

JUST ANOTHER NUMBER
Students often feel like just another face
in the crowd

FROGS ON TOP
Find out what has the men's tennis team
celebrating



TCU DAILY SKIFF

Serving Texas Christian University since 1902

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Minister says Sprinkle barred because of trust

The regional minister of the Disciples of Christ responded to a Brite official's accusation that he was barred from interviewing ministerial candidates because he is gay.

By Elizabeth Bassett
Staff Reporter

A letter from the Disciples of Christ regional minister says the Brite Divinity School representative who alleges he was

discriminated against because he's gay was asked not to participate in interviews because of a lack of trust and respect.

Stephen Sprinkle, Brite's director of field education, said he was barred from interviewing ordination candidates from Jan. 12-14. Regional minister Robert Rueter said in a letter that Sprinkle was asked not to participate in interviews because of a petition Sprinkle filed in the 48th Judicial District

Court in October.

The petition was filed to investigate possible defaming claims and conspiracy to interfere with Sprinkle's employment by officials in the Region and Brite students. Sprinkle was being investigated by the Region for alleged sexual misconduct when the petition was filed, according to affidavits filed by members of the Region. The petition was denied by Judge David Evans in a

court hearing Feb. 12.

"Mr. Sprinkle's court filing is inconsistent with the level of mutual trust and respect required for and expected of the members of the Committee on the Ministry," Rueter said in the letter.

Rueter said in the letter that Sprinkle fully participated in the three-day meeting activities except for the interviewing sessions, from which he was asked to excuse himself

by committee chairman Ben Hubert.

Before the petition was filed, Sprinkle's status in the Region was in question, said the letter from Rueter. Sprinkle cut ties with the Region when he resigned his standing in the church Feb. 12.

Richard Griffin, Sprinkle's attorney, said at the court hearing that Sprinkle's employ-

(More on SPRINKLE, page 2)

Say cheese



College selectivity difficult to verify

College admissions offices can manipulate applicant numbers to appear selective in college ranking surveys. TCU will use an auditor to ensure accuracy.

By Angelica Rosas
Staff Reporter

College admission officers say there is a need to define exactly what constitutes an application to prevent misuse of the number of applications reported by schools seeking a higher standing in student user guides.

Ray Brown, dean of admissions, said guide book rankings are important because high school students use them to filter out or choose a selective university with favorable academic rankings.

The total number of applications received, among other data, is what guide books use to rank schools. Accuracy is important because the numbers colleges report goes directly into print, Brown said.

Universities self-report application numbers to the Common Data Set, a national survey used by several college guides. There are no specifics for what colleges can count as applications, so this can sometimes lead to an application counting free-for-all.

Wes Waggoner, admission practices chair for the Texas Association for College Administration Counseling, said a murky definition of what applications are is a concern among education professionals.

"When the admissions office pads application numbers, the image of exclusivity arises," Waggoner said. "Students figure it's next to impossible to get accepted into such an 'exclusive' school."

High rejection rates means the school is more exclusive, and therefore pushes the institution closer to the top in rankings, Waggoner said.

(More on STANDARDS, page 2)

Pictures give applications special touch, officials say

With admissions officers reviewing as many as 2,000 applicants a region, staff members say pictures of TCU applicants can help admissions get to know applicants better.

By Angelica Rosas
Staff Reporter

Optional photos on applications help admissions officers remember certain students as they sort through the submissions of thousands of prospective TCU students, university officials said.

Sending in a photo is up to students. It will not eliminate consideration for admission nor count against them in any way, Chancellor Victor Boschini said. Other schools Boschini said he has been at request a photo as well.

"Students don't have to send in a picture," Boschini said. "However, it's to the students' advantage to have it because it helps us to remember them out of 7,000 applicants."

Each admissions officer reviews more than 1,000 applications a year. Of these, many applicants are contacted for a one-on-one interview

with the admissions officer in charge of reviewing applicants from the state in which they reside. Due to escalated application numbers, being remembered is an advantage, Boschini said.

"I have mixed emotions about it because I don't want anyone to think physical appearances are what students are remembered or considered for," said Ray Brown, dean of admissions.

(More on PHOTOS, page 2)

Workshop focuses on communication skills

The School of Business will hold a two-day event to teach students the skills they need to succeed in their careers.

By Drew Irwin
Staff Reporter

The Neeley Center for Professional Communication will sponsor and coordinate the seventh annual Corporate Communication Workshop today and Friday at the Dee J. Kelly Alumni and Visitors Center.

Gay Wakefield, director of the CPC, said business students are

not the only people who would benefit from the workshop.

"Any student interested in how communication works in organizations will benefit from the varied workshop sessions offered," said Wakefield, the coordinator of the event.

Greg Stephens, chairman of the department of management, said he hopes students will leave the workshop with the "enthusiasm and curiosity to explore ongoing

(More on WORKSHOP, page 2)

Hanging out



Sarah Chacko/Photo Editor
Brian Pinto and Nick Aleman, employees of Econo-Glass and Mirror, replace a cracked pane on the Moudy Building Wednesday morning.

Senseless Acts of Comedy entertain student crowds

Those who want a good laugh have the option of seeing a live performance on campus Thursday nights.

By Erica Parker
Staff Reporter

Thursday nights can kick off the club and dancing scene for college students. For others there's Senseless Acts of Comedy, the improvisational comedy troupe that performs on campus.

Senseless Acts formed in fall 2002 by founding members Andrew Hamer and John C. Anderson because of Hamer's interest in professional comedy. Both are senior radio-TV-film majors.

Hamer first tried stand up comedy that summer but hit a dry spell.

"I honestly would get sick of saying the same jokes," he said. "I can't stand that."

Hamer later decided he wanted to improve his improvisation skills, so that he can attend the Second City Conservatory in

Chicago, an improvisation school that many comedians have attended.

"I knew that I couldn't go to Chicago and be funny. I decided to get my feet wet and I started doing improv," Hamer said. "After seeing Four Day Weekend a few times for inspiration, I put out and ad in TCU Announce and 'Senseless Acts' was born."

Sophomore biology major Proshad Nemati said, "Senseless Acts brings people together, if you don't want to go out. It gives you something fun to do on a Thursday. The funniest scene from Thursday night was when Matt Meyer was putting animals down his pants for the thrill of it, and Nathan Pena placed an alligator down his backside."

Matt Meyer, a junior political science major, said he wanted to be involved with the comedy troupe because he enjoyed watching improv comedy such as, "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" and was looking for



Ty Halasz/Staff Photographer
Senior radio-TV-film major Andrew Hamer (left) and sophomore business major Chris Niemczyk do what they do best: go nuts.

co-curricular activities.

When asked how Meyer instantly gains energy, he said he never tries to be funny.

If the troupe has funny individuals, then the scenes will be comedic through playing out the situations, Meyer said.

"The energy is important to the mood and feeling we try to create," Meyer said. "The audience

and ourselves can always tell when we're trying to be funny. It's more rewarding and hysterical when comedy happens serendipitously."

Hamer said the energy comes from the crowd.

"If they're having a bad night, so are we," Hamer said.

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THE PULSE

Thursday, February 19, 2004

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Campus Lines

Your bulletin board for campus events

Announcements of campus events, public meetings and other general campus information should be brought to the TCU Daily Skiff office at Moudy Building South, Room 291, mailed to TCU Box 298050 or e-mailed to (skiffletters@tcu.edu). Deadline for receiving announcements is 2 p.m. the day before they are to run. The Skiff reserves the right to edit submissions for style, taste and space available.

■**The honor society for Pre Health Professions**, Alpha Epsilon Delta (Pre-Med), will be having a raffle to raise funds for its group to attend convention in Washington D.C. during March 18-21. The raffle will be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. today in The Main. The drawing will be held Friday. Tickets will be \$2 with many prizes such as dinners for two, a night's stay at the Courtyard Marriott; Stars, Brahmas and TCU baseball tickets with parking; and a TCU bar stool.

■**Kaplan**, the nation's leader in test preparation and admissions services, will offer free practice tests for the LSAT, GMAT, GRE, MCAT, DAT and TOEFL at 9 a.m. Saturday at TCU. For more details, log on to www.kaptest.com.

■**The 10th annual Leadership Institute Dinner** called Set Sail to Leadership: An Ocean of Opportunity will be at 7 p.m. Feb. 27 in the D.J. Kelly Alumni Center. The guest speaker is the President and CEO of Alcon Labs, Tim Sear. The cost is \$15 for students in the Leadership Center and \$20 for all other students. RSVP in Student Center Room 220 or call (817) 257-7855.

■**Buy your very own, name-engraved, senior brick.** The cost is \$50 and it includes the opportunity to recognize three influential people in your life. Deadline is Feb. 28. For more information call Sarah at (817) 257-8785 or e-mail at sj.cox@tcu.edu.

■**Summer 2004 Study Abroad Programs** are now enrolling. To enroll, come by Sadler Hall Room 16, to pick up a permit number and pay a \$500 deposit by Feb. 27. Contact t.williams@tcu.edu.

WORKSHOP

From page 1

improvements in their talking and listening skills, willingness to practice and a foundational framework for continuing to build on their new skills."

Shannon Shipp, chairman of the department of marketing, said his seminar is designed to help spokespeople develop an ethical response to crises.

"The primary goal of my seminar is to give the attendees a sense of the ethical issues involved in communicating with various publics after a crisis," Shipp said. Marion Luna Brem, principal and CEO of Marion Enterprises, will give the keynote speech at 12:30 p.m. Friday. The speech will illustrate how to maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses by becoming intimate with the five beautiful truths about successful managers."

After the speech, Brem will be signing her book, "The 7 Greatest Truths About Successful Women." The book was listed as one of the top ten business books in 2001 by Booklist.

The Coca-Cola Bottling Company of North Texas is the marquee sponsor of the workshop. Ronnie Morris, central area vice president, said he is excited about the workshop because he believes communication is very important in business.

"We believe fundamentally that communication skills are directly linked to good leadership," Morris said. "We really think that the quality of our results is dependent on the quality of our communication."

Morris said he learned about the workshop after his staff took a class in business communication skills at the Charles Tandy American Enterprise Center.

The cost of the workshop is \$149. Students can attend for \$75.

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STANDARDS

From page 1

"Schools sent in numbers that go directly into print," Brown said. "There are no governing rules, only ethics."

The numbers are in question because universities are finding new ways to define and count "applicants," Brown said.

Colleges at other schools have told Brown they report admission numbers including withdrawn applications, teacher recommendations and SAT scores in application totals.

"Without a clear-cut definition, this happens every year," Brown said. "Pumped up application numbers and low acceptance from those numbers give the impression that the school is hard to get into."

Chancellor Victor Boschini said rankings should not be the only reason a student decides to apply.

"We want high academic

standards for the total student benefit," Boschini said. "We don't put pressure on admissions about rankings."

Brown said he wants to take the high road. The TCU Admissions Office plans to hire an auditor to verify application numbers, SAT scores and student profiles. The auditor will come in this summer to audit applications for fall 2004 and fall 2003 before TCU sends its application report in November.

"Keeping honest with numbers is about the students," Brown said. "Take pride in knowing TCU does not count any application that is not student initiated."

Likewise, admission officials at Baylor University and Southern Methodist University report counting only applications filed electronically or by mail.

"Our numbers are verifiable," said James Steen, the director of admission services at Baylor. "But auditing would be a useful tool for consistency."

Rice University, considered by many to be the most selective private school in Texas, counts applications differently.

"We report the first part of our application process which includes a student-initiated application plus an application fee or fee waiver," said Julie Browning, the dean of undergraduate admissions at Rice. "Otherwise we don't count it in our reports."

Waggoner said having an outside objective voice would give validity to reports. He pointed out that although audits would ensure accuracy, the auditing agencies would need a standard definition for what an application is.

And that brings back the question of what counts as an application, he said.

"If this was done, even the auditing agency would demand a standard methodology," Waggoner said. "And if it was defined, schools could only be pressured to follow."

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PHOTOS

From page 1

Brown said the admissions office received its highest number of applicants for next fall, torpedoing past last year's 7,654 applicants. He said photos have always been part of the optional section of applications.

Though the admissions office has received more applications, the number of pictures sent in with those applications still remains roughly 20 percent, Brown said.

Brown said he and other admissions officials review pictures but do not profile students in any way. He said he hardly even looks at them.

"I get to meet so many students, as many as 2,000 a year, so having a face to go with a name is helpful," Brown said. "However, we really want to know what is in their head and hearts, not what they look like."

Some students questioned the practice.

"I think it's unnecessary to judge an applicant in any way based on what their profile looks like," junior marketing major Erin Kreider said. "If a student fits all requirements for TCU, what does it matter what they look like?"

Photos give students an additional opportunity to show creativity and distinguish themselves, Brown said. Students can send in

whatever picture they want. The most memorable are funny or creative photos, but high school senior pictures are the ones normally sent, Brown said.

"I always admire those that take risks, and those who send in creative pictures are a rarity," Brown said.

The most original pictures make it on the admissions application board in the office, Brown said. The admissions office has received group pictures with the applicant's face circled, students with their pets and even those superimposed onto a glossy with Hollywood celebrities.

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RESPONSE

From page 1

ment at Brite is not as secure as it once was.

"I think it's untrue," Brite President Newell Williams said when asked about Griffin's statement.

Williams said Sprinkle will remain field education director. He said because Brite is affiliated with United Methodist Church and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as well as the Christian Church, there is no requirement that the field education director be a member of the Christian Church.

Williams said that because Sprinkle has resigned his standing and is no longer acting on behalf of the Region, he will not be allowed to interview ordination candidates in the future.

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COMEDY

From page 1

"The funny ideas come from team building. If one of us tried to perform the same show alone, you can bet they'd run out of energy fast," Hamer said.

Meyer said most of the troupe members have known each other from the start.

"We have done a lot of improv with one another and have become great friends. Andrew, Nathan Pena and myself live in an apartment together," Meyer said.

Senseless Acts performs at 9:30 p.m., Thursdays, in Moudy Building North, Room 141.

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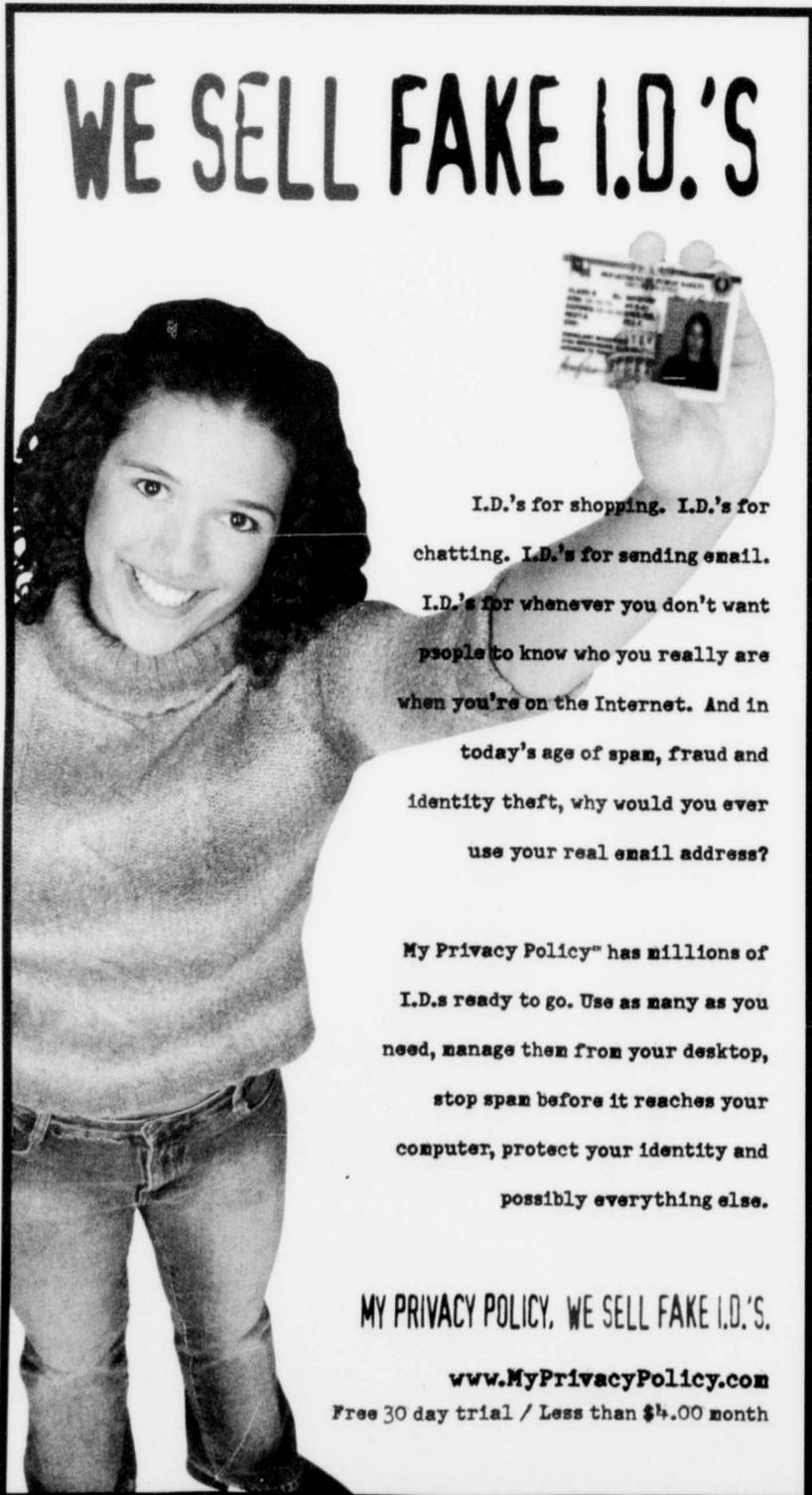
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Pair of blasts raise toll of violence in Iraq

Suicide attacks kill 10, wound more than 100. U.S. arrests seven suspects linked to al Qaeda in northern raid.

By Sameer N. Yacoub
Associated Press

HILLAH, Iraq — Suicide bombers detonated explosives outside a Polish-run base Wednesday, killing 10 Iraqis and wounding more than 100 people, more than half of them coalition soldiers. The United States arrested seven guerrillas believed linked to al Qaeda in an early morning raid to the north.

The attack in Hillah, the third suicide bombing of security targets in two weeks, was part of a wider effort "to isolate us from the Iraqi people," coalition military commander Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez told reporters in Tikrit.

Coalition and military officials said at least 106 people were hurt in the blasts, which happened in the Hayy Babil neighborhood near Camp Charlie. The wounded included 32 Iraqis and 26 Poles, as well as Hungarians, Bulgarians, Filipinos and an American.

The casualty toll could have been much higher had guards not opened fire and prevented the bombers from entering the camp. One truck exploded under the gunfire and another blew up after hitting a concrete barrier.

The 7:15 a.m. blasts — from 1,540 pounds of explosives — flattened 11 homes nearby and blew down the entire sides of several other houses in this town south of Baghdad.

Earlier Wednesday, U.S. troops arrested seven militants believed linked to al Qaeda in the turbulent city of Baqouba, north of the capital, the military said. It gave no details on the nationalities of

the militants. There was no indication the attacks and the U.S. raid were directly linked.

Troops from the 4th Infantry Division carried out the raid early Wednesday targeting an "anti-coalition cell" that may have ties to Osama bin Laden's terror group, a statement from the U.S. command said.

Suicide attacks have killed 300 people, mostly Iraqis, since the beginning of the year. They have fueled speculation that Islamic extremists, possibly linked to al Qaeda, were playing a greater role in the anti-coalition insurgency. U.S. military officials had believed the attacks were spearheaded by Saddam Hussein loyalists.

The stepped-up violence could be aimed at preventing U.S. administrators from handing over power to the Iraqis on June 30, when Iraqi security forces would also take a more prominent role against the insurgency.

Two suicide bombings killed more than 100 Iraqis last week. Polish Gen. Mieczyslaw Bieniek, commander of the 9,500-member Polish military contingent, said Wednesday's bombings, about 55 miles south of the capital, were a "well-coordinated terrorist attack."

Mohyee Mokheef, a 50-year-old cafe owner who lives in the neighborhood, said he was having breakfast when he heard a faint first explosion and a second, louder one that shattered the windows in his home. He blamed al Qaeda and an Iraq-based group linked to it, Ansar al-Islam.

"I saw dead and injured Iraqis lying on the ground," he told The Associated Press. "I suspect that Ansar al-Islam and al Qaeda were behind these operations because they want to create strife between Sunnis and Shiites and

between the Shiites and Americans. They want to derail the elections process."

Most of the wounded among multinational troops were hurt by flying debris and glass. The injuries were not life-threatening.

The attack happened as members of Iraq's Governing Council distanced themselves further from the U.S. idea of holding regional caucuses to elect an interim government after the planned June 30 hand over.

Mouwafak al-Rubaie, a Shiite Arab member of the Governing Council, said the idea of using caucuses to choose a provisional legislature was "gone with the wind." He said the only solution palatable to Iraqis is general elections.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said Tuesday that the United States was committed to giving the Iraqi people control of their country by July 1 but remained open to ideas from the United Nations. The world body sent a team to Iraq to evaluate the best way forward and is expected to report this week.

Governing Council member Dara Nor al-Din, a Sunni Kurd, said the Iraqi body was waiting "for the decisions reached by the United Nations on whether the elections are possible and what ideas they have to solve the problem."

Another debate connected to the hand-over of power is the drafting of an interim constitution and the role Islam will have in it.

The council's president, Mohsen Abdul-Hamid, appeared to back away from an earlier demand that the constitution specify that Islam is the principle basis for Iraq's laws. L. Paul Bremer, the top U.S. administrator in Iraq, suggested this week he would block such a move.

The Skiff View

Alternative paper is a good idea

The Skiff welcomes WHAT'SUPTCU!

For every packet of sugar there is a packet of Sweet 'N Low. For every Nike there is Adidas. Everyone in every facet of life has an opponent. It might be a cooperative opponent or an enemy. The Skiff is no different.

Knowledge is the key to success and the Skiff cannot have a monopoly on what the student body reads.

Alternative newspapers pop up here and there and provide students with a different view of TCU and life in general. Contrary to what some may think, the Skiff welcomes papers like WHAT'SUPTCU! to campus and hope they can provide students with even more sources of information.

We want to see the student body provided with the most knowledge possible, and the more outlets, the better.

This is America, not communist China. Students have a right get information from any source they can. You might as well call us Monarch Skiff if we hoard information and let out only what we deem fit for the public. That is not what our country is about. And it's not what the Skiff is about.

Not only will there be a wealth of information for students, but these publications will push each other to be the best they can be. One paper will try to outdo the other.

Only good can come from having some competition. Macy's and Gimbells learned to live next to each other, so why can't the Skiff and WHAT'SUPTCU! But Gimbells's is gone, long gone. So, WHAT'SUPTCU! can be Gimbells's.

The Skiff would like to wish them the best of luck in enlightening the student body of TCU. Get out there. Get the story. Tell the world about it.

And until then, we'll be working, and anxiously awaiting the next issue.

The Other View

Opinions from around the country

New technology betters SUVs

The presence of large vehicles such as Hummers and Ford Excursions on our highways shows that there is a demographic that prefers high horse-powered utility vehicles — vehicles notorious for being gas-guzzlers and less than environmentally friendly.

However, after the introduction of environmentally sound gas/electric hybrid cars, some automotive manufacturers have stepped up to the plate and designed sport-utility hybrids. These new SUVs are accredited with having the same gas mileage as current non-hybrid cars. Such vehicles will not only be more environmentally friendly but also lower the United States' dependency on foreign oil sources.

Ford and Toyota plan to introduce the first two hybrid SUVs to the American market as early as this spring. According to The New York Times, these models will supplement the typical internal combustion system with an electric motor that generates electricity while the motor is running on "regular" gas mode, but kicks in at low speeds thereby saving gas.

Typically, SUVs are only able to average 19 miles per gallon in fuel efficiency, and some get a as low as 4 to 8 mpg. The new hybrids are expected to average 35 to 40 mpg with city driving and average about 20 percent more fuel efficiency on highways, according to The New York Times.

Environmental advocates have been opposed to SUVs for their environment-damaging characteristics. For example, a study conducted by David Friedman, research director for the clean vehicle program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, quoted in The New York Times reports that in order to stop the global warming emissions of automobiles, 60 percent of cars would have to be hybrids by 2015.

Dan Becker, a specialist in global warming with the Sierra Club, told The New York Times that if large car companies start to embrace the technology that is available to them to make more fuel-efficient cars, then environmentalists will be more accepting of them.

Toyota initially reached commercial success with its hybrid Prius. Toyota also hopes to release the Lexus RX400h in early November or December of this year. Ford's new version of its SUV, Escape, will be on the market in April. Dodge and General Motors are also looking into revamping some of their more popular truck models in order to keep up with the hybrid demand, according to CNN.

Hopefully these environmentally sound SUVs will catch on. For now, it is commendable that the automakers are finally tailoring their vehicles to be more fuel-efficient.

This staff editorial is from The Oracle of the University of South Florida. This editorial was distributed by U-Wire.

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Letters to the editor: The Skiff welcomes letters to the editor for publication. Letters must be typed, double-spaced, signed and limited to 250 words. To submit a letter, bring it to the Skiff, Moudy 2915; mail it to TCU Box 298050; e-mail it to skiffletters@tcu.edu or fax it to 257-7133. Letters must include the author's classification, major and phone number. The Skiff reserves the right to edit or reject letters for style, taste and size restrictions.



Frogs ponder money issues

As a freshman, 10984 had a name. He was a naive young lad, who waived with a heavy heart to his parents as they drove away. He walked into

COMMENTARY Milton Daniel Hall, free to make the decisions and live the life that would shape his persona. Tuition was only around \$330 per class hour then, and his semester cost at Milton Daniel was only around \$900. While he is glad TCU is still under the average cost for comparable private universities, he wonders if the Stafford Loan program will raise the limit on how much one can borrow.

Fresh from Barbados, 10987 looks forward to her opportunity to work on a graduate degree. She doesn't have transportation, so she moved into the Bellaire House Condominiums only to find out that in the middle of May, she needs to find a new place to live. The school gave her 10 extra days from the end of finals, as a courtesy, to move out. Unfortunately, the only option she has is to move out at the end of April, during a tough spell at school, because it would be difficult to find a place that would let her move in mid-month. Because she has no transportation, she has to find a place close to TCU that she can afford, or live on campus year round which she cannot afford without taking out another loan.

10874 had his car broken into, and all he got was a police report verifying his car was broken into. The solution for his problem: Build a fence around the TCU property. People who want to come onto our campus to break into our students' property will have to climb the fence or walk around it. The students who can't find anywhere to park on the TCU property had better start working out on the climbing wall in the University Recreation Center if they hope to get to class on time. He hopes that whatever his insurance doesn't cover, he can cover with whatever money is left over from his student loans.

10467 reads the Skiff and can't figure out why fees collected from students — to be used for the students' sake by the Student Government Association — must be used to buy a new SuperFrog suit. She loves SuperFrog but can't understand why the university's sports marketing department doesn't pay for the new suit. Is it not TCU that benefited from having that very suit all over the nation's television screens? Is it not TCU that has seen an increase in licensing fees as a result? Yet, products the program uses to make it more visible are not funded by the department that is supposed to market them. She wonders how much of her student loan was used to make such a purchase.

Driving around campus on her way to sign more student loan papers, 10989 can't find a parking space that is not on an illegal side street. She just wishes that when she finally gets parked, walks across campus and gets to the bathroom, the school would at least have purchased better toilet paper.

Carlos Alvarado is an education graduate student from Fort Worth. He can be reached at c.a.alvarado@tcu.edu.

We need a Joker to our Batman

In the world of black and white photography, it is considered best to avoid the perfect whites and darkest blacks. It is the grays that give depth, the grays that tell the story and shade the object.

COMMENTARY In life, however, these grays are what take away our depth and blend us together into a finger-painted collage of something quite ordinary.

A good friend once told me, when critiqued for his outlandish views and tendency to argue, that this world needs a villain. "I just choose to fill that spot, at least for some people," he said to me, completely serious. He has a point, and a position I envy. A point which started me thinking — our world is filled with toe-stepping grays, all too afraid to make a move that would label them "radical" or "extreme." But since when has it become a bad thing to be extreme about a cause? Even our politicians have stopped standing for anything concrete, and now they all agree in a race for who can attain the most "moderate" position. This turn in our world throws us into upheaval; if there is no controversy, then there is no

spark and no spice to life.

I can see two solutions to this growing problem. If we were able, as a nation or as a world, to unite in a common cause, it could halt our apathetic views toward anything substantial. Unfortunately, our world shrinks smaller and smaller every day. Choices for this great unifying cause are dwindling. There is no more West that awaits our manifest destiny; no more conquerable governments, at least in today's society. Therefore, there is no option but to turn out of ourselves, out of this earth, and reach, quite literally, for space.

The 30-plus years our government has sat, stalling, on a move like this convinces me that this first option will not be the solution, at least not while our nation sits listlessly staring at televisions and muttering curses about the size of NASA's budget. Therefore, I believe our world needs an enemy.

Too long has our world sat, inactive, attempting the fight against nebulous enemies hatching vague plots in cramped, stale caverns. But if we have become unsure about our role as the valiant, brave, and righteous folk, the bad guys have become even less sure about their evil ways. Gray abounds unfettered; neither side chooses to attempt the purity of white or the

malevolence of black. Where does this leave us? We are unable to fight against anything and unwilling to fight for anything. Some will argue that our fathers and our fathers' fathers earned this peace of mind for us; it is our duty to accept and enjoy it while it lasts. But who among us truly possesses peace of mind? It is human nature to fight, to argue, to desire, above all else, to win. Our society, left with nothing over which to triumph, simply sits idly making nice with those surrounding us. We need an enemy. We are lapsing, and we want this fight, any fight, a chance to overcome evil and prove ourselves honorable. This urge can be seen in our culture: our films more and more portray the lives of comic book heroes. No one remembers, however, that without the Green Goblin, there would be no Spiderman.

No one wishes for another Holocaust. But our society needs something provoking, something about which we can all get excited. Even if that excitement entails jumping up and screaming at the injustice, it is better than leaning back and watching, indifferently, as our society turns grayer and grayer.

Claire Sellers is a freshman chemistry major from Idaho Falls, Idaho. She can be reached at c.e.sellers@tcu.edu.

Government, Constitution should not be subject to Christian beliefs

Fundamentalist Christianity is a sore subject with me. I've always been more subdued in my worship of God. I've even entertained doubts about his or her existence. If I had done that openly in the small town where I attended high school, it would've invoked the self-righteous wrath of people hell-bent on saving my soul.

COMMENTARY Saying the school administrators there teetered on the line of separation between church and state would be an understatement. They often crossed it and took everyone else with them.

I tried ignoring it when members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes put up a construction paper crucifix in the hallway. Our student assemblies were ostensibly secular but almost always featured an inspirational Christian speaker.

These experiences still resonate with me when I hear people in the Christian community cry, "persecution!" because they can't impose their religious beliefs on someone else.

Secularism is not an evil conspiracy. It is a necessary attitude that public officials must assume so they can serve every citizen, not just followers of Jesus Christ.

It's the attitude our government must take when deciding whether two men can marry.

Nearly all of the arguments against gay marriage have their roots in religion. Our Constitution, not Christ, Mohammed or Moses, should be the final arbiter there.

I thank God the Constitution is not so weak that it can be amended on a whim. President Bush won't risk all of his political capital on this issue, though he'll publicly support others who will run the fool's errand for him. A constitutional amendment with a basis in bigotry would contradict the president's compassionate conservative image.

Sure, the president supports a ban on gay marriage. It's an election year. He promised everyone lower taxes. He literally promised Americans the moon. Fundamentalist Christians are setting themselves up for heartbreak. Bush owns the Christian right, not the other way around.

I don't think Christians are bad people. Many of them sincerely believe America is God's instrument in bringing the gospel to the rest of the world. That's fine. Jesus is a good example of how love and tolerance can be an effective instrument for change. It's just unfortunate that certain Christians aren't following his example.

When these Christians make schools stop teaching evolution, turn other human beings into second-class citizens under the law and erect huge monuments to their faith in government buildings, it does not demonstrate the righteousness of their beliefs. It shows they are so insecure in what they believe that they will bully or intimidate anyone who disagrees with them.

No one is telling Christians what they can or cannot believe. I haven't seen a disclaimer on a Bible that says, "Warning: Genesis may be a metaphor and should not be taken literally." What the courts are telling Christians is they can't force others to agree with them using a public forum. Lack of government involvement in religion does not weaken faith; it strengthens it.

Some Christians are doing bad things in Christ's name. They are doing disservice to themselves and other Christians by misrepresenting Christ. Politicians should stop coddling them, and people of all faiths should stand up to them.

Dan Whisenant is a columnist for The Crimson White at the University of Alabama. This column was distributed by U-Wire.

Forecast
Today
 High: 70; Low: 53
 Partly cloudy and windy
Friday
 High: 63; Low: 35
 Partly cloudy and windy

On This Day
 1473 — Nicolaus Copernicus, the father of modern astronomy, was born. He was the first modern European scientist to propose that Earth and other planets revolve around the sun.

ETC.

Thursday, February 19, 2004

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To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.
Aries (March 21-April 19) Today is a 7 — You're liable to be more thoughtful for the next several weeks, starting now. You'll have to curtail your forward motion as you take more into consideration. This is because you've entered new territory.
Taurus (April 20-May 20) Today is a 6 — You've been going through a testing phase, and it's almost over — for now. The next phase should be a lot more fun for you and for all of your friends. Celebrate!
Gemini (May 21-June 21) Today is an 8 — Conditions are changing as you blast into new territory. You'll have a whole stack of new problems to face, as well as new responsibilities. If you've been paying attention, this will be very interesting.
Cancer (June 22-July 22) Today is a 6 — It's always darkest before the dawn. That's what they say, anyway.

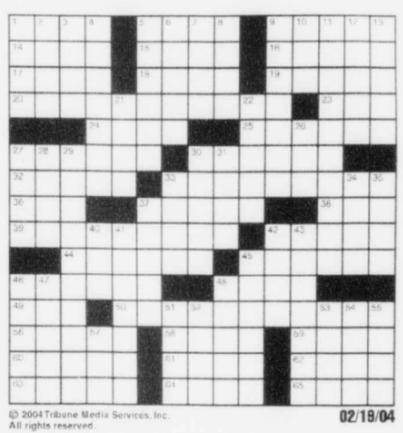
Remember that, and toss away your sorrow. Relax and let the transformation take place.
Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) Today is an 8 — Your assignment for the next few weeks is to stash away as much as you can. If you and your partner do this for a while, you'll have abundance later on.
Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Today is a 6 — You're not quite ready for the final inspection. Someone is likely to find something that has to be done before you get that last stamp of approval.
Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Today is an 8 — Just when you were at the top of your game, a new twist is introduced. There'll be more work for the next several weeks. Good news: It's the creative kind.
Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Today is a 6 — You've been through some tough times lately, but conditions are changing in your favor. For the next few weeks, love and support will be there, rejuvenating your energy.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Today is an 8 — Grab as much information as you can. You'll find a good use for it. Conditions keep on changing, however. Your next assignment is close to home.
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Today is a 6 — You'll find it easier to absorb new material over the next several weeks. Get books on, or take a class on, whatever has been giving you fits.
Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Today is an 8 — You're entering a pragmatic phase, and not a moment too soon. Ideas are abundant, but which of them will bring in the biggest profit? It might be a trick that's untried.
Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) Today is a 6 — It's always darkest just before the dawn, and you're coming into your own. Show courage when facing your trepidations, and ask them for a gift.

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- ACROSS
 1 Personnel
 5 School orgs.
 9 Film snippets
 14 Solo's princess
 15 Singer Guthrie
 16 Lothario's cousin
 17 Carter's middle name
 18 Tykes
 19 Colorado resort
 20 Breakfast offering
 23 Caesar's eggs
 24 Cops!
 25 Affectionate critic
 27 Religious bug?
 30 Black-and-white auks
 32 Elite invitees
 33 Content
 36 Author Fleming
 37 Temporary currency
 38 Sis counterpart
 39 Semi fuel
 42 Secretary of State Powell
 44 BLT part
 45 "Company"
 46 Prime
 48 Bride's accessory
 49 Abdul Aziz
 50 Blue Grotto location
 56 "Jurassic Park" star Sam
 58 Olympic runner Zatopek
 59 Requirement
 60 Banks or Kovacs
 61 Missile garage
 62 Copenhagen native
 63 Fine horse
 64 Musial or Getz
 65 Raw minerals



- DOWN
 1 Staff symbol
 2 Rump
 3 St. Patrick's land
 4 Fruitcake ingredient
 5 Feeling of pity
 6 Fidelity
 7 Sax for Bird
 8 Cub Sammy
 9 Lunar features
 10 Alamos or Gatos lead-in
 11 Out of the question
 12 Irrigate
 13 Sub detector
 21 Voucher
 22 Bacon unit
 26 J.J. Pershing's troops
 27 House servant
 28 Jai
 29 Agent 86's partner
 30 Nintendo's hero
 31 Pub service
 33 Dundee man
 34 Buffalo's lake
 35 Adams and Cornelius
 37 Bumps off
 40 Instant lawn
 41 Sent a cyber-message

Wednesday's Solutions

1	PERSONNEL	2	STAFF SYMBOL
3	ST. PATRICK'S LAND	4	FRUITCAKE INGREDIENT
5	SCHOOL ORGS.	6	FIDELITY
7	SAX FOR BIRD	8	CUB SAMMY
9	LUNAR FEATURES	10	ALAMOS OR GATOS LEAD-IN
11	OUT OF THE QUESTION	12	IRRIGATE
13	SUB DETECTOR	14	SOLO'S PRINCESS
15	SINGER GUTHRIE	16	LOTHARIO'S COUSIN
17	CARTER'S MIDDLE NAME	18	TYKES
19	COLORADO RESORT	20	BREAKFAST OFFERING
21	VOUCHER	22	BACON UNIT
23	CAESAR'S EGGS	24	COPS!
25	AFFECTIONATE CRITIC	26	J.J. PERSHING'S TROOPS
27	RELIGIOUS BUG?	28	JAI
29	AGENT 86'S PARTNER	30	NINTENDO'S HERO
31	PUB SERVICE	32	ELITE INVITEES
33	DUDDIE MAN	34	BUFFALO'S LAKE
35	ADAMS AND CORNELIUS	36	AUTHOR FLEMING
37	BUMPS OFF	38	SIS COUNTERPART
39	SEMI FUEL	40	INSTANT LAWN
41	SENT A CYBER-MESSAGE	42	SECRETARY OF STATE POWELL
43	MAGIC HOME?	44	BLT PART
45	COMPANY	46	PRIME
47	CREEKING	48	BRIDE'S ACCESSORY
49	ABDUL AZIZ SAUD	50	BLUE GROTTA LOCATION
51	FEWER	52	GIVE OFF
53	MAGIC HOME?	54	ACTRESS RUSSO
55	CAESAR'S UNLUCKY DAY	56	JURASSIC PARK STAR SAM
57	WHOPPER	58	OLYMPIC RUNNER ZATOPK
59	REQUIREMENT	60	BANKS OR KOVACS
61	MISSILE GARAGE	62	COPENHAGEN NATIVE
63	FINE HORSE	64	MUSIAL OR GETZ
65	RAW MINERALS	66	FRUITCAKE INGREDIENT

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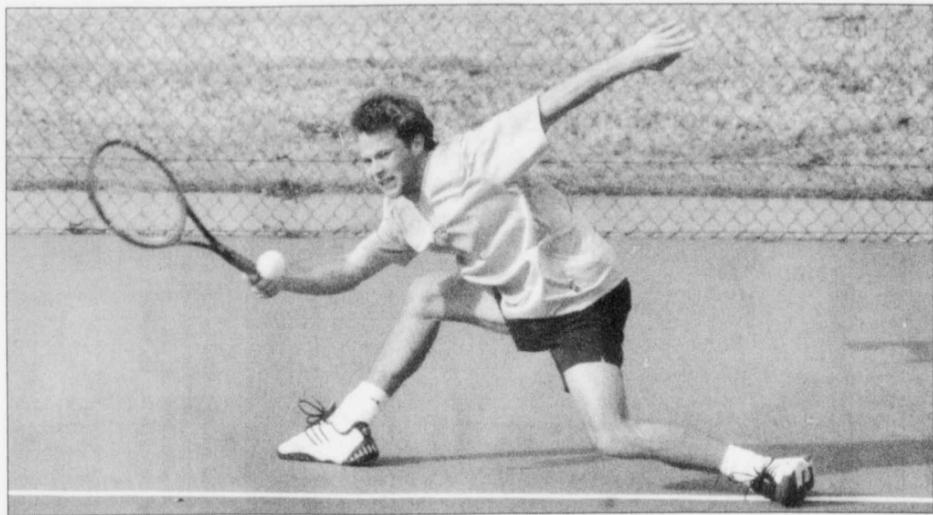
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Big win gives team boost



Ty Halasz/Staff Photographer

Sophomore Jacopo Tezza stretches to return the ball to Texas A&M's Khaled El Dorry en route to a match win. The Frogs upset A&M in the end 4-3.

Men's tennis program celebrates a return to the upper echelon of college tennis after a victory over top-10 opponent Texas A&M.

By Mary Hollis
Staff

A 4-3 home victory over No. 9 Texas A&M Wednesday afternoon might just be what the men's tennis team needed to propel themselves into the nation's top 10.

"It is a great win for our guys, a great win for our program," head coach Joey Rive said of their first victory over a top-10 team since the 2001 NCAA championship quarterfinals. "We've had a long tradition of great teams and I think this team is destined to be a very, very good team. It is good for us to get an early victory like this against a top-10 school."

Rive said the team was well prepared for the match and they went into it with full force.

"We worked very hard at it last year," he said. "We kind of fell short and I

think that a lot of the momentum we built up from this last year really spilled over to today."

Senior No. 1 singles player Alex Menichini defeated A&M's top player, Lester Cook, who was ranked No. 17 in the country.

"This just puts us back on track, and today was a great win and every one played really well, which proves that we are back," Menichini said. "This will put us in the top 10 in the country and I think we are even better than that. There isn't one team we couldn't play well against and beat."

Assistant coach Cory Hubbard, a former graduate of A&M, agreed that this match was a big step for the Frogs.

"It's a very big win for the program because last year we played five top-10 teams and every time we played them we got closer and closer," Hubbard said.

"It is good this year to finally break through and win one of these matches. It now puts us in the top 10, back with the elite teams."

Fabrizio Sestini also chalked up a win for the Frogs by defeating A&M's No. 1 doubles team with partner Rafael Abreu.

"This is a huge victory; it is just the beginning of a successful season," Sestini said. "I think today we showed everyone in the entire school and Division I that TCU is a great team."

Rive said he was very pleased with the way the team played and how they handled themselves during the matches. He added that there are many matches to come and this is only the beginning of what he sees as a successful season.

"This is a good top-10 win and it will help us, but there is a lot of tennis to be played," Rive said. "We are only 4-0 and so we still have 16 more matches left. It is a good start and it is good for the team to feel like they are one of the best teams in the country, but we still have a lot of work."

The Frogs will next welcome Florida State at noon Sunday.

Mary Hollis
m.hollis@tcu.edu

Move brings added visibility

TCU should help make the Mountain West Conference more distinct on the national level, while MWC will increase TCU's TV exposure.

By Matt Turner
Staff Reporter

The Frogs' leap from Conference USA to the Mountain West Conference should bring more national visibility to the conference, said Chris Hill, Utah's athletics director.

Hill said with the addition of TCU, and the departure of many of C-USA's other top teams, the MWC separates itself from the current pack of non-Bowl Championship Series conferences. He said the MWC has possibly put themselves in position to move into the top echelon of Division I-A college football at the ideal time, just as the current BCS contract expires after the 2005 regular season.

"Our goal is to be part of the BCS," Hill said.

Hill said he anticipates the MWC will have the best television contract of all the current non-BCS conferences when they re-negotiate their current deal.

Currently, the league is in the fifth year of a seven-year deal that guarantees a minimum of two football games on ABC, four on ESPN, five on ESPN2 and an average of eight syndicated by ESPN Regional Television each season.

The contract also promises an average of 21 men's basketball games per season and all MWC tournament games on ESPN, ESPN2 or ESPN Regional Television. A minimum of seven conference and three non-conference games are on ESPN each season, including at least three Big Monday appearances.

ESPN or ESPN2 televise the women's basketball championship game and one regular-season game.

Head coach Neil Dougherty said television exposure plays a big role in recruiting.

"I am anxious to see what the new TV package looks like, Dougherty said. "The more games we play out West, the less likely it is that we will be seen in the Midwest and East Coast."

Women's basketball coach Jeff Mittie said TCU expects to receive more money as a member of the MWC than in C-USA.

"Because it is a nine-team league, there will be larger revenue shares per school," Mittie said.

part 5 in a series



The large number of national television appearances the MWC has should make up for the conference's smaller local markets. In comparison, C-USA has schools in 13 of the nation's top 50 media markets, including TCU.

Dallas-Fort Worth, the seventh-largest market in the nation, will be the MWC's largest television market when the Frogs join the league, giving the MWC representation in five of the nation's top 50 markets.

However, many of the current BCS conference schools come from small markets, proving it is not the overriding factor to obtaining BCS status.

Head football coach Gary Patterson said the smaller markets of the MWC will have no effect on recruiting because national television exposure is what is important, and both of the conferences already have ties to ESPN.

The average football attendance for both conferences was about equal last season. The MWC averaged 32,809 fans a game and C-USA averaged 32,346, including TCU which averaged 36,155. However, those figures are expected to change as C-USA will be losing most of its best supported football programs: Louisville, Cincinnati and TCU, due to realignment.

Mittie said he is excited the MWC includes many schools that are among the foremost athletic institutions in their states. He said New Mexico's women's basketball team averages 12,000 fans a game. According to the MWC Web site, that figure ranks fourth in the country. The conference ranked fourth in the nation in women's basketball attendance in 2003.

Attendance for men's basketball was also better in the MWC, which ranked fifth in the nation last season with 9,694 fans per game compared to 8,362 per game in C-USA.

Matt Turner
m.a.turner@yahoo.com

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Cubs bring Maddux back to Chicago

Cubs sign last big free agent remaining on the market.

By Mark Bahinek
Associated Press

If the National League has anything close to the jockeying between the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox this offseason, it's the Chicago Cubs and Houston Astros.

And it looks like Chicago dropped the final bombshell.

Greg Maddux's choice to return to the Cubs gives them something of a counterpoint to Roger Clemens' offseason decision to play for the Astros. Both future Hall of Famers will lead young, talented rotations into the NL Central fray.

"All winter long you hear the Red Sox and Yankees have rearmend," baseball commissioner Bud Selig said this month. "But in truth the Astros and Cubs have rearmend as much as the Red Sox and Yankees."

That's debatable now that

Alex Rodriguez has joined the Yankees, but his point is that the Astros and Cubs appear poised for a classic duel in 2004.

"I think between the AL East and the NL Central, you're really going to see some great intensity and some very good baseball," he said.

Astros general manager Gerry Hunsicker, already in Kissimmee, Fla., awaiting the arrival of pitchers and catchers this weekend, said he's excited heading into spring training.

He won't go so far as to compare his team and the Cubs to the American League's superpowers, however.

"I think rivalries need time, so I don't know how any rivalry at this point can rival that of the Yankees and Red Sox," Hunsicker said Wednesday. "Certainly when you add All-Star caliber talent to your team it attracts attention, and both

the Cubs and the Astros certainly have done that this offseason."

Hunsicker did allow that the rotations are among the best in baseball.

"When you have them in the same division, it creates an added dimension of excitement," he said.

Maddux joins a group that nearly pitched the Cubs to the World Series last year: Kerry Wood, Mark Prior, Matt Clement and Carlos Zambrano. Clemens joins fellow ex-Yankee Andy Pettitte and three budding Astros stars in Roy Oswalt, Wade Miller and Tim Lincecum.

The Cubs also signed infielder Todd Walker and traded for first baseman Derrek Lee while losing outfielder Kenny Lofton. The Astros made few other substantive moves besides trading closer Billy Wagner to the Phillies.

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