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Matt Lynch

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BRONC
Talk
What do you think about the quality of water where you live?

THURSDAY
March 29, 2001
An Inside Look:
- Wasting wetlands.............. 2
- Calendar....................... 8
- Water conservation tips......... 5
- Broncs split games............. 11

The Student Newspaper of The University of Texas-Pan American

Newspaper launches Web site

By Denise Ramirez-Garza
The Pan American

After a year's absence, The Pan American's Web page is back online permanently.

Rodolfo Rocha, dean of the college of arts & humanities, was given the honor of pressing the button that launched the Web site yesterday.

"It's a great idea," Rocha said. "I'm glad we are finally on the Web Wide Web."

Rocha said he is happy alumni can now see what is going on at UTPA. He hopes it may be financially beneficial to the college, since alumni may notice what is going on at UTPA and may be inspired to make contributions to scholarships, he said.

The Web site was designed by Ryan Henry, the technical assistant for Student Publications.

"It has all the news stories online. It should be updated as the newspaper hits the stands," Henry said. "It was a lot of work but I also had fun creating it."

The Pan American online will feature the same stories as the newspaper and will be updated every Tuesday and Thursday as new newspaper editions become available.

The site offers background information on the staff as well as a history of The Pan American. It also has information on buying print ads and job opportunities at the newspaper.

Previous issues and stories can be accessed from the site. Other links will be available and information will be printable. In the future, The Pan American online plans to be an interactive web site, giving readers a chance to express themselves in polls and surveys.

The address for The Pan American is www.panam.edu/departments/panamerican

Conservation key to keeping water in supply in the Valley

By Ryan Zimmerman-Weaver
The Pan American

Citizens won't need to worry about having water for their morning shower, but should still be concerned about conserving the precious commodity for future use.

"The municipal water for the citizens gets supplied first. It's a higher priority than irrigation or livestock," said Guy Fipps, specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

"Furthermore, office of the watermaster is required to look at water supply on a monthly basis to make sure we have enough for each city. Other parts of the state don't have month to month water accounting like in the Lower Rio Grande Valley," Fipps said.

Although water is supplied to people first, citizens should not become lax in their efforts to conserve it for future use. A normal four person household uses from 100 to 160 gallons of tap water per day, according to Judy Adams, Project Specialist for McAllen Water and Waste Water Management. "It adds up to about 6,000 to 8,000 gallons a month," Adams said.

While water conservation is not an immediate concern for Valley citizens, local cities are implementing water regulations and ordinances which, if broken, are punishable by up to a $500 fine. Javier Santiago, McAllen Water Plant Superintendent, explains the extreme measures McAllen has previously taken to enforce the city rules.

"Stage 3 of the mandatory Water Conservation Plan implemented surcharges for households that used water in excess of 15,000 gallons per month. But we are back in Stage 2 again,"

See CONSERVATION page 4

Dam beneficial to industry, environment suffers

By Ryan R. Henry
The Pan American

In the midst of a severe drought, the Brownsville Public Utility Board's attempts to dam the Rio Grande has brought charges that the project aims to entice industry at the expense of the river's delicate ecosystem.

Karen Chapman, assistant director of the Texas Center for Policy Studies in Austin, claimed that opposition to the dam comes from a number of groups, including agricultural, commercial fishing, and environmentalists. "Our stance is [the dam] is frivolous due to the limited benefits and the possibility of long-term negatives."

The Brownsville Public Utility Board's (PUB) director of environmental health and safety Kathleen Garrett said that PUB has spent more than $4 million (other official sources go as high as $7 million) lobbying and preparing to build a special weir.
March 29

Opinion

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am wondering why our excellent university is not offering any graduate courses this summer in English Literature or Spanish Literature. There are a number of graduate students here at UTPA. Apparently the university is not concerned about whether or not we are able to take the courses we need to graduate. It has been said that UTPA is a business. [UTPA's] prime interest is generating cash. If this is an institution of higher learning, why are there no graduate courses being offered? I have heard William Faulkner is a great writer. How many years has it been since a literature course was offered covering the writings of Faulkner, or Hemmingway? I would settle for a course on Carlos Fuentes, or any other Latin American writer with an established reputation for excellence. Is it possible that our university administration does not care if students at UTPA have the opportunity to study modernism, post-modernism or any other significant movement that has affected world literature? In my humble opinion, it appears that the graduate students of UTPA are being denied the opportunity to further their education. Some of the departments in the area of Humanities appear to be somewhat stagnated. Thank you for your consideration of my complaint.

Mark A. Williams
Graduate Student
Interdisciplinary Studies Major

News

Drainage systems, development plans cause aquifers, wetlands to suffer

By Andrew McDiarmid
The Pan American

According to the Texas Water Development Board, the Rio Grande Valley is currently experiencing moderate drought conditions, with at least three community water systems under surveillance and watch.

Water is a constant issue for the citizens of the Rio Grande Valley, and cities of South Texas, and is important to environmental groups as well. Based on the amount of rainfall the Valley receives each year, water is considered a precious commodity.

For some businesses and companies in the past, however, water has stood in the way of development. The Valley is home to several wetlands that play host to a great variety of flora and fauna.

The National Wildlife Federation website (http://www.nwf.org/wetlands) says “wetland wildlife and plant species are numerous and unusual.” The site explains that amphibians and reptiles are especially dependent on healthy wetlands because they need both wet and dry areas to breed. Waterfowl rest in wetlands as they migrate, and many endangered species need wetlands to survive.

Valley wetland habitats have come under attack in past years, being drained and cleared for building and development purposes. Not only does this drainage destroy the living habitat of wetlands, it also depletes sources of water traditionally used by cities for drinking water supply.

The Environmental Protection Agency has in recent years used aspects of the 1972 Clean Water Act to toughen restrictions on wetland drainage, which has had an effect on the Valley.

Vaughn Cox, Senior Investigator of Chemical Biology at Texas State Technical College and head of the Chemical Environmental Technology Program at STCC says, he has noticed changes in Valley wetlands due to tougher restrictions. “Wetland clearance dropped dramatically due to the EPA’s tougher restrictions on water areas,” said Cox. “But damage has already been done to the wetland ecosystems, and when wetlands are drained, aquifers under the ground have no way to stay re-charged.”

Aquifers, along with reservoirs and the Rio Grande, are the main sources of drinking water supply for Valley towns and cities. The levels of aquifers around South Texas have dropped, as towns are having to use them for water supply instead of solely emergency drought use.

Water availability in the Rio Grande Valley has suffered due to wetland drainage, and when drought conditions are in place, the availability of water can be even more scarce.

According to Jose Rodriguez, a Water Investigator for the Harlingen office of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), “most city public water systems get their water supply from the surface waters of the Rio Grande, apart from the city of Hidalgo, which taps into an aquifer for supply.”
BRONC Talk

What do you think about the quality of water where you live?

—Irene Trevino

Mauricio Zanabria
C.L.S.
Senior
I think the quality is okay. I usually drink bottled water, but have drank the tap and found it to be okay.

Where do you live, and do you drink the water? Rey nosa, sometimes.

Jenny Cavazos
Journalism
Sophomore
I don’t think it’s good to drink. I know it tastes like dirt, even though I don’t drink it.

Where do you live, and do you drink the water? Edinburg, no.

John Hudsonpillar
T.V. and Film
Junior
I think it’s good. I know there’s a lot of complaints about the Rio Grande, but I like the water.

Where do you live, and do you drink the water? Edinburg, yes.

Ariana de la Garza
Pre Physician’s Assistant Studies
Junior
I don’t drink it because I don’t trust the quality. I prefer to drink bottled because I think it’s safer.

Where do you live, and do you drink the water? Edinburg, no.

Max Mejia
Kinesiology
Sophomore
The water is nasty because it has so much chlorine. We have to buy water from the “Water Mill.”

Where do you live, and do you drink the water? Relampago, no.

Campus news briefs

Cuellar unveils UTPA publication

Special to The Pan American

The challenge was posed and UTPA was the only Texas university to respond to requests by Secretary of State Henry Cuellar, Ph.D., to create a publication on state funding and technical assistance programs available to border cities and small communities.

The 96-page guide was unveiled Thursday, March 22 in Austin before a crowd of senators, representatives and media. Presenting “A Guide to Texas Programs,” were Cuellar and UTPA Vice President for External Affairs Roland S. Arriola.

“I challenged the (Texas) universities to comb the appropriation bill and look for the dollars available in the programs and UT Pan American accepted the challenge and created the guide,” Cuellar said.

During the news conference, Cuellar also introduced the first-ever “State of the Border: A Decade of State Agency Funding for the Texas-Mexico Border,” a report highlighting the history of state agency funding in the Texas-Mexico border for the last 10 years.

Arriola and UTPA Office of Center Operations and Community Services staff members Sofia Hernandez and Michael Uhrbrock, along with numerous University students, condensed a 2,000-page Appropriations Act passed by the 76th Legislature into an easy-to-read guide to inform communities on how to get dollars from Austin. The 2000-2001 budget for the State of Texas is $98.2 billion.

“Many communities are not aware of the wide array of funding and technical assistance available from the state,” Cuellar said.

“This guide however, will give local officials the opportunity to access available programs and bring more dollars and services to their respective communities.”

The guide will also benefit the business community, large corporations and legislators.

■ Preventing Bicycle Theft

Tip #1:
Keep bicycles locked when unattended with a good “U” type lock. Second choice would be a good case-hardened padlock and cable. Be sure the “U” lock or cable goes through the front wheel and frame or rear wheel and frame, and secure it to a fixed object.

Tip #2:
Check the lock by pulling on it to make sure it is secure.

Tip #3:
Use an engraver to place an identifying mark on unpainted major bicycle components.

Tip #4:
During the day at home, keep the bicycle out of sight, or at least at the rear of the house.

Tip #5:
At night and when not at home, keep the bicycle inside a locked structure.

Tip #6:
Be sure to retain all evidence of purchase including the serial number.

Tip #7:
Be able to identify the bicycle, not only by its color, but by its features.

Tip #8:
Have one or more close-up color photographs of the bicycle and its owner on hand.

Tip #9:
Register the bicycle in a community registration program, if available.

Tip #10:
Try to avoid parking bicycle in high crime, deserted or poorly lit areas.
Board plans for increase in water use

By Eladio Jaimez
The Pan American

Even with the scarcity of water in the state, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) predicts Texas' population will nearly double to about 40 million by the year 2050.

Jay Keller, National Field Director for Zero Population Growth, said population growth may be predictable with the water shortage problem, but quality of life will suffer.

"Population growth could probably be predicted with the scarcity of water, the question is how difficult life will become," Keller said. "We will see increased health problems or food shortages."

"We definitely think it is a problem (water shortage) and population growth adds to the problem," he added. "We can offer clean food and water to our population right now, and we can offer better health and education, but if you add 77 million people to the world population, it becomes difficult."

TWDB chairman William Madden said water shortage is not a big issue yet.

"We have an adequate amount of water in the state for the next 25-50 years," Madden said. "What has to be done is currently being discussed in the state legislature."

The TWDB released 16 regional water plans stating the state's water sources would be strained if the population growth projections grew as predicted.

The Rio Grande Region — comprised of the Rio Grande Valley plus Jim Hogg, Zapata, Maverick and Webb counties — is expected to have an adequate amount of water in the state.

"The TWDB released 16 regional water plans stating the state's water sources would be strained if the population growth projections grew as predicted."

"The Rio Grande Region — comprised of the Rio Grande Valley plus Jim Hogg, Zapata, Maverick and Webb counties — is expected to have an adequate amount of water in the state."

"What is good today may not be good tomorrow," Madden said.

CONSERVATION

where citizens can only water lawns and wash cars on designated days. There is no watering on any days from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m." Santiago said.

The ordinance is based on water levels at Falcon and Amistad Reservoirs, which have increased since the record lows in October of 2000.

The city of McAllen has even hired a full-time water enforcement officer, Ronnie Garza, whose sole responsibility is to patrol residential areas and ensure no water ordinances are broken. The water cop is responsible for administering warnings and fines to citizens and businesspeople who are caught breaking water laws.

However, Santiago expressed the eventual need for more water officers. "With more than 28,000 accounts in McAllen, there are a lot of people violating the law. And only one person to take care of it all."

University students can conserve water in their dormitories by using administrators to "audit the dorms and switch out some pretty cheap fixtures to reduce water over time," Adams said.

Santiago has hope for the Rio Grande Valley water situation. "We are really doing all we can to promote conservation. You can be efficient if you just think about it."

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Easy and Inexpensive Tips to Conserve Water

Water Conservation: Making the most efficient use of the Earth's precious water resources.

- If you have a sprinkler system, check your timers and sprinkler heads often to ensure that you are watering at optimum times. Javier Santiago, McAllen Water Plant Superintendent, suggests watering in the early morning or late evening because the sun's rays won't evaporate the water during those times.
- Forget about watering the streets or the driveway. They will never grow a thing.
- When washing your vehicle, first move the vehicle into your yard. The runoff soapy water will be recycled into watering your grass.
- Hand wash your dishes as much as possible because automatic dishwashers use nearly three times as much water to wash the same amount of dishes.
- For less than $20, you can replace your old unregulated shower heads with new low flow or super low flow shower heads that have smaller holes and use only 1.25 gallons per minute.
- Install faucet aerators to reduce water consumption in your kitchen and bathroom sinks.
- Don't let the water run when you are washing your hands or brushing your teeth.
- Take shorter showers instead of baths. Baths use more water than showers do.
- Don't use hot water when you can use cold water. Water and energy can be saved by using cold water when washing hands and dishes.
- Check your toilets frequently for leaks. Put a few drops of food coloring or a dyed tablet in the toilet bowl, then your toilet has a slight leak and needs to be repaired.
- When doing laundry, only use the high water setting for full wash loads. For two or three garments, use the lowest possible water setting.
- Recycle the "gray water" from the clothes washing machine by removing the discharge line from your sewage or septic tank and put it into your yard to water the grass.

~Ryan Weaver-Zimmerman

Pan Am Classic tees off

Special to The Pan American

Make plans now for a fun-filled weekend of golf for the entire family April 20-21 at the UTPA Pan Am Classic golf tournament at the Los Lagos Golf Club in Edinburg.

The weekend of events also features a concert with Three Dog Night at La Villa Real Special Events Center, the Blockbuster Million Dollar Cash Shootout and a youth golf clinic with members of the UTPA men's and women's golf teams.

Tournament proceeds will go to the Greater University Fund, which is used for student scholarships and special activities such as national competitions, conferences and music and cultural events.

The Three Dog Night concert kicks off the tournament on April 20. Ticket prices are $100, $50, $30 and $20 general admission, with 10-person VIP tables available for $1,000.

Tournament play begins with a Florida scramble Friday at 1 p.m. and resumes Saturday at 8:30 a.m. with select drive, one low ball. The format is two-man teams, with the lowest member's handicap determining flight (three flights). Prizes will be more than $2,000 per flight.

In addition to the two-day tournament, 50 people will have a chance to win a million dollars at the Blockbuster Million Dollar Cash Shootout, Saturday, April 21 at 3:30 p.m. Qualifying is every Saturday and Sunday from March 24 to April 14 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the driving range at Las Lagos. The cost is $5 for three balls.

A semifinal round is April 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to determine the first 35 of the 50 final shootout qualifiers.

Meanwhile, a junior golf clinic for children ages 6-13 will be from 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 21, and registration is open to the first 80 children (pre-registration is encouraged). Young golfers will learn from members of the Broncos and Lady Broncos golf teams, with all participants receiving two free tickets to a Broncos baseball game.

Several sponsorship opportunities are available - Ace, Eagle, Birdie, Par and Hole.

An Ace sponsorship is $7,500 and includes two days of golf, 4 two-man teams, a VIP table for 16 at the Three Dog Night concert, golf shirt and cap for each player, an entry in the Blockbuster Million Dollar Cash Shootout and more.

An Eagle sponsorship is $5,000 and features two days of golf, 3 two-man teams, a VIP table for 10 at the Three Dog Night concert and a golf shirt and cap for each player.

Birdie sponsorships are $2,500 for two days of golf, 2 two-man teams and six VIP concert tickets. A Par sponsorship is $1,000 and includes two days of golf, 2 two-man teams and four reserved concert tickets, while a Hole sponsor is $500 for two reserved concert tickets and a hole sign.

it's not for everyone, but that's [the point].

Sure, Army ROTC isn't a piece of cake. After all, in here you'll push yourself. Test your limits. And in the process, develop skills that'll last a lifetime. Like how to think on your feet and be a good leader and decision maker. You could even get a scholarship. Register today for an Army ROTC class. Because you're not just like "everyone."

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Call 381-3600 or email: rotc@panam.edu
With a history of droughts explosion along the Rio G;

By Daniel Garcia Ordaz
The Pan American

"As the world's population grows, so does the demand for potable water," said David Corbus, a scientist at the U.S. National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL), a Department of Energy agency. "Communities in coastal regions or regions with brackish groundwater are already experiencing shortages of potable water." With the population along the Rio Grande expected to continue growing every year and water shortages continuing to be a problem, officials see alternative water purification processes as an important step in surviving growth.

"It is very essential because of drought and growth to find adequate sources of water," said Habib Mahdi, associate professor of engineering at the University of New Mexico. "Communities are very close to major storage sources such as the Gulf of Mexico, so having a continuous water supply is critical.

Desalting, a water treatment process that removes salts from water, produces freshwater from either seawater or brackish (slightly salty) water. Use of the different desalination or desalining processes seems increasingly necessary in a world where 77 percent of water is from oceans and only six percent is freshwater.

In addition, 27 percent of freshwater is in rivers, another 72 percent is underground. Much of that underground water, which lies underground, requires some desalination to be made potable. "One of my applications in the near future is on desalination," said Mahdi, whose "funding's from the International Desalination Association and for the research he is conducting.

There are two types of techniques which produce water for domestic or municipal use—thermal and membrane separation. The most common ways to desalt the seas in form of boiling or evaporation, both thermal processes, according to NREL's Web site. Seawater can
an agricultural-based economy, a plethora of manufacturing plants and a population
and, the Valley seems ripe for exploration into alternative means of water purification

The demand at the time was for a water source other than seawater, which is
expanding in arid areas where 94 percent is

across as an alternative means of water purification. The project was

Semi-permeable and ion specific membranes (filters) can also be used to desalt seawater. Membrane processes are

based on separation rather than distillation. The chemical separation of water and salt occurs when

reverse osmosis membranes essentially let water pass through them but reject the passage of salt ions.

In most cases, a small percentage (about one percent) of sea salts pass through the membranes, or leak around seals. The leakage is acceptable for drinking water, but for industrial purposes the water may require further treatment, NREL reports read.

Mahdi suggests building a model plant at South Padre Island using 100 percent alternate energy sources.

Water desalination technology is commonly used in the Middle East, however, those communities are using desalination in conjunction with conventional power supplies since they are oil-rich countries, Mahdi said.

Mahdi said it is imperative to use alternative power sources, which are “cleaner and environmentally friendly,” including a combination of solar and wind energy in order to operate desalination plants and electric power plants.

“In this case if we have a problem like in California—and I think New York is next—we have already overcome a major problem” because we would use alternative energy, not conventional electrical power from natural gas heating, Mahdi said.

“[Desalinated water is] going to help a lot,” Mahdi said. “It will be attractive for more companies to come to the Valley because you have the water. I think the price will go down with time.”

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS
Several years ago the Laguna Madre Water District ran a desalination project to test the efficacy of salt water purification. The project was less than successful.

“We were trying to figure out the feasibility of a desalination plant—how much it would cost to get rid of the salt in the water,” said Carlos Galvan, administrative assistant for the LMWD. “When the plant was running we checked for chlorides, hardness, and other things,” Galvan said.

The water district ran a pilot plant about three years ago from a point near Isla Blanca Park in South Padre Island. Salt water from near the ship channel was pumped into filters containing acids then pressure was used to force water through some filters, officials said.

“It [desalination] is too expensive,” said Felipe Zamora, Chief of Water Plant Operations for the LMWD. “We only got a few gallons of water.

Only about 10 percent of the seawater collected during the trial study was converted into usable water, Zamora said.

Donald Hockaday, acting director of UTPA’s Coastal Studies Lab, said a company used a reverse osmosis process to purify salt water a few years ago at South Padre Island. However, the private enterprise only provided bottled water on a “very small scale,” Hockaday said.

“Before [trying desalination] we would get water from wells,” Zamora said. “Desalination is a last resort—only if things become real drastic and it’s something we have to do.”

However, some ground water many Valley wells tap into is not always “sweet,” since varying salt concentrations are present in some of the groundwater.

While this water is important for transportation and fisheries, it is too salty to sustain human life or farming,” said O.K. Buros in “The Desalting ABCs,” a 1990 report of the International Desalination Association.

The LMWD provides water to Laguna Vista and some surrounding communities, including South Padre Island.

~ Daniel Garcia Ordaz
**Thursday, March 29**  
Student Health Services offers sexually transmitted diseases (STD) screenings for all students, staff and faculty in Emilia Hall, room 1.113. Screenings take place from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Through Friday, March 30**  
UTPA, along with various Rio Grande Valley organizations will host the "Tamaulipas en Texas" cultural festival. The festival will bring the culture and economy of the Mexican State of Tamaulipas to the Valley. The free festival features art and photography exhibits and lectures on music, anthropology, history and business. There will also be folkloric dancers and plays. The festival begins with a 6 p.m. banquet Monday in the Student Union Theatre. For more information, call Ed Davila, special events coordinator or Francisco Gonzalez, Mexican Business Information Center coordinator at 318-3361.

**Monday, April 2**  
As part of the National Library Week, the University Library presents "Check-it-out Yourself Day," an opportunity for students and faculty to become more self-sufficient in the library by checking out their own materials with the 3M SelfCheck System. The event will also help the UTPA Library become eligible for random drawings of $1,000 cash prizes. The library will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 11:45 p.m.

**Through April 2**  
"New Faces," a group exhibition by James Dutremaine, Dindy Reich, Rolando Reyna and Charles Wissinger is open in the University Gallery in the Communication Arts and Sciences Building. The gallery is open Mondays through Fridays and admission is free for everyone.

**Friday, April 6**  
Student Health Services offers a Men’s Wellness Clinic from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. SHS will conduct prostate, testicular and rectal screenings for male students, faculty and staff. For appointments, call 381-2377.

**Monday, April 9 through Thursday, April 12**  
The Chi Alpha Campus Ministry and Baptist Student Ministry present "April Flood." The event takes place April 9 from 11:50 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. in the UC Circle, April 10 from noon to 1 p.m. in the Student Union Theater and April 12 from noon to 1 p.m. in the UC Circle, Computer Circle and Science Quad. The event is free and everyone interested is welcome.

**Tuesday, April 10**  
The UTPA Counseling Center will provide a free depression education and screening program from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Student Services Building, room 504. Educational materials on anxiety and depression will be provided along with a video, questionnaire, confidential meetings with mental health professionals and referral, if necessary. For more information, contact the Counseling Center at (956) 381-2574.

**Wednesday, April 11**  
Student Health Services presents a Skin Care Clinic from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. with reduced pricing for all students, faculty and staff. The clinic will perform removal of warts and skin tags, evaluation of sun exposure and moles as well as treatment for acne and other skin problems. For appointments, call Student Health Services at 381-2571.

**Monday, April 16**  
The University Placement Services presents a Walt Disney World Information Session. Recruiters are back. Career Placement Services presents a Walt Disney World Information Session. For more information, call 381-2781 or 381-2267.

**Monday, April 23**  
Student Health Services offers a Women’s Wellness Clinic from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Pap smears, pelvic exams and breast exams are at a reduced rate. For appointments, call 381-2511.

**Every Wednesday**  
Free and confidential HIV testing and counseling from 9 a.m. to noon at Student Health Services. Ask for Ruben.

**Now Open**  
The LAC Writing Lab has moved to the new University Writing Center located in Suite 101 of the University Library. The center provides the same services that were offered at the Student Services Building location, including paper reviews, help with English assignments, etc. The Writing Center is open Mondays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursdays from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 7 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
The PUB has estimated the project will cost as much as $37.5 million. However, other state agencies, such as the Texas Center for Policy Studies, predict the cost could reach $54 million.

Regardless, the Brownsville PUB has pushed development of the dam since 1985 as a solution for the city's future water needs.

Brownsville's population has seen a 41 percent growth increase in the last ten years, based on U.S. Census data. In order to assure continued growth, the State of Texas has issued a permit allowing the city to divert as much as 40,000 acre-feet of water from the Rio Grande per year. Critics of the city's water plan claim that as much as 40,000 acre-feet of water diverted will go for industrial use and not residential consumption. Critics add that tax funded programs should not be used for special interest projects like industrial development.

"PUB could argue that [the dam] benefits residents through job creation, but this is speculative," Chapman said. "I don’t think this has been clearly revealed to residents."

The Brownsville Economic Development Commission (BEDC) claims to have introduced five companies to Brownsville in 2001, with a potential to create 458 jobs. At least three of these companies are manufacturing plants.

In an online press release, BEDC president Monte McDermott claims the area’s lack of water interferes with continued economic development. PUB General Manager John Bruciak agreed in a letter to the Rio Grande Regional Planning Group. Bruciak wrote that the PUB hopes to attract manufacturing plants like a steam-electric power plant with projected water demand “on the order of 12,000 to 15,000 acre-feet per year.”

Chapman believes the city should attract industries that can operate within the regions’ resource limitations. “[What we have now] is a case of economic development driving the consumption of natural resources,” Chapman said. “It doesn’t make sense to make a steam-electric plant in a region that is running out of water.”

Chapman predicts that the project will negatively impact the environment by altering water flow downstream from the weir dam. She added that environmental changes will damage the local economy by threatening the area’s wildlife refuges and valuable eco-tourism.

"I don’t think this has been clearly revealed to residents."

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RANDY BLANKENSHP, with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), said that state wildlife officials are concerned with whether or not the weir dam will block the normal movements of aquatic life, or whether it will adversely affect salinity levels in the Rio Grande’s estuary.

In response to the TPWD’s concerns, the Brownsville PUB has promised to release a “constant flow of water” from the weir dam in order to assure that a proper fresh water/salt water mix is maintained in the Rio Grande’s estuary.

Blankenship said he is worried that if the weir dam cannot maintain a release of at least 25 cubic-feet of water per second then saline levels will increase dramatically in the estuary and thus threaten white shrimp, mullet, trout, redfish and blue crabs.

The Texas Center for Policy Studies questions whether or not the Brownsville weir dam can maintain a release of 25 cubic-feet of water per second, and new evidence may support their suspicions.

Blankenship added that the Brownsville PUB has promised to conduct a six-year environmental assessment of the estuary after the dam is built. Blankenship said that there is a “chance” that the Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Brownsville PUB could go into arbitration if the assessment indicated a problem. However, he added that the “agreement doesn’t have as much teeth as we’d like it to have.”

The PUB will provide a metering device downstream from the dam that would track saline levels. If saline levels are below the mean value, Blankenship said PUB would not be able to impound water.

At Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, environmental technology instructor Vaugn Cox scoffed at the six-year assessment. “By then, it’s too late,” Cox said. “After six years, the damage is done.”

Cox also cautioned that the dam could cause upstream salinity changes that would adversely alter the ecosystem along the banks of the Rio Grande.

The PUB could argue that [the dam] benefits residents through job creation, but this is speculative

-Karen Chapman

Irrigators and biologists expressed concern about a flood of problems that will face Valley farms and public lands after the Brownsville dam is constructed.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge’s senior biologist David Blankenship said that the dam could raise the water table upstream which would have a negative effect to agriculture along the river. Farmers use heavy amounts of water to flush the salt in the soil into the river. David Blankenship said that the rising water table will interfere with this agricultural drainage system, and the salt will be unable to wash out of the ground, potentially ruining crops along the river.

Karen Chapman, assistant director of the Texas Center for Policy Studies, said that Rio Grande water levels will raise as much as a foot for 40 miles upriver from the Brownsville dam. The dam could flood upriver sections of private and public land, and Blankenship worries that Mexican land may take the brunt of the flooding since stretches of Mexico’s banks are not as elevated as those on the U.S. side.

Chapman added that increased water levels will also flood the Rio Grande banks that makeup the Valley’s wildlife corridor, a 190 mile strip of land that parallels the river and is meant to form a refuge for ocelots. In some places along the river, the corridor only covers the narrow strip of land from the river’s surface to the top of the bank.

Additionally, Chapman said that the International Boundary and Water Commission would mow vital vegetation along the river’s banks as water levels increased, which would further deplete wildlife habitat. “The IBWC’s concern is to reduce blockage [in the river],” Chapman added, explaining that plants slow the river’s flow.
Men's Tennis
Southland Conference

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Southland Conference
Player of the Week -
March 26, 2001

David Corrie had a 2-1 week in both singles and doubles, helping Texas-Arlington improve to 12-6 overall and 4-1 in the Southland. Corrie won his No. 3 singles matches against Louisiana-Lafayette's Johann van der Westhuizen 7-5, 6-2, and Southeastern Louisiana's Mats Lindelof 6-7, 7-5, 6-2. With partner Andy Leber, Corrie was successful in No. 1 doubles, winning 8-3 against ULL and 8-5 versus SLU. His losses were tough matches. He lost in a third-set super tiebreaker 7-6(6), 5-7, 10-6 to Sanjin Sadovich of No. 26 LSU. In doubles, Leber/Corrie built a 7-4 lead, but lost 9-7 to the ranked Tigers. Also Nominated: Milos Vasovic, SLU; Tom Mangelschots, UTPA.

Freshman Pierre Cantu hits a volley at the net during doubles play earlier this season in a match at UTPA's tennis courts. Cantu and senior teammate Enrique Bastante have a 3-3 record so far this season in doubles play.

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Broncos split doubleheader

By Isaac Chavarria

In one game, UTPA saw their winning streak come and go.

The streak, their first of the season, was stopped by the Incarnate Word Crusaders. The Broncs defeated Southwest Texas State on Saturday and then defeated Incarnate Word 4-3, to earn a two-game winning streak.

The Broncs were down by three in the first inning, and were left scoreless in the first. But even with three errors in the game, the Broncs were able to leave IW scoreless for the next six innings.

UTPA's offense picked up and scored single runs in the second and third inning. Senior Darren Heinrichs scored the first run when freshman Matthew Sisk singled to center field.

After a shaky start in the first, junior Justin Dowd (2-5) earned the win and went all seven innings allowing six hits. Dowd allowed two hits in the first and walked two.

In the second game, the Broncs committed four errors, but were unable to overcome them.

Sophomore Clark Baggett led the Broncos with two hits and one run. Freshman Justin Bogy (0-2) pitched six innings and took the loss for UTPA.

UT-A sophomore

Simon earns conference award

University of Texas sophomore Jean Simon (Lille, France) has been named the Big 12 Men's Tennis Player of the Week, the conference office announced on Tuesday. Simon joins senior Craig Edmondson (Manchester, England) as the second UT player to win the award this season.

Simon, who compiled a 2-0 record at the No. 1 singles position and a 2-0 doubles mark for UT during the week of March 18-24, is currently ranked No. 30 in the Wspanbank.com ITA National Singles Rankings. He leads all Longhorns with an overall 22-7 (.759) singles record and was the first Big 12 Conference player this season to surpass the 20-win plateau in overall singles. Simon’s record this season is quite impressive considering that he posted an 8-8 overall singles record last year (1999-2000) during his first season with the Horns.

No. 15 Texas produced a 2-0 mark for the week of March 18-24 to improve its 2000-01 dual match record to 11-2 overall (2-0 Big 12). UT’s two-match homestand included Big 12 Conference victories over Colorado (6-1) on Wednesday and Nebraska (5-2) on Friday. The Horns have been included in the Wspan.com ITA Team Top 20 all year, and received its highest ranking of the season at No. 9 on Feb. 21.

The Longhorns return to the road this week when they travel to take on Oklahoma on Friday, March 30 at 1 p.m. and Oklahoma State on Saturday, March 31 at 1 p.m.

Red Raiders get two-in-one with Knight

By Matt Lynch

If Bobby Knight is the new sheriff on the Texas Tech campus, Red Raider basketball players better be on the lookout for police brutality.

Listening to Knight’s press conference Friday, you’d think the guy was up for sainthood. Knight spoke in a civil tongue about everything from setting up a library fund to season tickets.

He even practically pleaded with fans to go out and become season ticket holders for next season.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I submit to you the REAL reason Texas Tech took a gamble on the coach. Regardless of his chair-throwing tantrums, player-pushing attitude and reporter-bashing, the Red Raiders brought Knight to Lubbock to sell tickets.

I submit to you exhibit A: In just two days following Knight’s press conference, Texas Tech received 1,800 phone calls and sold nearly 3,000 season tickets.

In an interview with The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, Russel Warren, Texas Tech assistant athletic director/ticket operations said, “We’ve had 10 to 12 people in here handling the phones for two days solid, and the phones have not stopped ringing.”

Knight may be one of the greatest NCAA coaches of all-time and definitely gets results. He is one of just 13 NCAA basketball coaches to notch over 700 wins, and has won over 70 percent of the games he’s coached.

But that’s just the icing on the cake for the Red Raiders, who seem to be killing two birds with one stone by getting a good coach and selling tickets at the same time. If the Texas Tech administration can keep a leash on Knight and keep him from assaulting his players, it’ll be a match made in heaven.

But that’s a big “if.” Not even a “no-tolerance” policy could force Knight to keep his hands to himself. If the threat of losing his job didn’t deter him from an unwanted course of action, there’s not much left to try.

While Knight has brought big-name recognition to Texas Tech, the Red Raiders made an hasty decision. Big-name coaches are always available following the NCAA tourney. Denny Crum’s out of work, and he doesn’t even hit people.
The Lady Broncs head to San Antonio this weekend for another tournament. "We are looking at this tournament as an extended practice," said head volleyball coach Dave Thorn. "We aren’t preparing specifically for it, and we’ll be trying different lineups and working on some of the things we’ve worked on during practice."

Last year’s lineup included several freshman that started. Mindy Hubik started 30 matches. Jaclyn Muszynski started 22, Shawnda McDowell 20 while Winker Cruz and Miranda Lawson had ten apiece.

The team is expected to get younger and will lack a crop of seniors next season. Junior Yvonne Garcia will be the only senior on the squad next year. Thorn has set his sights on the future: "Our record in the spring isn’t a concern, it’s getting ready for next fall," Thorn said.

But, it would benefit the Lady Broncs to take some of last year’s momentum and accomplishments into next season.

UTPA won eight of their last ten matches and finished the season with 19 wins. Their last win of the season gave them a winning record and a school record.

At San Antonio, the Lady Broncs will face St. Edwards University, Incarnate Word and Texas Christian University. The Lady Broncs are familiar with the Incarnate Word Crusaders. They lost to IW in four games at the UTPA Fieldhouse last session, but avenged the loss in a five-game match at San Antonio.

Although current members of the team haven’t had any in-game experience against either TCU or St. Edwards, it isn’t one of Thorn’s main concerns.

“It’s good for us. [We] adapt to new situations, being able to adjust the team on the fly," Thorn said.

In their tournament at Monterrey during spring break, the Lady Broncs had a similar opportunity.

The Broncs finished third in the six team tournament featuring the Nuevo Leon Cadets, the Nuevo Leon Juveniles, Monterrey Tech, Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon and Regionmontana.

The Lady Broncs compiled a 5-2 record at the tournament and also competed using the rally point scoring system.

In an interview conducted by the UTPA sports information, Thorn said, "We got a lot of good experience from playing international competition, especially since we are changing the scoring format and some of the rules for next year."

“I was very happy with how the team responded, especially after a very close loss to Monterrey Tech,” he continued. Hubik, who received the Rookie of the Year Award, had 43 kills and five solo blocks in seven matches for UTPA.

“That’s something we have to work on for next year - the team being so young, adapting to new situations. Whether it’s the other team, the gym or the referees," Thorn said.

Eight players will be traveling with the team to San Antonio. Unlike their last tournament, when senior Enith Villalobos traveled with the team, none of the seniors will travel.

The Broncs have ten players returning from last year’s squad. Other plans for Thorn will be additions to the team. Thorn stated announcements will be made after the signing date, April 11.