty, and especially Ginny (who acts as the narrator) into words. In the beginning, the family appears close-knit, with each member having a place and unique characteristics. The reader learns of the history of the Cook family and how they came to own a thousand acres of some of the best farm land in the state.

As the novel continues, however, not even the massive acreage is enough to stay the hand of tragedy. Ginny and Rose are close sisters, and Ty and Pete are their husbands, respectively. Larry Cook is the overbearing father, the owner and the manager of the vast family property. He decides to form a corporation, with his daughters owning shares in order to lower inheritance taxes when he dies. This idea, starting as an insignificant seed that everyone in their hometown of Cabot laughs at, initiates a chain of events that will tear the Cook family apart and will result in the loss of their land and the comfort they sometimes find in each other.

The manner in which Smiley guides the reader through the destruction of the Cook family is exceptionally well written. When the relationships in "A Thousand Acres" begin to unravel, the reader mentally begs Smiley for a situation that will reverse the negative spiraling of events. Larry is giving up his past when he signs over his

farm, but he still wants to maintain rigid control over Rose, Ginny and the futures of their families. After the legalities are approved and completed, Larry degenerates mentally and even Rose's and Ginny's problems are magnified. Ginny, in a burst of insight common in Smiley's writing, fears what the arrangement will do to her family.

The land is what ties and binds the families together. It held them together during the depression and during times of prosperity, yet now it is wrenching them apart. Each family that farms (and the truth still stands for today's farming communities) deals with every situation in an unique way. The Cook daughters dream of things being different, especially when their father starts acting oddly.

Ginny always looks at other families and other lives rather hopelessly; "that was what was to be envied ... the uniqueness of each family's fate, of each family's, each couple's, freedom to make or find something apart from the others." The Cook family lacks that freedom; it was buried in the land when the first Cooks bought and tilled it, and it was stolen and then locked away by Larry Cook.

Readers will devour "A Thousand Acres." The characters are touching and realistic, but more so because of the encompassing truths presented in the Cook's life story that apply to the human heart as well as to a farmer's soul. Any reader, even if not familiar with rural life, will enjoy the novel immensely.

Smiley powerfully conveys with stunning insight the symbiotic relationships between a farmer and his land, including those between family members. She takes the endless horizon as glimpsed from a car speeding through America's heartland and gives it depth, a history and a personality.

"A Thousand Acres" is a story about carrying buried secrets and burdens, and learning to live life day by day. In hindsight, the novel is sprinkled with lessons that can apply to all readers, usually concerning some difficult issues like accomplishments when tied to forgiving the unforgivable. "A Thousand Acres" is the marvelous and captivating story of America and the existential horrors that inevitably emerge into the light as the rock of family solidarity slowly disintegrates and eventually is shattered. **Grade: A**

Calendar & Events

Calendar

Friday, Jan. 22

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 23

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 3 & 8 p.m.
Fine Arts Chamber Players, FREE concert, 3 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 24

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 2 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 7 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 7:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 25

Curt Thompson violin recital —
TCU Ed Landreth Hall
Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 28

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 29

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 8 p.m.
Tripping Daisy concert at the Aardvark, 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 30

TCU Graduate Dance Concert:
University Theatre, 8 p.m.

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 3 & 8 p.m.
Tripping Daisy concert at the Aardvark, 3 & 8 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 31

TCU Graduate Dance Concert:
University Theatre, 2 p.m.

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 2 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 7 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 7:30 p.m.



SPECIAL TO THE SKIFF
THIS AIN'T NO FRATERNITY PARTY. (From left) Dawn Swearingen, Chuck Huber, Laurie Vlasich and Deborah Kirby perform the Greek tragedy, "Medea."

Thursday, Feb. 4

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra:
Superstar Pops Series, 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 5

Contemporary Dance Fort Worth:
Sean Curran, 8 p.m.

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 8 p.m.
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra:
Superstar Pops Series, 8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 6

Main Street Theatre: "Kiss Me Kate," 8 p.m.

Stage West: "Medea," 3 & 8 p.m.

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra:
Superstar Pops Series, 8 p.m.

Pocket Sandwich Theatre: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 8 p.m.

Events

Stage West brings new approach to "Medea"

Stage West and Moonwater Theatre Company combine forces to produce Moonwater's new adaptation of Euripides' Greek classic "Medea." Moonwater Theatre Company, formally associated with the improvisational group Fuzzy Logic, approach the classic formality of "Medea" with the improvisational rehearsal tech-

niques used in Fuzzy Logic along with a great deal of respect for the power of the original text.

The play's fierce passion makes it stand out even among the large-scale emotions and issues of Greek drama. The Greek play is the story of the original myth, a sorceress in love whose revenge violates society's strongest bans and destroys the political structure of the state.

All performances of "Medea" are at Stage West. Performances are 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. Friday, 3 and 8 p.m. Saturday and 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Student Rush Tickets, available 30 minutes prior to the curtain, are \$5. Other tickets are \$7-\$9 with student ID. For more information, call 784-9378.

Music and dance combine for dramatic performance

The Fine Arts Chamber Players present the Dallas Bach Society and New York Baroque Dance Company in a free performance at 3 p.m. Saturday. The program will include chamber music by Bach, Mozart and Handel with costumed dancers.

"Music from the 18th century is dominated by a spirit of drama and theatrical movement," said Rogene Russell, Artistic Director of the Fine Arts Chamber Players, in a press release. "The pairing of music and dance in this concert will provide our audience with a visual translation of the style, detail and dramatic element intended by the composers."

The concert will be held at the Horchow Auditorium at the Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N. Harwood. Admission is free. Doors open at 2:30 p.m. for the 3 p.m. concert. For more information, call (214) 520-2219.

Internet Site of the Week

www.darkhorizons.com

Want to know all the available info on upcoming movies through the year 2000? Log on to this site before the Y2K problem keeps you from finding out about hit movies in the works. Previews, news & rumors, reviews and trailers will hold you over until the real films come out. Check it out!