

Horseshoe school

Oklahoma trade school ropes in students from around the world, 5

Photo by Jacky Lee, Red Dirt Journal



High stakes

Poker's popularity online introduces another addiction to students, 20

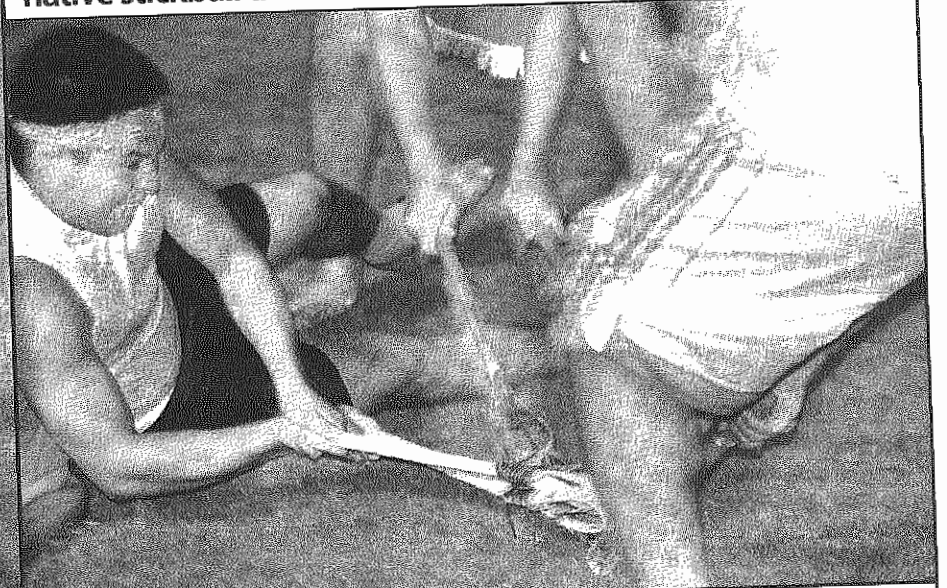


RED Dirt Journal

Sticky situation

Choctaw tribe still winning battle to keep native stickball true to tradition, 16-18

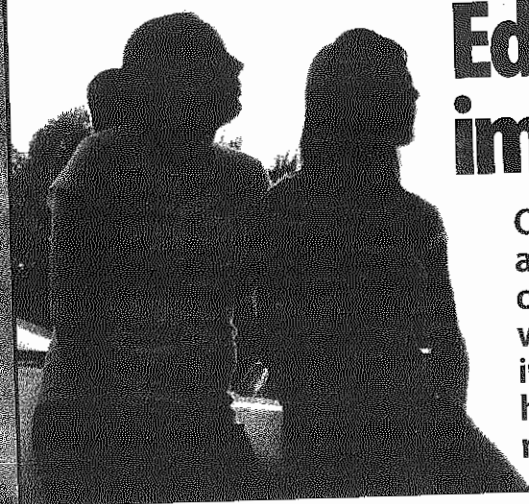
Photo by Baxter Holmes, Red Dirt Journal



Educating immigrants

Oklahoma's new law allowing children of undocumented workers to receive in-state tuition hasn't attracted many takers, 3

Photo by Henry Nguyen, Red Dirt Journal



Red Dirt Journal

Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism • 2005

Students	
Da'Shai Ables, Pathways High School	19
Sereena Caldwell, Edmond Santa Fe High School	5
Lynsey Carson, American School	14
M.J. Gastano, Moore High School	11
Jamie Gonzalez, Santa Fe South High School	9
Baxter Holmes, Clayton High School	17
Blake Hoss, Bishop McGuinness High School	20
Jaqueline Lee, The Okridge School	7
Malisa Morsman, Jenks High School	6
Henry Nguyen, Northeast Academy	3
Elizabeth Reed, S.P. Waltrip Senior High School	13
Monica Ruiz, Chickasha High School	12
Renee Selanders, Edmond North High School	8
Ruby Sharda, Stillwater High School	4

Director

Fred Blevens, University of Oklahoma

Faculty

Irene Abrego, San Antonio College
 Joni Alexander, USA TODAY
 Barbara Allen, Tulsa World
 Treba Buchhorn, San Antonio College
 Rob Collins, Oklahoma Gazette
 Bill Eisen, PressTime magazine
 Jim Fisher, University of Utah
 Ashley Gibson, The Associated Press
 Joe Hight, The Oklahoman
 Sue Hinton, Oklahoma City Community College
 Chris Krug, The Oklahoman
 Russell LaGour, Tulsa World
 Ja'enna Lunsford, The Oklahoman
 Jesse Olivarez, The Oklahoman
 Earnest Perry, University of Missouri
 Amy McFall Prince, The Columbian
 Seth Prince, The Oregonian
 Ana Rodriguez, Little Moments Photography
 Susan Rudman, Tulsa World
 James Tye, The Norman Transcript
 Naashia Washington, The Oklahoman
 Kathryn Jensen White, University of Oklahoma

Counseling staff

Angela Bullard, University of Oklahoma
 Adepeju Faboro, University of Oklahoma
 CJ Macklin, University of Oklahoma
 Crystal Mason, University of Oklahoma
 Latisha McElroy, University of Oklahoma
 Heidi Pudrett, University of Oklahoma

Sponsors

The Ethics & Excellence in Journalism Foundation
 The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund
 The Gaylord College of Journalism & Mass Communication
 Canon Professional

Contributors

Oklahoma City Community College	The Oklahoma Gazette
San Antonio Community College	The Norman Transcript
The Society of Professional Journalists	Apple Computers
All Dia/The Dallas Morning News	The Poynter Institute
The Oklahoman	OU Student Media
Tulsa World	The Columbian
USA TODAY	The Oregonian

Dedication

This issue is dedicated to Janet Fisher and Dora Hinton.



The 14 students of the 2005 Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism class gather in the multimedia lab of the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord Hall in

Writers find challenges, rewards at OU workshop

14 teens experience life as journalists for two weeks

By Renee Selanders
 Red Dirt Journal

On July 10, 14 teenagers came together hoping to learn how to produce the best newspaper they could at the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism.

Now, nearly two weeks later, they have created a paper, learned the craft of journalism writing and heard much about their future and potential in the industry. They did all that with professional instructors and new high-technology facilities at the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication.

"Journalism has a lot of opportunities. There is a wider range of fields — it can involve television, advertising and a lot of other things," said Monica Ruiz, an incoming OU freshman who recently graduated from Chickasha High School.

"I'm majoring in journalism and I want to try different aspects of journalism. I'd like to explore the field and see if I'd prefer writing or advertising."

For some, ODIJ meant being more open to news writing or wanting to learn about the different types of journalism.

"I used to think I only wanted to work for a magazine but I've enjoyed this experience so much that I think that a career in news would be exciting as well," Jenks High School senior Malisa Morsman said.

The workshop exposed some students to a

realistic journalism scene for the first time, creating an environment comparable to a newsroom. ODIJ fellows had to call people for interviews and adhere to tight deadlines.

"It's a lot harder than I thought," said Lynsey Carson, an American School senior. "There's a lot of stress, but despite all of that, I love it even more."

Like Carson, other students encountered the stress and difficulty of newspaper writing and they realized the style was not for them.

"The blinds have been lifted and I really know what journalism is about," said Blake Hoss, a Bishop McGuinness graduate who will enter OU in the fall.

"I used to think of journalism as romantic, traveling all over the world. My picture of journalism was to go and talk to interesting people. I now see that it's a lot of hard work and I definitely don't like the writing style."

Learning skills for life

Despite some changes of heart, fellows learned skills that will help them in other aspects of life.

Morsman said the workshop has helped her become more open to different ideas.

"I have become more sensitive to people who may not see eye to eye with me on issues because I have to be fair in my article," she said. "I have to be concerned with how my source feels so I can capture the heart of the issue."

Capturing the heart of the story starting the past two weeks, shop included many classroom snippets on how to talk to and interview. Fellows learned that good journalists on the source and the interview.

"The interviews were really fun and I loved me to gain a deeper insight into people and feel about them."

Morsman said, "I used to be scared of interviews but now I wouldn't miss an interview without them."

Carson said these interviewing very helpful when dealing with a day-to-day basis.

"It's made me more confident. I'm now more comfortable on interviews. I think that it won't only help me in journalism but with making friends."

Baxter Holmes, a Clayton High School graduate entering the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, said the workshop has only made journalism grow. Holmes shared how journalism has grown in high school and how it's different from college. Holmes said that ODIJ helped him in his career of choice.

"I respect journalists a lot more now. I know what they have to do every day and it's a very complicated job," Holmes said. "This has excited me about journalism and I look forward to being a journalist."

Lessons of immigration

Oklahoma, unlike many states, gives illegal immigrants break on tuition

By Henry Nguyen
Red Dirt Journal

Two Oklahoma sisters who came illegally to the United States 10 years ago said being undocumented immigrants had little effect on their lives until they reached college.

The sisters traveled with their family to the U.S. from Mexico in 1995, taking a route by automobile through Arizona.

"I love Mexico," said Isis, the older sister. "It is where I was born. I love my people and my family, but this is my home."

Isis and Cynthia asked that their last name not be used to protect their identities, but both said they are glad to have the chance to go to college after graduating from high school.

During her senior year of high school, Isis was asked to speak to the Oklahoma Legislature in favor of a 2003 bill allowing undocumented workers to attend college.

She was able to take advantage of that law and is deciding on a major while working on her basics.

Cynthia is still in high school and aspires to go to college after graduating to become a teacher.

"At risk at any time"

Many undocumented immigrants are afraid to speak up. "At risk at any time" is how Isis describes the constant fear of being exposed.

These undocumented workers are taking jobs no one else wants to take.

"Working hard for their families and to better their lives," Isis said.

"In construction work, for every 10 Mexicans you see, you see one American," she said. "They are burning out in the sun, and they're not getting paid much money. They're not taking the good jobs. They are taking the jobs that they can survive with."

In the U.S., undocumented workers cannot apply for a driver's license because it is too great of a risk of being exposed, but they can get things like a bank account and insurance using a matricula consular, a Mexican ID.

Children of undocumented workers attend school like citizens as required by law and supported by a Supreme Court ruling -- Plyler v. Doe -- to educate all students. This ruling determined that every child no matter what status has the right to a K-12 education.

In that case, Texas withheld from local school districts any state funds for the education of children who were not legally admitted into the United States and authorized local school districts to deny enrollment to such children.

The Supreme Court ruled June 15, 1982, that this violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

Children of undocumented workers do not necessarily have the same status as their parents. They could be citizens if they were born in the U.S., for instance.

If the child was born in another country and then immigrated to the U.S., then they are undocumented, but if the parent immigrated to the U.S. before the child was born, then the child is a U.S. citizen.



Photo by Henry Nguyen, Red Dirt Journal
Cynthia and Isis, sisters that immigrated to the United States with their family in 1995, live in fear of being exposed and deported.

Did you know?

New research from Bear Stearns Asset Management shows there could be as many as 20 million illegal immigrants. There are 55,000 to 85,000 illegal immigrants in Oklahoma, according to the Pew Research Center.

To give children of undocumented workers that were born abroad a chance for a secondary education, Oklahoma lawmakers passed Oklahoma Statutes, Title 70, Section 3242, which enables children born abroad to attend college paying in-state tuition and to receive state financial aid.

Oklahoma has not been the only state to create a law enabling undocumented students to receive in-state tuition. Since 2001, many states have enacted similar laws, with California and Texas being the first, followed by Illinois, Kansas and Washington.

To receive these benefits, the student must have graduated from a public or private high school or have received a GED after living with a parent or legal guardian for at least two years in the state. The student must satisfy admissions standards determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and file an affidavit with the institution declaring the disposition of their application for legal citizenship.

Few benefit from law so far

Amando Peña, the director for Student Preparation Programs at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, estimated fewer than 200 people have benefited from this law.

Peña said the law has not created a large increase in enrollment of undocumented students because people do not know about the law or eligible students are too scared to risk being exposed. If exposed, the undocumented immigrant runs the risk of being deported.

The National Conference of State Legislatures said the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, convinced some state leg-

islators to introduce bills to prohibit in-state tuition for foreign students or to exclude all undocumented students from attending a public college or university.

They believe that allowing in-state tuition during tough economic times will take away opportunities from U.S. citizens and legal immigrants.

Common perspectives on undocumented immigrants are they do not pay taxes and they send their children to public schools at the expense of citizen taxpayers.

"The public tends to ignore that they do pay taxes," Peña said. "They certainly pay sales tax. Many are able to buy property, and they have to pay property tax, and some pay income tax."

A recent study by Bear Stearns Asset Management estimated there could be as many as 20 million undocumented immigrants throughout the United States.

There are between 55,000 and 85,000 undocumented immigrants residing in Oklahoma, according to the July 18 edition of Business Week and Pew Research Center. In the United States, many major companies favor illegal immigrants because they add 700,000 new consumers to the economy every year, Business Week reported.

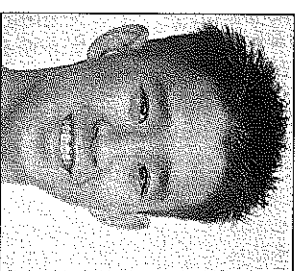
In the U.S., 84 percent of these illegal immigrants are between 18 and 44 years old, which are the prime spending years for consumers, according to the Pew Research Center. This adds a large number of customers for the nationwide companies because only 60 percent of legal immigrants are in this age group.

Because of all the obstacles Isis and Cynthia have faced, they are acutely aware of the opportunities they see quantified around them.

Isis said Americans are abusing their opportunities.

"They have opportunities to go to college, to get all this money, and all this stuff they're able to do," she said. "They don't want to finish high school or college. They just want to go work at McDonald's."

"They take it for granted, if they could switch a day with one of us, if they could see what we had to go through, I'm sure they would appreciate what they have."



Henry Nguyen
Northeast Academy

Henry Nguyen, 17, was the only junior to graduate from Northeast Academy this year. The Oklahoma City native loves to play tennis and was a member of the varsity team for two years and participated in the state tennis tournament. He lives with his mom, dad, two sisters and two dogs.

One of Nguyen's favorite hobbies is traveling. His favorite book is "Blink," by Malcolm Gladwell. Though he loves to listen to various genres of music, one of his favorite singers is Josh Groban.

Nguyen graduated with a 3.4 grade-point average, was a member of the Asian Club and Mu Alpha Theta, and he also received third place at the State Business Professionals of America competition and attended nationals in April.

He looks forward to next year when he will live in Krefeld, Germany, learning about Germanic culture. After returning, Nguyen hopes to attend the University of Oklahoma, where he wants to study to biochemistry or journalism.

—Rudry Sharda



Ruchy Sharda
Stillwater High School

Ruchy Sharda, 17, of Stillwater was a 2005 valedictorian graduate of Stillwater High School with a 4.086 grade-point average. She is a person of many great attributes, one being that she has spent 1 1/4 years dancing and eight years doing gymnastics. She has a 21-year-old brother in college and currently lives with her parents and "fishes."

In the fall, she will attend the University of Texas and plans to major in journalism. She was the vice president of the National Honor Society, editor of the school newspaper, senior class secretary, and student council secretary. She is an aspiring journalist and wants to work for a magazine.

Her favorite books are the Harry Potter series, by J.K. Rowling, and her favorite movies are "Elf" and "Dodgeball." Her favorite restaurant is McAlister's.

The show she loves most is the "Gilmore Girls." On the weekend she loves to "just hang out." She said, "There's nothing to do in Stillwater except for bowling and the new indoor mini golf."

—By Henry Nguyen

New program opens doors

Local Y's Minority Achievers accepting students for fall launch

By Ruchy Sharda
Red Dirt Journal

It's a gift that keeps on giving, and it's yours for the taking. A new program at the Cleveland County Family YMCA aims to help minority students in local high schools take steps toward success in college and later in their careers.

The YMCA Minority Achievers Program, based at the Y at 1801 Halley Ave., is accepting applications through the summer in preparation for its September launch.

Donnette Brown, the Y's youth and teen director who is running Minority Achievers, said she learned about such projects at a training session in Atlanta in 2004.

According to the National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, Quentin Mease created the first program of the kind, called Black Achievers, at a Houston YMCA in 1967. After noticing that program, Leo B. Marsh began a Black Achievers Program at a YMCA in Harlem, N.Y., in 1971. Since then, many YMCAs across the nation have started similar programs.

Brown said she found few programs in Cleveland County to help minority high school students prepare for college or choose a career field. As a result, she began Minority Achievers to serve all racial groups, hoping it would get more students involved.

Census figures show that Cleveland County, like Oklahoma overall, is heavily white. According to the 2000 Census, 3.6 percent of the county's residents are African American, 4.4 percent are American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.8 percent are Asian, and 4.0 percent are Hispanic or Latino.

"The YMCA embraces diversity. This program will help

On the Web

Cleveland County Family YMCA: www.ymcacornorman.org
Black Achievers: www.ymcanetv.org/programs/teens/Ba.htm

Who to contact

Donnette Brown
Cleveland County Family YMCA
1801 Halley Ave.
Norman, OK 73069
405-364-9200 ext. 125

minorities in Norman get the extra push that they need," Brown said. "I'm really excited because this is the first year for the program. Anything we can do to help minority kids is a great achievement."

Easy to take part

Getting involved with Minority Achievers is simple and costs nothing. Before summer arrived, the Y sent brochures and applications to about 780 students at Norman and Norman North high schools. All who apply from the county will be accepted, Brown said, and a few already have responded. The deadline is in August, but Brown plans to recruit at high schools as soon as classes resume in the fall.

Rachel Bradley, who will be a junior at Norman North, was one of the program's first applicants. Bradley, who is half Caucasian and half African American, said she thought the program would help her meet people, get more involved with the community and win scholarships.

Another rising senior at Norman North, Hassan Karim,

said he applied when he saw the brochures that said the program could boost people who want to pursue a career.

Making a difference

Brown, who works with seven fellow board members, said the Y is courting area corporations to provide money to steer students down the right paths to their professional goals.

Students and mentors will meet at least one week a month, with mentors contributing at least 40 hours for college, and Brown says the goal is to eventually have scholarships directly from the program.

Anthony Francisco, the city of Norman's chief financial officer, is a member of the Y's board and Minority Achievers treasurer, said mentoring can have a profound impact on students.

"The importance of mentors is to get the child to understand what is involved with various careers," Francisco said, "and to let the students know that they can be successful when they grow up."

Research supports Francisco's statement.

"The mentoring of youth by adults is one of the most promising program approaches intended to promote positive youth outcomes," said a report by Susan Jekielek and Tim A. Moore and Elizabeth C. Hair, published in 2004 by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

"Warm and close relationships with caring adults, and positive role models are the common reasons that mentoring interventions work best for youth development."

International students find a home in city

By Barter Holmes
Red Dirt Journal

Felipe Armaza Arce had a lot ahead of him in Norman. Coming from La Paz, Bolivia, Arce was about to attend a university a hemisphere away in a city nothing like his own.

But the OU Cousins program helped him adjust to life in America as well as life at the University of Oklahoma. An international business major, Arce has been in Norman for eight months and plans to earn an MBA while gaining experience in business before starting his own company either in America or Bolivia.

"The community is very nice and the university is very helpful to foreigners," Felipe Armaza Arce said. "In classes, they treat everyone the same, and I don't receive any special treatment or am given any points." Aurelie Sauter, an engineering major from Clermont, France working on her master's, also felt that OU has worked hard to make international students feel at home.

"International students here are well-treated, teachers are always answering all the questions and speaking slower to students to help us," Sauter said.

All OU Cousins are given the opportunity to live with a family if they choose to, but more often than not, they chose to live in university apartments. Most stayed in Yorkshire apartments until they were closed for demolition earlier this year.

Arce said most students will live in Tradition Square being built south of the College of Law and west of Kraethli apartments and that it will be rather expensive.

"A lot of international students live there because it's convenient and the transportation is easy," said Sauter, who has been in Norman for about 11 months.

She said that the engineering school at OU was a major factor in her choosing a university. Sauter plans to get a job in America because of the poor job situation in France, but moving back is an option if she cannot find work in the states.

Arce said one of his biggest challenges was adjusting to American food.

"Living where I lived, I was used to a maid and having breakfast, lunch and dinner prepared for me," he said. "I know that sounds kind of spoiled, but that's just how it was. I've had to adjust from eating a lot of healthy, hot food to eating a lot of

"The community is very nice and the university is very helpful to foreigners. In classes, they treat everyone the same, and I don't receive any special treatment or am given any points."

Felipe Armaza Arce, OU Cousins and international business major from Bolivia

the American fast food, which is not that healthy."

Sauter agreed.

"The food is very different here. In France, it's very diverse," she said. "Here, it's all the same. Here, people drink lots of pop and there is not much healthy food."

Arce said the program has helped him.

"The first thing is language," he said. "They help you improve your English and learn new languages. They also have helped me become independent because I'm living by myself, cooking my own food and just doing my own things."

The OU Cousins program was formed in 1995 after Molly Shi Boren, wife of OU President David L. Boren, was disappointed

to find that foreign students did not find they had experienced America.

The Borens decided to create a center that became OU Cousins, which has been in existence for eight years. Since then, it has created international friendships with hundreds of foreign students.

OU Cousins participates with 141 universities in 66 countries and has about 1,000 international students from more than 100 countries. OU will send students to every country, unless the U.S. State Department issues a safety alert restricting travel. If, for example, OU receives a safety alert from the state department warning about Colombia, they will not send students there.

"It is a very special program," said C. Audas, director of education about international student services.

"A lot of international students would be a part of the 21 international orientations and not get involved in campus activities," Audas said.

"Now, several international students travel to their OU Cousins to come home countries for the holidays. It's just a program for creating friendships."

Mark Lally, a farrier student from Montana, heads the horse while Derek Disch, a student from Prescott, Ariz., trims the hoof at the Oklahoma Horseshoeing School. Instructor Tommy Roodden (right) shapes a horseshoe.

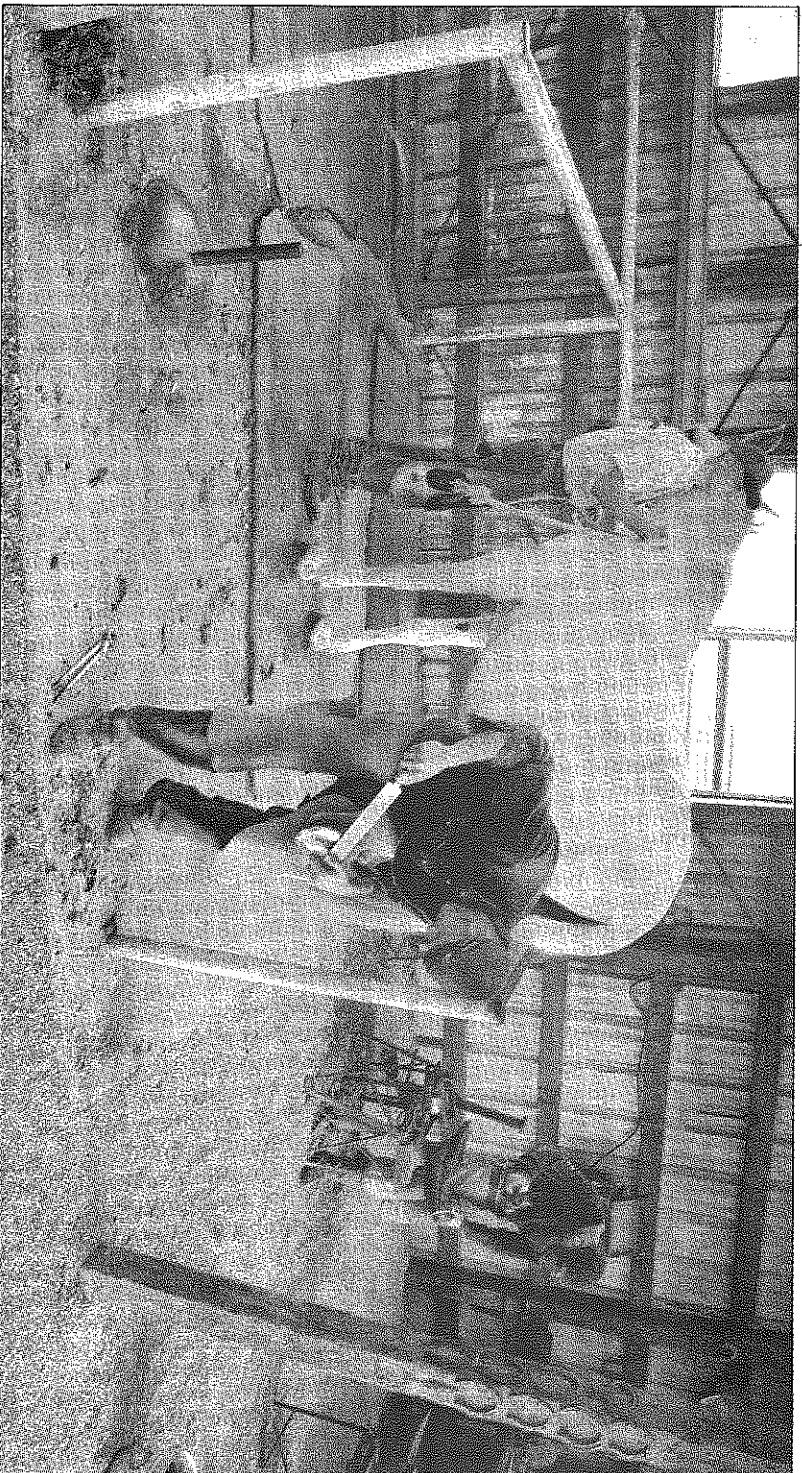


Photo by Jacey Lee, Red Dirt Journal

Shoeing horses a hot job

Purcell school has been training farriers for 32 years

By Serena Caldwell

Red Dirt Journal

A July day in Oklahoma may not seem that hot to Jan Pur. The Netherlands native traveled more than 4,000 miles to work in 130-degree heat inside a horse barn.

He is one of about 300 people this year who will attend the Oklahoma Horseshoeing School.

The school, located in Purcell, was established in 1973. It is one of the few in the country that teaches people the trade of becoming a farrier — a person who shoes horses, mules and donkeys. The school's brochure says a professional in the field can earn \$200 to \$300 a day.

Some students come to build a career while others just want to take care of their own animals. A farrier usually charges \$65 for shoeing a horse and \$25 for a hoof trim.

Students come from all over the world to take part in what the school has to offer, said Rosie Resendiz, the school's manager. Students have come from Belgium, Spain and Australia.

They can choose from two-week, eight-week or 15-week sessions where they can learn anything from the basics of the job to the complete set of skills. Though most states do not require certification, many come for the training.

On a muggy Thursday morning after a heavy rain in McClain County, students were at work in the long reddish barn filled with stalls, horses and hot ovens. This barn is the students' classroom.

"It's very, very hard work," Pur said, dripping in sweat. The temperature rises well above 100 degrees in the summer, yet farriers typically wear gloves, long sleeves and even leather chaps for protection from the hot metal and irritable animals.

Pounding out the job

Student Derek Disch stood near a large white mule's right hindquarter with his back toward the mule's head. He bent down and squeezed near the animal's ankle. The mule gave in to the pressure and allowed Disch to pick up the hoof and cradle it between his thighs. Disch then trimmed the hoof down to about five inches, preparing it to be shod.

Immediately after trimming, Disch set a horseshoe the size of a dinner plate in the hot oven. He then placed this hot orange steel horseshoe onto the mule's hind hoof. Because there is no feeling in the hooves of horses and mules, the animal doesn't flinch. He finished the job by rhythmically pounding multiple nails into the mule's hoof.

Disch came from Prescott, Ariz., to learn



Photos by Jacey Lee, Red Dirt Journal
Gilberto Castro of Jourdanton, Texas, fits a hot shoe to a horse. Castro has been a studying for 10 weeks at the Oklahoma Horseshoeing School.

the horseshoeing trade and said he hopes to find a good job in Napa Valley, Calif.

Resendiz pointed out that only working horses need shoes. Horses that spend their days grazing in a pasture may need a farrier from time to time to trim their hooves, but they can go unshod.

Active horses are shod, or shod, every six to eight weeks to ensure hoof protection. Without shoes, hooves can get damaged and cause a horse to go lame. Horses' hooves are the driving force behind their productivity.

Farrier facts

- The word farrier is derived from the Latin words *faber ferarius*, which translates to blacksmith.
- Hipposandal is the name of an earlier version of the horse shoe used by Romans.
- Horseshoes are made by heating raw steel and forming it into a U-shape that fits a horse's hoof.
- In farrier training, students learn how to shoe a horse, the animal's anatomy and treatment for lameness.
- About 85 percent of farrier training is spent working with horses.

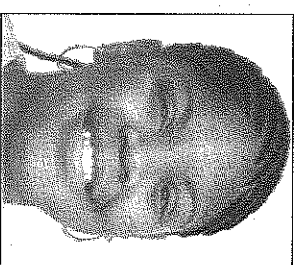
By Serena Caldwell

This private school, owned by veterinarian Jack Roth, operates year round. Classes begin each Monday at 7 a.m., allowing new students to begin at any time.

Roth started shoeing horses to pay for his college. He opened the school to continue to educate those interested in horseshoeing and horse care.

James W. Bailey, a horse embryo transfer specialist whose ranch is near the school, said horses have to wear shoes just like people do.

"No foot, no horse," Bailey said.



Serena Caldwell
Edmond Santa Fe High School

Serena Caldwell, 18, graduated from Edmond Santa Fe High School with a 3.3 grade-point average and will be attending Oklahoma City University this fall after winning the Clara Luper Scholarship.

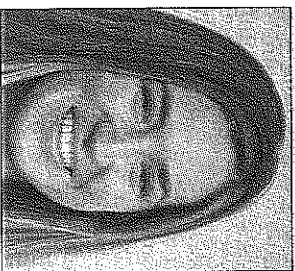
Caldwell hopes to major in broadcast journalism with a minor in culinary arts, but also would love to be a NBA analyst.

Born in Oklahoma City, Caldwell says that the most influential person in her life is her father because he taught her to never give up.

She enjoys playing basketball, rooting for the Detroit Pistons, being the captain of her Amateur Athletic Union team, and eating her father's Mexican casserole after coming home from the Church of Emmanuel Tabernacle.

She is also fond of chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream, cold peach Neri, and good romance novels. Her favorite music is R&B, neo-soul, rap, and she loves listening to Music Soul Child.

—By Baxter Holmes



Malisa Morsman
Jenks High School

Although Malisa Morsman loves to be unpredictable and is ready for any challenge, the Jenks native is deeply rooted in her family and faith.

Since joining her high school newspaper, the Jenks Trojan Torch, in 2003, Morsman has proven to be a talented writer. She will finish her senior year as editor-in-chief while continuing to write for the Tulsa World Satellite section for the second year in a row.

In addition to journalism, Morsman is a member of student council, National Honor Society and Christ Presbyterian Church youth group. She takes great pride in recently learning to drive a stick shift.

Morsman hopes to attend the University of Oklahoma and eventually become an editor at *Vogue Magazine*.

—By **Reneé Selanders**

Divine Darwinism

Proposed teachings on alternatives to evolution stir debate

By **Malisa Morsman**

Red Dirt Journal

A crowded room of onlookers waited anxiously at the July 7 Tulsa city board meeting to hear the vote on a proposed creationism display at the Tulsa Zoo. The board reversed an earlier decision to feature the display designed to counteract an elephant exhibit that included a fact about Hinduism.

Eighty years earlier, another crowded room anticipated the verdict of the John Scopes trial, which found the high school science teacher guilty of teaching evolution, suggesting that humans and monkeys descended from the same primate ancestor.

Although the focus may have shifted from the monkey to the elephant, the controversy about creation continues to create conflict among scientists, school boards, religious leaders and students caught in the crossfire. Most scientists accept evolution — the scientific theory that life began in one form and developed into many others over millennia — as a valid explanation of the physical world.

However, a movement of people of faith — including some scientists and primarily Christian religious activists — proposes an alternative theory: intelligent design, which says that evidence in nature suggests a divine cause for the origin of the world.

In a November 2004 Gallup poll, Americans were evenly split between those who said sufficient evidence supports the theory of evolution and those who said it does not.

However, 76 percent of respondents to a March 2005 Gallup poll said they would not be upset if public schools taught intelligent design or creationism along with evolution.

Philosophy or science

Proponents of intelligent design say it is a legitimate scientific theory and that treating it as such in public school classrooms would not violate the separation of church and state. Many, however, dismiss intelligent design as a strategically designed argument for biblical creationism.

"It's philosophy, not science," said David Nagle, a botany and microbiology professor at the University of Oklahoma. Nagle said that intelligent design and evolution were two different systems, not competing ideas.

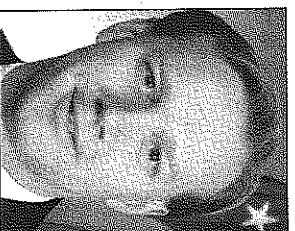
"I don't see the threat in evolution at all. I think it makes the creator that much more wonderful. Evolution does not involve God, but that does not mean God does not exist."

Susan Barber, a biology professor at Oklahoma City University, agreed.

"The nonscience world has a very different view of the word 'theory' than the science world," she said. "Theories in science

Comments on intelligent design

Educators, politicians and religious leaders have different perspectives on the idea of intelligent design and whether it should be taught in public schools.



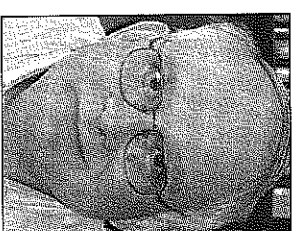
"It's entirely appropriate to offer intelligent design as a scientific theory in public schools... it ought to be presented so students have exposure to competing ideas."

Rep. Thad Balkman, R-Norman



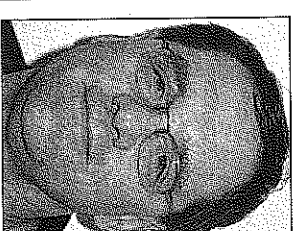
"It's not really the idea that you can't teach intelligent design; it's the fact of where it's taught."

Susan Barber, a biology professor at Oklahoma City University



"To believe that it [intelligent design] should be taught in public schools crosses a very sacred line for me, which is separation of church and state."

Rabbi Steven Kirschner, director of the University of Oklahoma's Hillel Jewish student center



"I don't see the threat in evolution at all. I think it makes the creator that much more wonderful. Evolution does not involve God, but that does not mean God does not exist."

David Nagle, a botany and microbiology professor at the University of Oklahoma

have large bodies of evidence to support them. It's not really the idea that you can't teach intelligent design; it's the fact of where it's taught."

She said intelligent design should be left to religion or philosophy classes.

Edmond North junior Chenoa Barker, however, said she would like her science classes to include both ideas.

"Schools can still maintain separation of church and state because they are not forcing students to accept this idea of intelligent

nations of Darwinism are mixed.

"I have had some students who have picked," she said. "I try to put them at ease, tell them all I'm trying to do is help them informed and that waylays any fear."

Airington said that she would feel comfortable teaching intelligent design a classroom to students who may hold a number of religious and scientific opinions. She said she could have seven or eight regions represented in any given class.

"That would be infringing on their constitutional rights," she said.

Separation of church, state

While some politicians say an intelligent design curriculum violates separation of church and state, others find a lesson with evolution and intelligent design to be a good way to present equally valid views.

"It's entirely appropriate to offer intelligent design as a scientific theory in public schools," said Rep. Thad Balkman, R-Norman. "I think it ought to be presented to students who have exposure to competing ideas. I don't see that there are any church/state issues."

Even so, some religious leaders said it does not believe intelligent design should be taught in science classes.

Rabbi Steven Kirschner, director of the Hillel Jewish student center, said he believes in a creator, but that a religious idea of intelligent design has no place in a public school classroom.

"To believe that it should be taught in public schools crosses a very sacred line for me, which is separation of church and state," he said. "I don't think that the people want both taught as ready to compromise at all. I believe that if they get their foot in the door, they want to boot evolution out. Intelligent design advocates said, however, that they are willing to compromise on this issue and have no hidden agendas.

"Because our public education has been teaching evolution for as long as it has, I don't think that our schools should be teaching it, [but] I think it's important that students be given the option to learn what both sides are presenting," said J. Martin, youth minister at First Baptist Church of Norman.

He said the issue requires a scientific discussion, not a religious one.

"If, becomes this debate between religion and science, but it doesn't have to be," Martin said. "It can be a debate between science and science. God is the originator of science."

Whether the animal in question is a rat or an elephant, the controversy over intelligent design is both an intellectual and an emotional topic — one that may never be resolved in a laboratory.

Protection or censorship?

Reps ask that children's book be moved to adult section

By Jacky Lee

Red Dirt Journal

Jessica Granley is careful about what books her children read.

The 28-year-old mother of two said if a children's book is not age appropriate, then it should be censored by putting it in the adult section. "I would definitely check it out first," Granley said. "I don't have a problem with it."

In Oklahoma, censorship of books has become an issue in schools and libraries.

On May 9, the Oklahoma House passed a nonbinding resolution, proposed by state Rep. Sally Kern, R-Oklahoma City, asking public libraries to relocate age-inappropriate children's books, including homosexual themes, to adult exclusive areas.

Libraries do not have to comply, but funding may be cut if they choose not to move the books.

Kern's resolution was prompted by a complaint from a constituent over "King & King," a book that tells the story of a prince who falls in love with another prince.

State Rep. Glen Bud Smithson, D-Sallisaw, one of three representatives who voted against the resolution, said school and library officials are all capable of selecting books to offer.

"I think we need to leave parenting to schools and parents," he said.

Recent polls indicate that Kern's resolution has broad support across Oklahoma. Eighty-eight percent of voters in Oklahoma agree that books like "King & King" should be restricted to adult readers who can decide whether or not to let their children read it. Shirley Godwin, 78, from Norman, said she is "against censorship in the United States, but on the other hand, in the past, we've had such controversial subjects so accessible to kids." Currently, the controversial issue is homosexual themed books, but Godwin said she remembers when single parent families were not the norm.

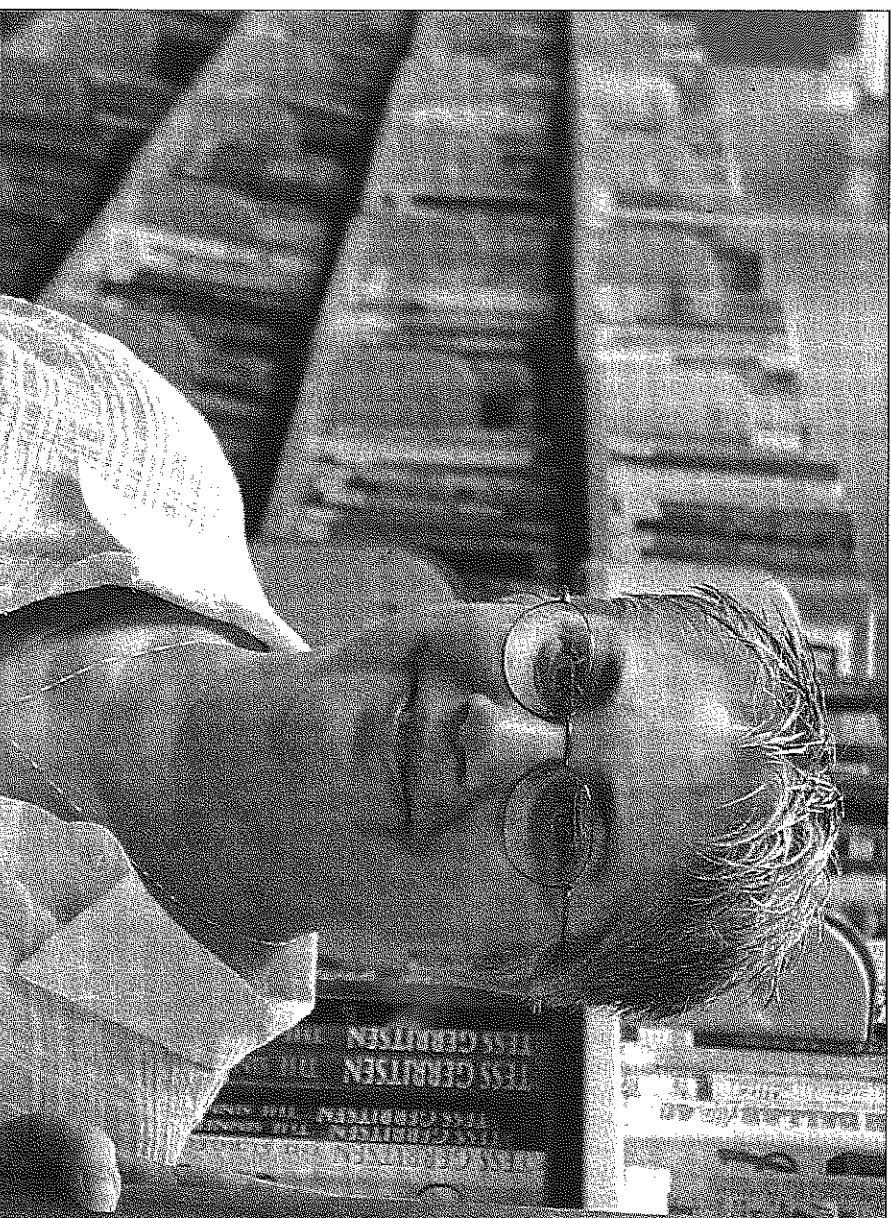
However, Robert Booth, 30, from Norman, said he is against library censorship. "I really think it's the parents' responsibility to supervise what kids are reading," he said.

The American Library Association defines intellectual freedom as the right of every person to have all types of information to view without restriction. Censorship involves changing the access of material based on the content of work.

Judith Krug, director of the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, said about 11 percent of the population self-identifies themselves as being gay or homosexual, not including those "in the closet."

"This is a part of our population and whether individuals like it or not, it's a part of our society," she said.

Many books across the country have been banned or censored for sexual content, of



Norman librarian Jenny Stennis stands among the stacks of the Norman Public Library. Stennis has been a librarian for 15 years.

fensive language and racism. Some of the most banned books in the country include "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," "Of Mice and Men" and "The Color Purple," according to "Banned in the U.S.A."

Some books are censored when officials decide that the number of challenges against it exceeds the educational value. Some schools decide not to even order the book in the first place.

Choosing library books is not easy

School libraries have a very detailed process of sending challenges on books and issues to a committee, and there it is reviewed, said Charles Davis, the executive director of National Freedom of Information Coalition. Although public libraries are public institutions, the selection process is not that different from schools, he said.

"A lot of censorship happens informally," Davis said.

When a book is controversial, it can either be moved to another section of the library, or a parent can ask for an alternative, Davis said, and there is a frequent occurrence of libraries finding "good reasons" not to display certain books.

"I find the idea of book censoring so medieval," Davis said, noting that even if controversial issues are put away, social issues are

still going to be there.

"King & King" is not in the Norman Public Library because, according to Jenny Stennis, coordinator of the library's Center for Children's Services, "it wasn't well reviewed or well illustrated."

She said the library uses book reviews, like the Kirkus Reviews, and journals, to make their selections.

The Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma City carries nine copies of "King & King" spread throughout the branches in the system.

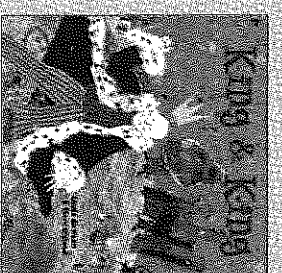
The book is classified as "easy read" in the Children's section, said Executive Director Donna Morris.

In March, a member of the Family Policy Council, a parent and Kern asked the library commission to move the book to the adult collection.

The commission asked the library staff to research the issue and is scheduled to meet next month to discuss whether the book will be moved, Morris said.

Morris said it is the parents' obligation to set values for their families for movies, books or video games, and it is the library's responsibility to provide materials for what people want and need.

"It's a parent's responsibility to parent their children," Morris said.

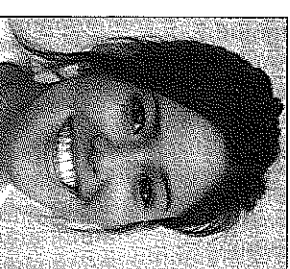


Banned books

Top 10 Most Frequently Banned Books

1. "The Chocolate War," Robert Cormier
2. "Fallen Angels," Walter Dean Myers
3. "Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture," Michael A. Bellesiles
4. "Captain Underpants" series, Dav Pilkey
5. "The Perks of Being a Wallflower," Stephen Chbosky
6. "What My Mother Doesn't Know," Sonya Sones
7. "In the Night Kitchen," Maurice Sendak
8. "King & King," Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland (*Picture/above*)
9. "Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," Maya Angelou
10. "Of Mice and Men," John Steinbeck

Source: *The Associated Press*



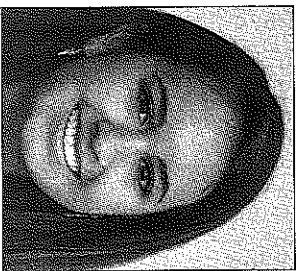
Jacky Lee
The Oakridge School

Vivacious and outgoing, Jacqueline "Jacky" Lee, 18, is always laughing. A recent graduate of The Oakridge School in Arlington, Texas, she will attend the University of Oklahoma this fall where she will major in broadcast journalism. Lee, who enjoys acting and playing volleyball, was born in Fort Worth, and grew up as a single child in Arlington.

When not quoting movies such as "Anchorman," or watching "Sex and the City," Lee can usually be found driving her 2002 BMW Z4 to and from one of her favorite stores, such as Nordstrom. In preparation for life on her own, Lee recently learned how to cook.

"My first meal was spaghetti," Lee said. Her favorite dishes to cook, however, all ways contain chocolate. From chocolate cake to chocolate chip cookies, Lee is obsessed with chocolate.

—By Blake Hoss



Renée Selanders
Edmond North
High School

An Edmond resident but a Texan at heart, Renée Selanders is always on the go.

The Edmond North junior is a National Honor Society representative and member of Key Club, Spanish Club and Multicultural Club. She is also junior class treasurer, page editor and staff writer for the Edmond North Ruff Draft, a hostess at Charles-Tons and a talented dancer.

When she isn't busy with school or work, Selanders enjoys traveling. When she was 14, she went on a three-week trip to the United Kingdom and Ireland, which she

recounts as the most exciting experience of her life.

She is an active volunteer at Coffee Creek Riding Center, which offers mobility therapy to disabled children through interaction with horses.

"It's very rewarding to see the kids improve," she said.

Above all, Selanders values her family, faith and education as the most important aspects of her life.

—By Malisa Morsman

Iraq duty strains family ties

Families and schools see the effects of war at home

By Renée Selanders

Red Dirt Journal

All over Oklahoma, people from every walk of life have been leaving their jobs and families for a common purpose — to go into combat overseas.

But for every person who goes away, a desk at work or a seat at the dinner table is left empty.

When family members are involved, the initiative to go into the military and the possibility of being deployed can be emotionally trying. For Penny Forth, dealing with her son's multiple deployments has been tough.

"The holidays in November and December were so intense for me and his family and his sister because we knew he was leaving for a year to a year and a half," Forth said. "We knew that we would miss him terribly."

Aaron Forth, 26, was deployed for the second time in January. Staying in touch has not been difficult. Penny and Aaron Forth exchange many letters, e-mails and phone calls. She also sends him care packages frequently.

However, she still struggles with his absence.

"Having him halfway around the world is somewhat difficult on me because I don't have as much contact, but it really makes all of the past 26 years so special that I can't put it into words. He is a wonderful person," she said. "I miss Aaron very much."

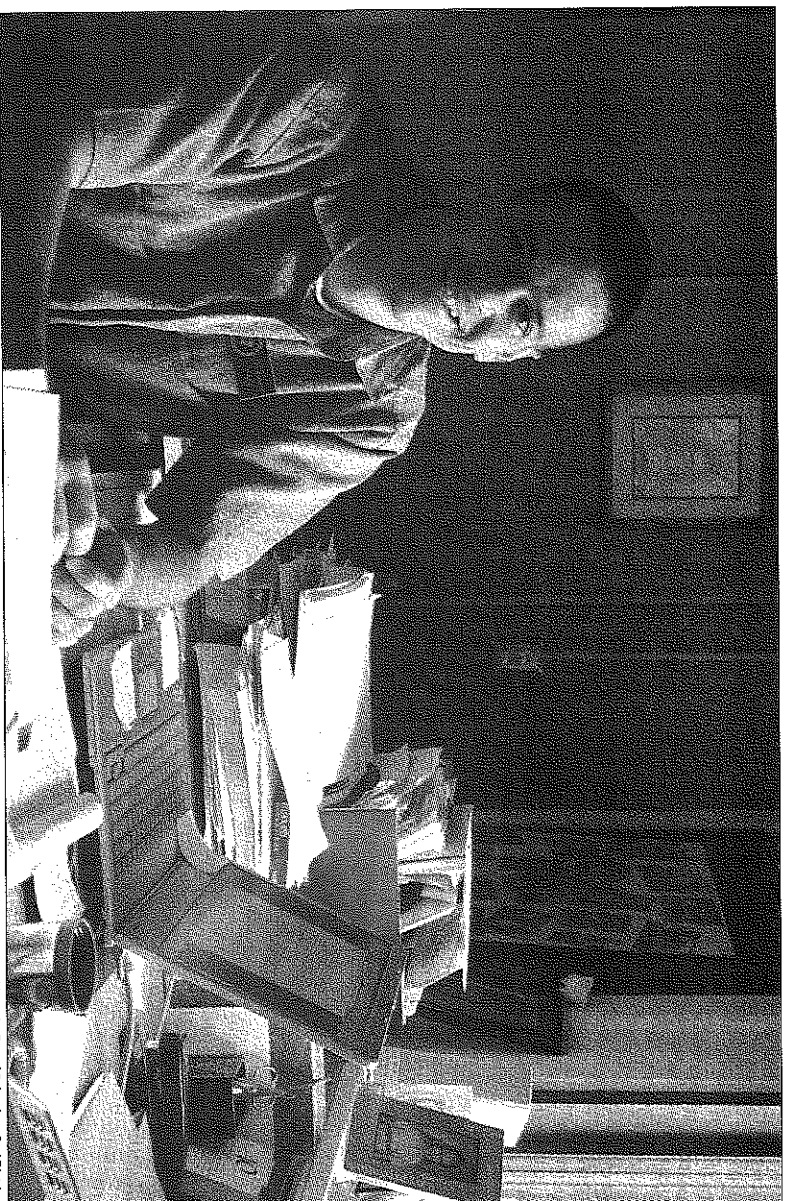
Her two granddaughters are also trying to get used to their father's deployment.

"His daughters have had the hardest time with it, but they talk to daddy on the phone when he calls," she said. "That seems to keep them grounded."

Penny Forth said she finds consolation in visiting with her daughter, grandchildren and daughter-in-law often, but also receives help from the Blue Star Mother's Oklahoma Group, an organization that offers support to moms who have or have had children deployed.

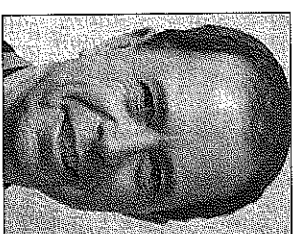
"I had a really hard time with this second deployment and they were supportive and got me involved with taking an office and going out on more events and fundraisers. Staying busy helps," she said.

Institutions other than families are also affected by the rapid deployment process. For Santa Fe South High School, a sudden deployment this past spring meant the loss



Chris Brewster, Santa Fe South High School Principal, said he was prepared the deployment of Teri Coles, a math teacher at his school. Despite the preparatory some students struggled to adapt to their teacher's absence.

"Families consisting of separation of parent-child relationships are very affected by separation, and young members might not have as much life experience with separation. They may need counseling to provide assurance of a reunion."



of Teri Coles, an excellent, trusted math teacher and an influential faculty member. Principal Chris Brewster said.

Coles is a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve. She had been in training during the fall of the first semester in 2004 and was notified of her deployment in March.

"We knew with the situation being what it was and with her rank and her importance, mobilization for Teri was a probability and could virtually take place at any time so we weren't certain that would happen," Brewster said. "But we were prepared for it."

Coles' students, however, were not prepared for such a sudden change. Although they were all aware of her importance in the reserve, some of Coles' pupils struggled with the fact that their teacher would be abruptly taken away from them. They were also concerned with her well being, Brewster said.

"I think the kids were affected by it because of the unknown and not knowing what was going to happen to Ms. Coles," he said.

Despite the emotionally trying transition, most students continued to progress with

their studies in Coles' classes, due in part to her excellent planning and preparation, Brewster said, and a group of faculty mentors also helped the replacement teacher.

Even so, some students felt the change in teaching methods contributed to struggles in the classroom.

"She helped a lot of students and she was doing well teaching," said senior Donna Flores. "When she left, it was difficult. It put me behind in school work. I was also part of her advisory class and we were all shocked when she left. I was scared for her safety."

Coles' departure had an impact in other ways.

"We were in the process of considering Ms. Coles for some administrative duties or increased duties within the school itself, so it kind of threw us for a loop as far as searching out our assistant principal pool or other positions," Brewster said.

Even though Brewster was left with other decisions to make regarding replacements and new candidates for jobs, he likes hiring those in the armed forces because of the

positive influence they provide for students in the school.

Chaplain Lt. Col. Gary Brooks at Tinker Air Force Base, outside Oklahoma City, seen the effects of war on families and individual soldiers while offering counseling.

"When couples are separated by deployment magnitude, any problems in a marriage are greatly compounded," Brooks said. "When dealing with marriages and communications over the telephone or e-mail, deployment greatly stresses and tries marriages.

Not only can marriages suffer, but children may also struggle as they adjust to living without one parent, Brooks said.

"Families consisting of separation of parent-child relationships are very affected separation, and young members might have as much life experience with separation," he said.

"They may need counseling to provide assurance of a reunion."

Brooks said he also sees other scenarios in which marriages and families do well coping with such an enormous change.

"Some families are much better adjusted in relationships when they go into deployment. Those who have more life experience are not affected as deeply and they have more experience with adjusting to deployment," he said.

Despite the difficult times, Penny Forth said she has come to terms with her situation time away.

"I feel we are doing fairly well at this by staying busy, good communication support of each other," Penny Forth said. "Some families are much better adjusted in relationships when they go into deployment. Those who have more life experience are not affected as deeply and they have more experience with adjusting to deployment," he said.

Recruiting made simple

No Child Left Behind gives recruiters additional access

By Jamie Gonzalez

Red Dirt Journal

Standing tall, Joe Crawford said he is proud to have served his country if only briefly.

"I wanted to do something for my country," said Crawford, 19, who after graduating high school went to the Marines Corps. After basic training he had an accident that left him without his right index finger. Crawford received a medical discharge.

Crawford is the type of person military officials like to recruit. A provision in the No Child Left Behind Act has made it easier for the military to reach potential high school recruits. However, the often-overlooked provision is not supported by some students and parents.

Congress passed the act in 2001 in an effort to strengthen secondary education. The controversial provision requires high school officials to grant access to military recruiters and provide student contact information.

Trey Maddox, a 17-year-old attending Norman High School, said he has no interest in being in the military. Still, he said he gets calls, letters and pamphlets from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

"I only took the ASVAB (Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery) because it gave me preparation for the ACT," Maddox said.

Taking the test, of course, alerts the military to a potential soldier.

While some high school students have no enthusiasm for being recruited, there are others who do not mind having

the military at their schools.

Ana Long, Norman North High School student, said she is considering joining the Air Force even though she has not been recruited. She said she wants to play the French horn for the Air Force band.

Long said she is not afraid of being deployed to the Middle East.

Some parents are concerned about having military recruiters on high school campuses.

Deann Minst of Alhus, who has a daughter in the 11th grade, said recruiters should not be allowed on high school campuses because recruiters place too much pressure on students.

"I don't like it," Minst said. "I think if the kid wants to join the military then they'll join."

Mary Kay Hapke, an assistant principal at Norman North High School, said she does not see military recruiters as a bad thing because they encourage underachieving students to stay on track to graduate.

Even so, she said, some students who sign up for the military do not know the reality

of being in the military.

"They (students) do it because they don't have scholarship money and are not college

bound," Hapke said.

John Soos, the chief of advertising and public affairs for the Oklahoma City Army Recruiting Battalion, said the recruiting rate has remained steady in Oklahoma. The battalion serves Oklahoma, Arkansas and North Texas.

Even though recruiting is done on high school campuses, military officials also talk to students who visit recruiting stations, he said.

"There is still quite a bit of walk-ins," Soos said.

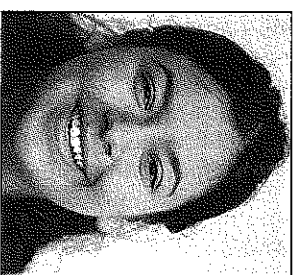
Soos said it is wrong for high school officials not to tell parents their children's personal information can be accessed by military recruiters.

Glenda Glacken, a registrar at Norman North High School, said

that parents can prohibit school officials from releasing contact information, but she did not know how many had done so.

Crawford said recruiters should not have access to student information, but they should be allowed on campus.

"They are doing their best to get students into the military," he said.



Jamie Gonzalez
Santa Fe South High School

Jamie Gonzalez, 17, was born and raised in Oklahoma City. She is a senior at Santa Fe South High School. Her hobbies include mixing compact discs and listening to the newest jams. She likes to go to concerts where she can bounce around to hopping beats. She enjoys listening to indie music, especially her favorite singer, Patrick Wolf.

She drives a "broken down" 1994 Nissan Sentra.

She prefers to wear American Eagle clothing while she sports Converse on her feet. She has a 2-year-old brother and adores him.

Her idol is Elton John.

"He is a diva," Gonzalez said. As a child her nickname was Oompa Loompa. She is height challenged and said that sometimes kids can be fat-out mean to short people.

Gonzalez is fluent in both Spanish and English. She speaks Spanish to her mother and English to her stepfather, when at home. She is full Guatemalan.

—By M.J. Casiano

Did you know?

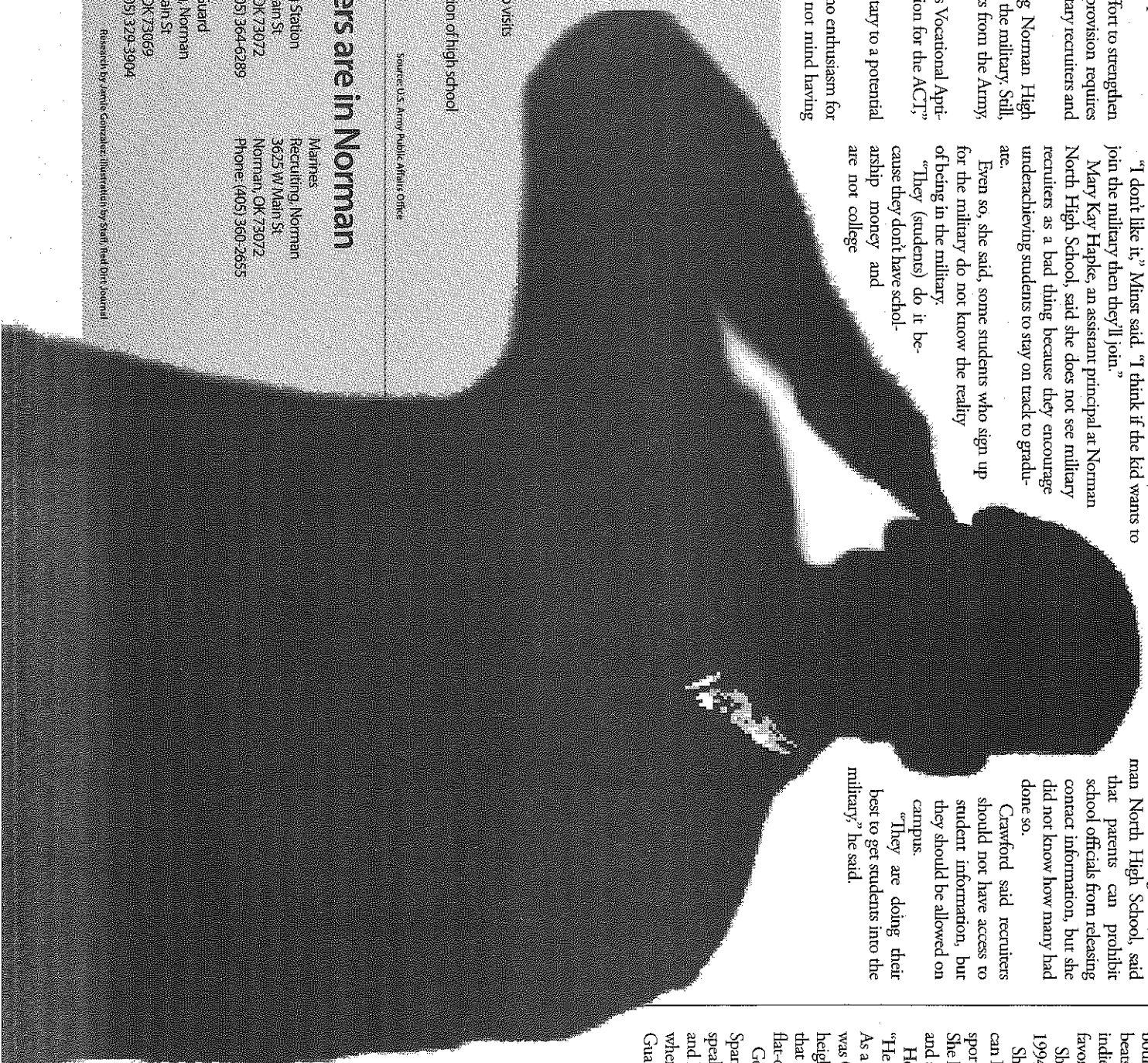
- As of June, the military has recruited 47,121 soldiers.
- The goal was 54,935 soldiers. By the end of the year the military hopes to recruit 80,000 soldiers.
- In June, the army recruited 6,157 soldiers, nine percent more than the goal of 5,650 enlistees.
- The clause attached to the No Child Left Behind Act states that the military gets two visits per year at each high school.
- Military can also access personal information of high school students.

Source: U.S. Army Public Affairs Office

Where the recruiters are in Norman

Air Force Recruiting Office 3625 W Main St Norman, OK 73026 Phone: (405) 364-4740	Navy Recruiting Station 3625 W Main St Norman, OK 73072 Phone: (405) 364-6289	Marines Recruiting, Norman 3625 W Main St Norman, OK 73072 Phone: (405) 360-2655
Army Recruiting Office 3625 W Main St Norman, OK 73072 Phone: (405) 364-2171	National Guard Recruiting, Norman 2115 W Main St Norman, OK 73069 Phone: (405) 329-3904	

Research by Jamie Gonzalez; illustration by Steve Red Dirt Journal



Bombing impacted stuo

Overwhelming experience propelled students' careers, redirected futures of others

By M.J. Casiano
Red Dirt Journal

The April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building challenged the most seasoned of journalists. On that day, a handful of student journalists awoke to the biggest story of their young careers.

Omar Gallaga, Michelle Sutherlin, Michael Patrick and Kelly Crow can vividly recall that event and how it impacted their futures. That was the day Timothy McVeigh parked a Ryder truck packed with explosives in front of the federal building. The bomb exploded at 9:02 a.m. killing 168 people, including 19 children, and injuring 850.

"It was a heart-wrenching experience," said Gallaga, who worked for *The Oklahoma Daily*.

Sutherlin, Gallaga's colleague at the University of Oklahoma's student newspaper, arrived at the bombing site within an hour of the blast.

"There was twisted metal, broken glass and bricks lying around everywhere," Sutherlin said. She ran into victims dusted with plaster and debris as she walked the downtown streets interviewing people.

Some of the quotes she gathered that morning were published in *The Dallas Morning News*. It wasn't until that afternoon she learned of the daycare center in the building. That's when the impact hit her.

She returned to the crowded newsroom where co-workers began asking questions about her experience. She broke down and cried.

From newspapers to television

When Patrick arrived at the site, he saw bloody, dusty victims racing away from the federal building, scared at the possibility of a second bomb.

"Blood was everywhere," said Patrick, a student journalist at Oklahoma City Community College.

Days later, CNN hired him to be a temporary associate producer for a makeshift Oklahoma City bureau set up just to cover the bombing. He worked for the national news network until September of that year. That experience jump-started his career in broadcast. Today he is an executive producer for Fox News in Dallas.

"That day solidified it for me," he said. When Crow headed downtown to the

bombing site, she knew exactly where to go. She'd waited in front of the building the day before when she was downtown for a field trip with her classmates from Edmond Memorial High School.

A reporter for the school newspaper, Crow knew the story was important. She left for Oklahoma City as soon as school let out.

"There was smoke everywhere, and people were walking the other way," she said. "Rescue workers were everywhere. There was a rubble pile in the shape of a building."

For days, she rarely saw her parents because she was busy covering the story.

"It was very overwhelming and just an empowering experience," she said.

The experience helped her six years later when, as a reporter for *The New York Times*, she covered the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

The death and destruction there was an eerie *déjà vu*. Today she is a feature writer for *The Wall Street Journal*.

"To be honest, as a news reporter, it was overwhelming and exhilarating," she said.

"That's what I remember when I look back on that day, a need to look closer and look away at the same time."

Experience alters careers

"It turned out to be the biggest story of my life," Gallaga said. "I grew as a journalist."

He took a job with the Austin American-Statesman in 1997. He now is the editor of the publication's Spanish language paper. He also launched a Web site where he posted the daily journals he wrote in the days following the bombing.

Gallaga's former colleague at the OU student paper still recalls that painful day. Like the others, the bombing impacted her career. It helped her decide she didn't want to write about people in need; instead, she wanted to help them.

"I didn't want to go through another experience like that," Sutherlin said.

She started volunteering at the American Red Cross and eventually took a job there. Now, she is a stay-at-home mother and part-time teacher.

Even though the bombing pushed her away from journalism, she said the experience changed her for the better.

"Here's no way," she said, "someone could teach you that experience."



The reflecting pool at the Oklahoma City Memorial embraces the shadow of the west entrance and the beautiful sky.

Antireporters' careers

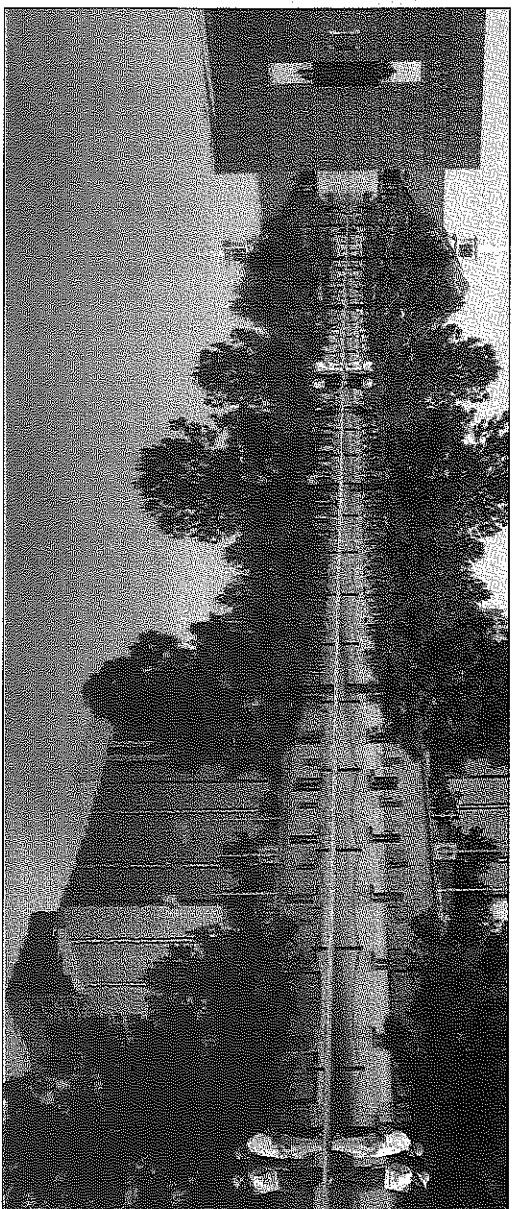


Photo by Henry Nguyen, Red Dirt Journal

View over the reflecting pool of the field of empty chairs that represent every life lost in the Oklahoma City bombing

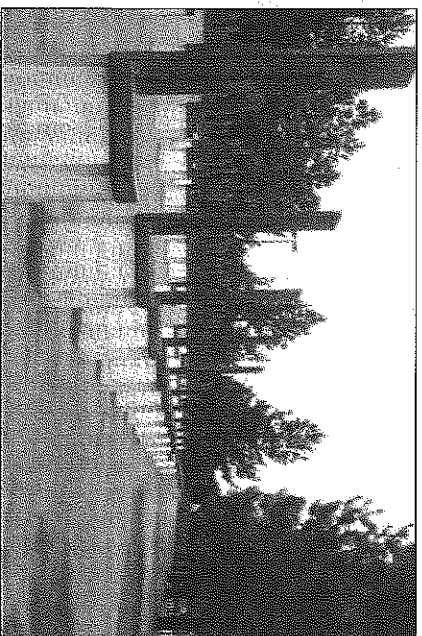


Photo by MJ Casiano, Red Dirt Journal

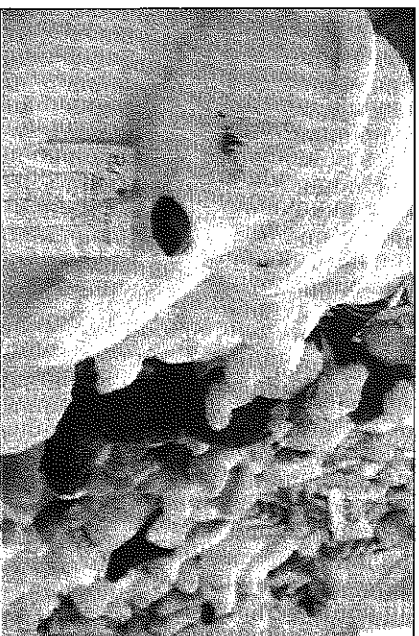


Photo by Renee Selanders, Red Dirt Journal

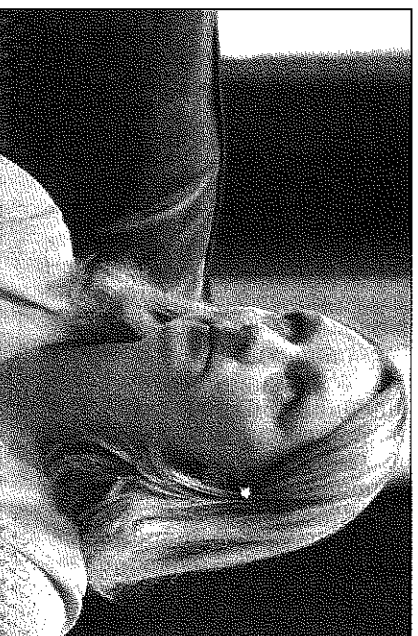


Photo by Malisa Norman, Red Dirt Journal



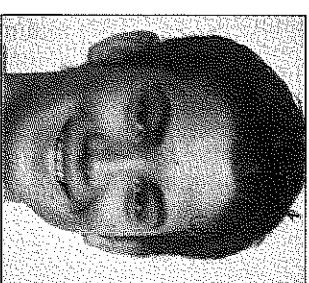
Photo by Monica Ruiz, Red Dirt Journal

Above: Trent Jackson is a 5 year old from Kings Bay, Ga. He's drawing a picture on one of the chalkboards in the Children's Area.

Top left: These chairs represent the victims of the bombing.

Middle left: Along the west side of the OKC Bombing Memorial, family members and friends bring keepsakes in remembrance of their lost loved ones and place them on the fence. The fence is covered with teddy bears, all holding the memory of a bombing victim.

Left: Former Oklahoma Daily reporter Michelle Sutherlin pauses to contemplate the events that took place April 19, 1995, when the Alfred P. Murrah Building was bombed in Oklahoma City.

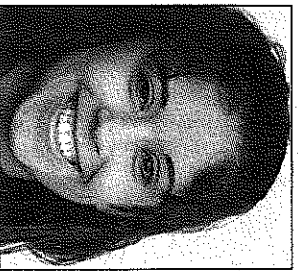


MJ Casiano
Moore High School

"Always make a contract," said M.J. Casiano, referring to a bad experience with his sister's boyfriend. He wasn't paid for a two-page article about Lance Armstrong.

The 16-year-old junior at Moore High School hopes to attend the University of Oklahoma and major in communications. He already has sports journalism scholarship offers for work on his NFL mock drafts. The son of a Caucasian mother and Puerto Rican father has two sisters and a brother and is the second to youngest. Some of his quirks are that he's double jointed and is called Mel Kiper by his friends for his NFL mock drafts. When he's alone in his room he loves to rap to Mike Jones and Kanye West. The most experience he's had with celebrities is that Toby Keith graduated from his high school and his sister, who is 27, turned down dates with both Jerome Berts, running back for the Pittsburgh Steelers, and Jim Thome, first baseman of the Philadelphia Phillies.

—By **Jamie Gonzalez**



Monica Ruiz
Chickasha High School

Monica Ruiz, 18, is a 2005 graduate of Chickasha High School. Striving to be a journalist, Ruiz has made many advancements toward her goal. As a senior, she was co-editor of her school newspaper, Chicken Scratch, as well as an intern at the local newspaper, Chickasha Daily Express. She won third place in sports photo essay from OSM/OIRA, an Oklahoma high school journalism association.

Ruiz's other achievements include her musical talents. She was part of the marching band, and was section leader in her high school's concert band, in which she played the clarinet. She also enjoys playing the piano and guitar. Diversity is an important issue to this writer, who speaks both Spanish and English.

"Different backgrounds bring other concepts... everyone should be represented," she said.

Equally important is spending time with her parents and 11-year-old brother, Jaime. In the fall, Ruiz will attend the University of Oklahoma, on a President's Community Scholarship, to major in journalism.

—By **Elizabeth Reid**

Leading minorities

Representatives in the state say they don't mind chance to educate others

By **Monica Ruiz**
Red Dirt Journal

"Minority" and "leader" are not terms often used in the same sentence, but in Oklahoma today, minority leaders are making a difference for their people and those of other ethnic groups.

These leaders often put themselves aside for the greater good, focusing on educating the community by being role models.

Oklahoma has two influential men making a difference on the state and national level.

Freshman called to public service

In the Oklahoma State House, Rep. Jabar Shumate and, in the U.S. Congress, Rep. Tom Cole are constantly reminded that they are minorities.

Having run campaigns since he was 16, 29-year-old Shumate is a freshman Democrat on the Capitol scene, having just been elected in 2004 to represent District 73, part of North Tulsa.

Shumate's main focus in politics is ensuring that his state has the best educational system available so that the American Dream can come true for his constituents.

Shumate, who served as only the fourth African American student body president at OU, earned a bachelor's in public affairs and administration and served as press secretary to OU President David L. Boren for two years.

He helped energize the youth vote in Judy Eason McIntyre's campaign when she was running for House District 73 in 2002, then went on to become an intern in her office.

Jabar, who said he feels he was asked by the Lord to help through public service, likens his experience to someone being called into ministry.

He likes that he can provide health care and serve the people that put him in office.

Pursuing the greater good

A leader, Shumate said, is a motivator who also has to be able to listen to engage in good government. He said that often means putting the greater good above one's own interests.

Shumate doesn't consider just one person to be his leader. Community elders are leaders in history and knowledge. His pastor is his spiritual leader and the president is his political leader.

He believes having minority leaders on a state and national level is vital to the community because it pushes different viewpoints and aspects of life into the state and national conversations.

"I bring a different view to the table because of where I come from and the fact that I am African-American," Shumate said.

When looking around the room, Shumate isn't bothered by the constant reminders that he is a minority because his vote only counts as one, the same weight as that of the House speaker.

He was asked by House Speaker Todd Hietz, R-District 29, to serve as vice chairman of the House Aerospace and Technology Committee and he's involved in the Affirmative Action Review Council, to which he was appointed by the governor.

He's an advocate for education and business growth.

He sits on the House Committee on Commerce, Industry, and Labor and the House Committee on Higher Education and is an active member in the Tulsa Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

Political influences

Like Shumate, U.S. Rep. Tom Cole found his way into politics thanks to the influence of female politician.

Cole actually became a politician by accident. He had planned on becoming a college instructor.

His mother was politically active, but lost her first campaign.

He told her that if she ever ran for office again that he would help run her campaign.

He was teaching for the summer when his mother phoned to let him know that indeed she was running for office once again.

He helped her run her campaign and she ended up winning.

"It was the most fun I'd ever had," Cole said.

He found himself helping run other political campaigns, which in the end, helped him with his career.

In 2002, Cole became the representative for Oklahoma's 4th Congressional District, located in the southwest region of the state.

His focus on being a politician is that he wanted to make Oklahoma a two-party state.

"I enjoy public life, and I wish more people were involved with politics," Cole said.

He said he feels that it's not a politician's job to agree with everything proposed. He said it's his responsibility to make his point and let people make their own decisions based on the points made by all sides.

Cole earned a B.A. from Ginnell College, an M.A. from Yale University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma.

A leader, Cole said, is someone who knows what they believe in and why, who can identify with other people and who has the ability to know both sides of the story.

A leader requires energy and determination, demands action and can't accept the way things are, he said. It's their job to make changes, to have a vision and to know where they want to go.

His role models are his mom and President George W. Bush, who he said has great character and great qualities.

Close to him is U.S. Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, R-Ill. To Cole, Hastert is a remarkable figure who he feels at times is underestimated because no one is talking about him.

In January, he was appointed by Hastert to the House Rules Committee, which serves as the body through which all significant legislation must pass before being considered by the House.

He's also involved in the Ethics Committee, House Armed Services Committee and serves as deputy majority whip.

He's served as a member of the Oklahoma Senate and as Oklahoma's secretary of state.

He said serving on the House Armed Services Committee is important to him because he has a lot of family members who have served in the armed forces. Citizens need to accommodate the soldiers by sending them food or whatever resources they need.

Adding color

These legislators are making strides in adding diversity to the state and federal governments.



State Rep. Jabar Shumate
D-Tulsa

"I bring a different view to the table because of where I come from and the fact that I am African-American."

Minority group: African American
Education: B.A. in Public Affairs and Administration from the University of Oklahoma
Age: 29



U.S. Rep. Tom Cole
R-Moore

"I enjoy public life, and I wish more people were involved with politics."

Minority group: Native American, Chickasaw
Education: B.A. from Ginnell College, M.A. from Yale University, Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma
Age: 55

Graphic by Monica Ruiz, Red Dirt Journal

He's a fifth-generation Oklahoman and an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation. He's also the only Native American serving in Congress and was inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 2004.

Cole thinks it's vital to have minority leaders on both the state and national level because America is a diverse society. "We're a power restaurant to the rest of the world," Cole said, adding the genius of such diversity is caused by the mixture of color, race, gender and creed.

Cole said it's interesting how people figure out how to be unified and come together at times. If there are minority leaders, it helps their people see that they themselves can be successful.

He's not bothered that he's constantly reminded he is a minority because it gives him a chance to educate and be educated.

"Public office is like graduate school," Cole said.

He said at times, there are 700 people discussing a subject they know nothing about, and that out of these 700 people only one might know the real background.

He quoted Oklahoma son and humorist Will Rogers: "We're all ignorant, only about different things."

Funds and futures at stake

Federal money for college preparation helps Oklahoma

By Elizabeth Reid

Red Dirt Journal

Juggling both a job and a college course, Eric Fonseca will complete four credit hours by the end of this summer.

Combined with his 15 hours from last year, he will have 19. In the fall, he will be back on the track as he enters his senior year — of high school.

This first generation college student is one of 27,000 Oklahoma students who received help last year through college preparatory programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

President George W. Bush originally proposed to slash budgets of such programs for next year. However, recent congressional action indicates the money will not be cut.

The president's budget eliminated Gear Up funding and reduced similar programs such as Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services by 56 percent. The final federal budget will not be approved until the fall.

Sell the money to prepare underprivileged youth and first generation college students is secured only for six years. That means supporters must be on guard to defend the programs.

Oklahoma state Sen. Kenneth Corn, D-District 4, authored a resolution that passed in the Legislature supporting restoration of funding to the federal programs. Corn speaks passionately about the subject, himself being an Upward Bound project.

Corn, 28, graduated from the University of Oklahoma earlier this year. He was a student at Howe High School more than 10 years ago when he participated in Upward Bound sponsored by Carl Albert Community College in nearby Poteau.

"Upward Bound prepared me academically to succeed in college," Corn said. Coming from a small town, he grasps how limiting that background can be.

"Kids from small rural schools often only know their community," he said. "Upward Bound broadens their knowledge of people from different backgrounds that they will have to live and interact with.

"They gain skills for a lifetime," Corn explained.

Gear Up at Oklahoma City University brought together two teens who make an unlikely pair.

Michael Basore, 17, a self-described Goth, showed up in black Army boots. Jamelle Johnson, 16, looked as if he could go play basketball or video games at a men's notice.

Basore of Northwest Classen High School and Johnson of Harding Preparatory School found common ground. Both enjoyed the challenges of writing and the simplicities of life.

"He eats chicken like I eat chicken," John-



Photo by Malisa Moorman, Red Dirt Journal
Sandra Box receives a package from Eric Fonseca at Oklahoma City Community College. Fonseca is part of a work study program through Upward Bound.

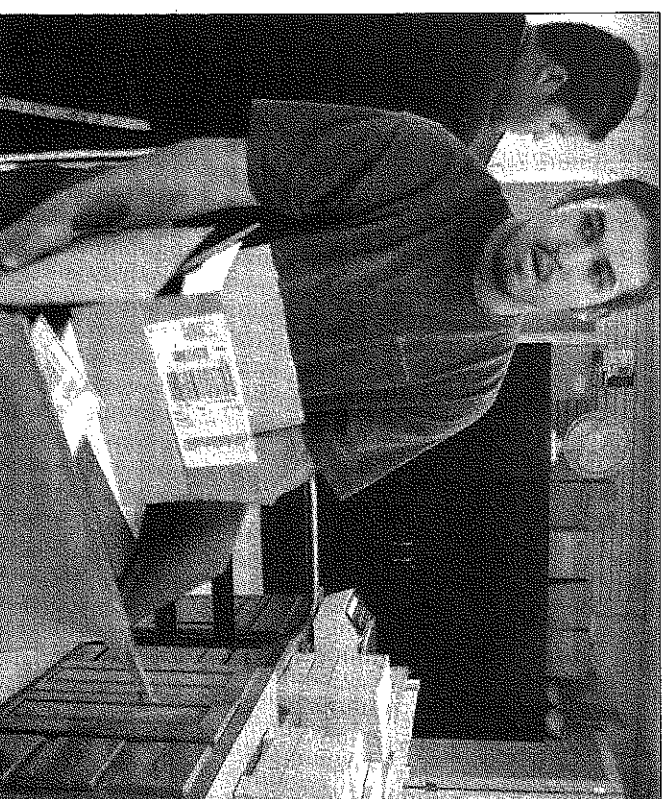


Photo by Malisa Moorman, Red Dirt Journal
Juan Valenzuela, left, and Eric Fonseca make deliveries at Oklahoma City Community College as part of a work study program through Upward Bound. Both men take also take college classes.

son said.

Students agree that these programs are helpful. Gear Up improved their classroom skills in a more relaxed, less structured environment, giving them more one-on-one

time, they said.

Johnson and Basore said they participated in the summer program at OCU because they thought it would help them.

"They are just motivated," said Mindie

Dieu, their Gear Up director.

Critics of Gear Up and the other programs point out that many of the students who participate were already looking forward to attending college. One reason the cuts were proposed was that students who planned to go to college would do so without the extra help.

That's true of students in Dieu's Gear Up class. But, they added, now they are more likely to succeed in college.

Basore said he believed that some people are made for college and others are not. He enrolled in the summer program to help him learn which group he was in, and now he is confident that he knows.

"Maybe I really am made for college," Basore said.

Students who get into the program are more likely to earn college degrees and stay in Oklahoma, Corn said.

U.S. Rep. Tom Cole, a Republican representing Oklahoma's 4th District, said he knows how important it is to have someone prepare you for the rigors of college life. He is a first generation college student himself. "I didn't know what college was like," Cole said. "College is a huge challenge."

Oklahoma students need help overcoming that challenge, Cole said.

The state, which is below the national average in income and in degree completion, could benefit the most from Gear Up and Upward Bound.



Elizabeth Reid
S.P. Waltrip Senior
High School

One of Elizabeth Reid's favorite possessions is her magazine collection, which includes 50 magazines, her favorite being *YM*.

She collects magazines because she likes how the stories are written and designed. A magazine only makes it into the collection if it catches her eye.

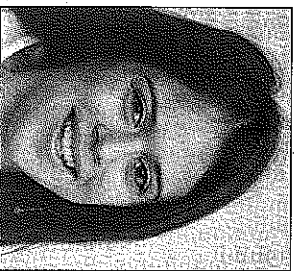
Reid, 17, is a graduate from S.P. Waltrip Senior High School in Houston.

She enjoys movies, shopping, ballet and hip-hop. Her favorite team is the Houston Texans.

She will attend Syracuse University in New York, where she plans to major in communications. She received the Bill Gates Millennium scholarship.

In high school, she was senior class representative and participated in National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, yearbook staff, and a community service organization. She graduated with honors and was published in the Texas Poetry Anthology.

—By Monica Ruiz



Lyndsey Carson
American School

"Be bold. If you're going to make an error, make a doozy, and don't be afraid to hit the ball." Unknown author

Those words could be applied to Lyndsey Nichole Carson, a 16-year-old senior who is taught at home through the American School.

Carson said she would love to be bold in her actions and voicing her opinion.

She isn't sure what college she wants to attend, but she knows she wants to pursue a career in journalism.

Carson lives by her motto: Question everything.

She came to the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism as a published writer. Her work has been included in Satellite, a teen section of The Tulsa World.

The Texas native lives in Sapulpa with her parents, Scott and Debbie, and her brother, Matthew, 20.

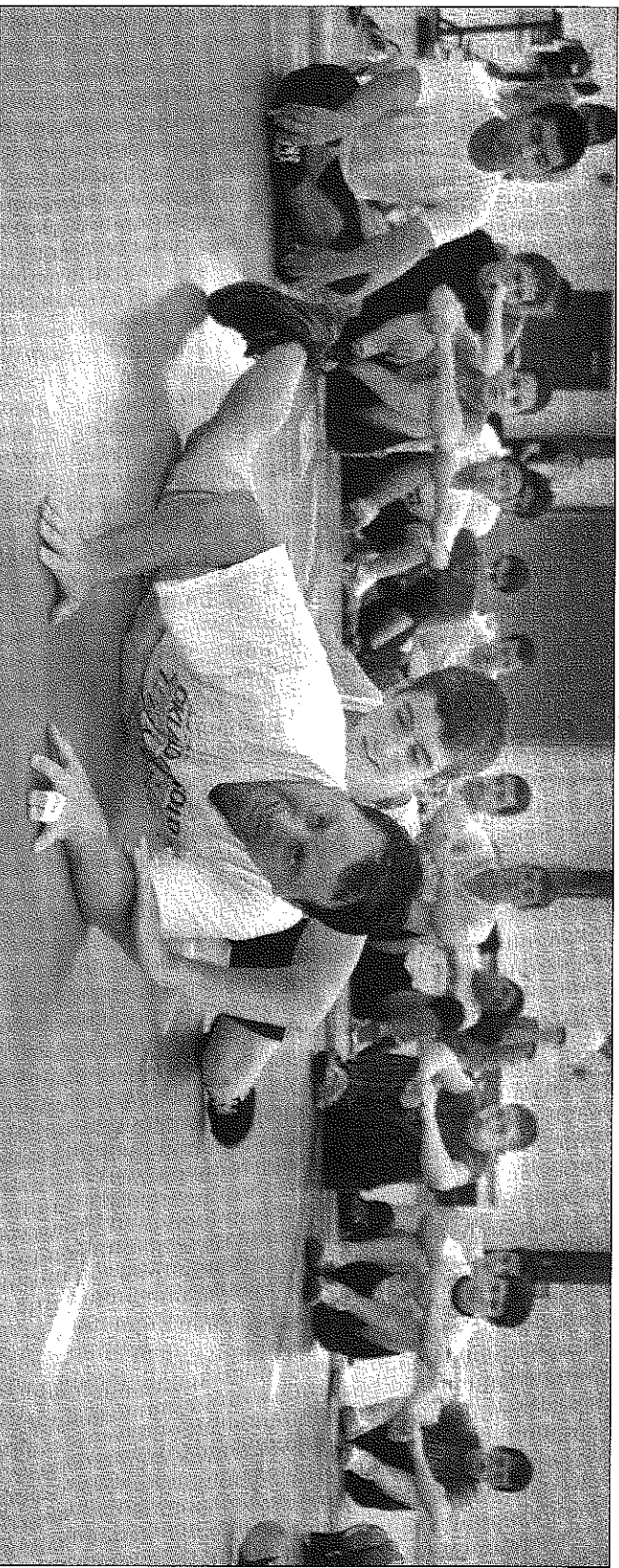
Her family also includes her four dogs: Sophie, Zoë, Mac and Joe.

She enjoys eating cheeseburgers, mac and cheese and anything else with cheese in it.

Although she loves food, her pet peeve is snacking, eating noisily.

—By Da'Shail Miles

Education by day, entertainment by night



Dallas native A.J. Rose, 16, helps Coach Tony Armas of Bremen, Ga., demonstrate a wrestling move. About 600 wrestlers attended the wrestling camp in July at the Mosier Center on The University of Oklahoma.

OU summer camps provide skills for life

Thousands of students get a taste of life on campus

By Lyndsey Carson
Red Dirt Journal

During lunchtime at the University of Oklahoma's Couch Cafeteria, thousands of students are rushing to get their meals.

It's the middle of summer and most of these kids don't look like typical college students. They are smaller and louder and they wear matching T-shirts or neon ruffled mini skirts.

They are high school students attending OU camps for basketball, baseball, softball, wrestling, cheerleading, dance, journalism, spirituality, gymnastics and all sorts of academic programs.

Through this wide range of activities runs a common thread. Instead of just having fun, these students say they are developing skills and learning how to be better people.

Six hundred members of the United Methodist Church came from eight states for the SpilRa (Spiritual Life Rally), whose theme was "Learning, Living, Leading."

Students – seventh graders to recent high school graduates – attended 24 different workshops. Concerts each night, six in all, feature six different, widely known bands, all delivering Christian messages.

The Oklahoma Gold Wrestling Camp was not just about learning how to win a wrestling match, but also how to win in life, said OU wrestling coach Jack Spates, who has been



Photo by Baxter Holmes, Red Dirt Journal
Javelin Mills of Michigan Valley, Kansas, reaches the finish line of an inflatable bungee race July 12 on the University of Oklahoma campus. Mills was one of the 600 SpilRa campers enjoying a week at OU.

coaching 26 years. 12 at OU. He holds two camps in New York as well as the one in Norman.

About 600 students from high school to elementary school came from all over the nation to hone their wrestling skills. What they did not know is that each person would leave knowing more than just how to do a leg ride or some other move.

"I want to challenge them to pursue excellence in every way," Spates said. He said he wants to teach life lessons and that if students succeed in the sport, they can succeed in other challenges.

Students learn spirit and leadership skills

More than 2,000 high school cheerleaders and spirit dancers also were making their way through almost weekly four-day OU Spirit Camps over the summer. They were learning new cheers, chants and dances along with leadership and teamwork skills.

OU Athletic Camps Coordinator Peggy Whaley, who has been working with these camps for 16 years, said that even though teams are competing, they still have fun.

"They get to come to be together for four days," she said. "There is bonding, they learn to get along."

Whaley added that the camps offer opportunities for the girls. These include the chance to be selected for the All American Team, then travel and perform nationally, or

become instructors. Many of the students hope to one day join OU or other college squads.

Stephanie Daniel, who will be a senior at Weatherford High School this fall, spent five days at OU learning how to be a better leader. She came to attend the Advanced Leadership Camp with her school's student council.

"I learned how to be a better leader myself," she said. "It's made me more open as a person."

Programs preview college experience

No matter what the camp, resident students can get a taste of college life.

Precollegiate Programs Specialist Amy Logan estimates that nearly 10,000 campers were on campus during June and July, many of them unsure of what college they want to attend. She said that camps are great recruiting tools for OU.

Campers live in dorms, eat in the cafeteria, walk the campus, use classrooms and computer labs and meet coaches, teachers and college students.

"It gives them a feel of what it is like to be a college student," Logan said.

Daniel said that it lets her know more about the campus so she can be better prepared for the years when she plans to attend OU.

"I love the atmosphere and all the people," she said.



Photo by Jacky Lee, Red Dirt Journal

At left: Teron "Bonafide" Carter from Grits performs for SpillRn at the University of Oklahoma.

Below: DJ Manwell spins for the Grits concert at the University of Oklahoma.

'Grits' not just for breakfast

Hip-hop duo turns hardships into music that inspires others to succeed

By Jacky Lee and Henry Nguyen
Red Dirt Journal

Teron "Bonafide" Carter from Jacksonville, Fla., and Stacy "Coffee" Jones from Atlanta, Ga., a hip-hop duo, share their life-changing experiences with audiences through positive lyrics and high-energy concerts.

They have overcome the odds of a not-so-glamorous past. Now, they use their music to encourage youth to triumph over hardships.

The group has been featured on MTV, BET and movie soundtracks and has shared a stage with OutKast, Jay-Z, Nappy Roots, Ice Cube and Monica. Recently, they performed at the University of Oklahoma for the conference "SpillRn" (Spiritual Life Rally). Grits decided to perform in Oklahoma because they felt even small towns deserve to hear their music.

"It was so awesome. I knew about Christian rock, but I never knew there was hip-hop for Christians," said Vanessa Wasielewski, 15, from El Paso, Texas, one of 850 conference participants.

For some, hip-hop is not a guilty pleasure anymore. "I liked it, I didn't feel guilty about listening to hip-hop," said Meg Mojica, 19, a youth leader from Winfield, Kansas.

The two performers said they were rebels who got involved with the wrong crowd. Bonafide said he believed that his "bridges were burnt with God." He was involved with drug dealing and car stealing, which landed him in prison.

"That time of life, I didn't want to have nothing to do with God," Bonafide said.

Weeks after he was released from prison, he moved to Nashville, Tenn. There he realized God was real and "realized I needed him in my life," Bonafide said.

Within six months, he was working for a Christian band. He was able to turn his life around without changing who he was inside.

"I wanted to be real," Bonafide said.

"Her dragging me to church really paid off in the long run," he said. "Just being on my own and really seeing how difficult life was, I knew I needed something other than myself to get me through it."

Grits members said they grew up in difficult situations but were able to defeat many hardships and come out on top.

These rappers are not new, having made five CDs already, but they are just now going mainstream.

Despite Grits' Christian hymnes, the group refused to have a label put on them. DJ Manwell, who has been with the band for six months, said the Christian genre puts them in a box.

Manwell said they are not Christian hip hop musicians, but hip hop musicians who "just happen to believe."

Grits claims to spread the positive word to their audience "without having to sell it to them," Bonafide said. Although they claim not to be a Christian hip-hop group, they record under a Christian label, Goree Records.

They are influenced by the original roots of hip-hop, like Rakim, who is of Islamic faith. Bonafide said Rakim altered the language of hip-hop by changing the structure of rhyming and rapping "straight up about his faith."

"I've always loved the culture, not because it was Christian or not Christian, it just kept me out of trouble," Coffee said.

Bonafide said that hip-hop culture was designed to keep people out of trouble.

"It's an outlet besides killing each other or fighting."

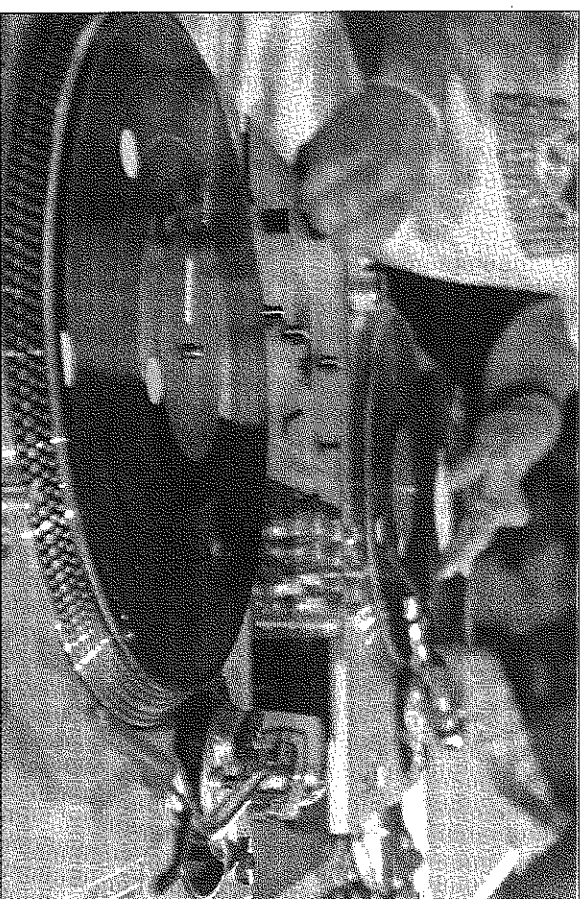


Photo by Jacky Lee, Red Dirt Journal



Photo by Jacky Lee, Red Dirt Journal

At left: Teron "Bonafide" Carter from Grits performs at a concert for SpillRn at the University of Oklahoma.

"It's beautiful. Instead of annihilating each other, we play a game."



Bok Cito teammates celebrate their 2-1 win over Beaver Dam, the defending champion, in the 18-35 age group men's championship game July 16. The World Series of stickball is played each year in Philadelphia, Miss.

Photo by Baxter Holmes, Red Dirt Journal

Native stickball sticks around ...

By Baxter Holmes

Red Dirt Journal

PHILADELPHIA, MISS. — Each team speaks loudly in the huddle about hitting the other team until its players can't walk.

The fourth quarter winds down and both teams are trying desperately to score.

Alas, this battle is meant for overtime, and it is only fitting that both these giants are pitted against each other: It's Bok Cito versus Beaver Dam in the final game of the World Series of Stickball in Philadelphia, Miss.

Stickball is a very sacred game to the Choctaws.

"The game is our heritage," Ramsey Williston, 19, an avid stickball player from Tuskahomma, Okla., said.

"It's beautiful. Instead of annihilating each other, we play a game. No missiles, no guns, no death. Maybe some broken bones, but we don't kill each other. That's why it is called 'Stickball: Little Brother of War.'"

Folsom White, the son of one of the greatest stickball makers of all time, speaks about Native Americans keeping the game sacred:

"I don't want it to be 'Americanized,' I think that we have to keep it traditional," White said. "No recruiting; establish teams from your region and just play. You have to play for the love of the game, not for the dollar."

Stickball was a part of Native American culture long before 1729, when a Jesuit priest stumbled onto a game in southern Mississippi, according to the Choctaw World Series of Stickball for the opportunity to be crowned world champion. There are five divisions: 9-13 co-ed, 14-17

boys, 18-35 men, 18 and older women, and 35 and older men.

How it's played

Stickball involves two teams with between 20 and 300 players. In the championships, both teams play 30 at the same time. The field is about 100 yards long with two poles on each end, but fields can be up to five miles long. Each player has two sticks, which look similar to lacrosse sticks, but the cups are a lot smaller and often made of hickory.

The object of the game is to score points. Players can do so by picking up the small, leather ball with their sticks and then hitting one of the poles by either throwing the ball at it or hitting it with their sticks.

There are not a lot of rules to the game, but all players know that if you are going to tackle someone, you must drop your sticks. After watching several games, it becomes obvious that any player within 12 inches of the ball will get hit by one, two, and sometimes as many as four opponents.

A physical game

Tod Harrison, who has been on the games' medical staff for the past five years, makes it clear that stickball is a very rough sport.

"We get tons of lacerations everywhere, broken fingers, ribs, legs, lots of extremities, lots of knee and foot injuries," he said. "We even had a spectator have a heart attack from the game."

Stickball is so violent that a French explorer said of it, "Almost everything short of murder is allowable," recalled a 1997 article in Smithsonian magazine. Because most clothing is ripped off during tackles, teammates wear same-colored T-shirts instead of pricier jerseys.

Before games, players walk around proud and strong. After games,

many hobble around on crutches, with their extremities bandaged and wrapped. There is a high price to pay for playing.

"No padding and there are a lot of things that would hurt would get players penalized, fined, and suspended in other sports," Les Williston, Ramsey's father. "It's 60 people with two sticks, so get as physical as you dare."

Folsom White agreed.

"It's not like football, it takes a tremendous amount of endurance during the game, but there are no breaks," he said.

During the game, there are about a dozen officials. When they get out of bounds, the nearest official quickly throws another ball so not a second is lost. The only time the game is paused is when a foul is called. A player fighting, playing far too aggressively, or for a

Playing for the title

The men's title game this year pits defending champion 1 (pronounced Boké Chir-to, which means Big Creek) against powerhouse Beaver Dam.

Thunder rumbles as both Mississippi teams wait to take the field. The players' passageway, building the drama. Teammates shove one another to get hyped up as they jaw with their rivals away.

Finally, the moment erupts as the teams pour onto the field, waving flags and smacking their sticks in a flurry of bodies and passion.

The game features hitting so violent that mothers cover children. Everywhere the ball flies, collisions follow.

No missiles, no guns, no death. Maybe some broken bones, but we don't kill each other!"

Ramsey Williston, 19, an avid stickball player from Tuskahoma, Okla.



Photo by Baxter Holmes, Red Dirt Journal

The final game of the World Series of stickball begins with a tip off similar to basketball. Each team has about 30 players on the field simultaneously.

in its traditional state

Bok Cito strikes first, scoring almost nine minutes into the first quarter. The sideline erupts with cheers. Not a minute passes, however, before Beaver Dam evens the score. It is a defensive battle then until overtime.

About nine minutes into the sudden-death extra period, Bok Cito's Cain Chickaw finds a golden opportunity.

He has the ball next to the other team's goal, with a chance to win a world championship.

Chickaw's shot hits the pole, and Bok Cito wins the world championship.

Bok-Cito celebrates around coach Louie Morris after dousing him with Gatorade.

"We stay together, we play together, we win together," Morris said.

Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Phillip Martin hands out the championship trophies and MVP awards to all divisions.

Chickaw is presented with a special stickball blanket made by Tuskahoma native Nancy Southerland-Holmes in honor of being named MVP and he also received a large trophy.

Soon, stickball will be seen in larger venues.

Ken Klaudt, the Native American Inaugural Olympic Games Commissioner, has formed the Native American Olympics that will be held in 2007 in either New York or Denver.

The games will feature the more than 500 U.S. tribes and will have more than 30 original Native American games, including stickball.

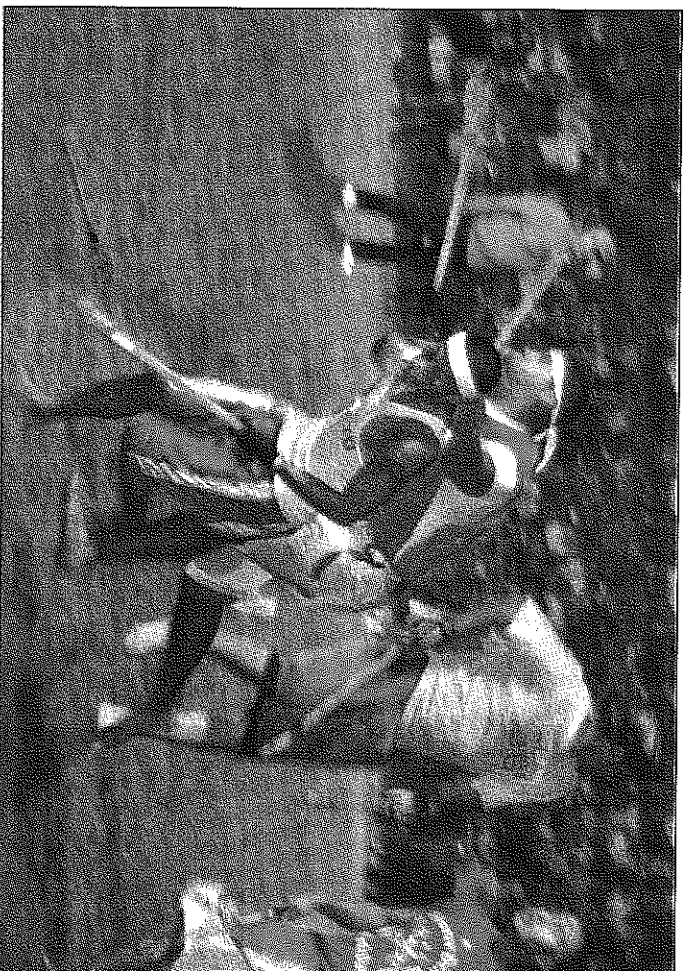
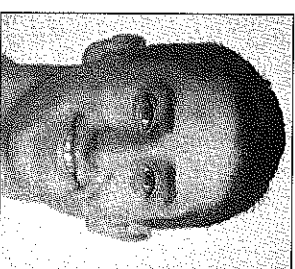


Photo by Baxter Holmes, Red Dirt Journal

A Beaver Dam player attempts to knock down a Bok Cito player in a legal move in the championship game.



Baxter Holmes
Clayton High School

Baxter Tucker Holmes, 18, is the son of Nancy and Jack Holmes. He is a recent graduate of Clayton High School, where he was the valedictorian with a 4.0 grade-point average.

His achievements include being student council president, a National Honor Society member and vice president of the Business Professionals of America.

Holmes will attend the University of Oklahoma in the fall. He plans to major in journalism and minor in law. He has received multiple scholarships, including the Henderson, McMahon, and OU Valedictorian scholarships. Holmes would like to someday write for ESPN.

He enjoys playing and watching basketball. Another interest of his is the Native American game of stickball that is similar to the game of lacrosse. More favorites include seafood pasta, the color green, the movie "Anchor-man" and chocolate milk.

—By Sereena Caldwell

Traditional blanket depicts Native sport played to settle tribal disputes

Chief Martin (far left) presents the Choctaw Stickball blanket to MVP Cain Chickaw, Looking on are Choctaw Princess Jessica Greer (in gold dress) and blanket creator Nancy Southerland-Holmes (far right).

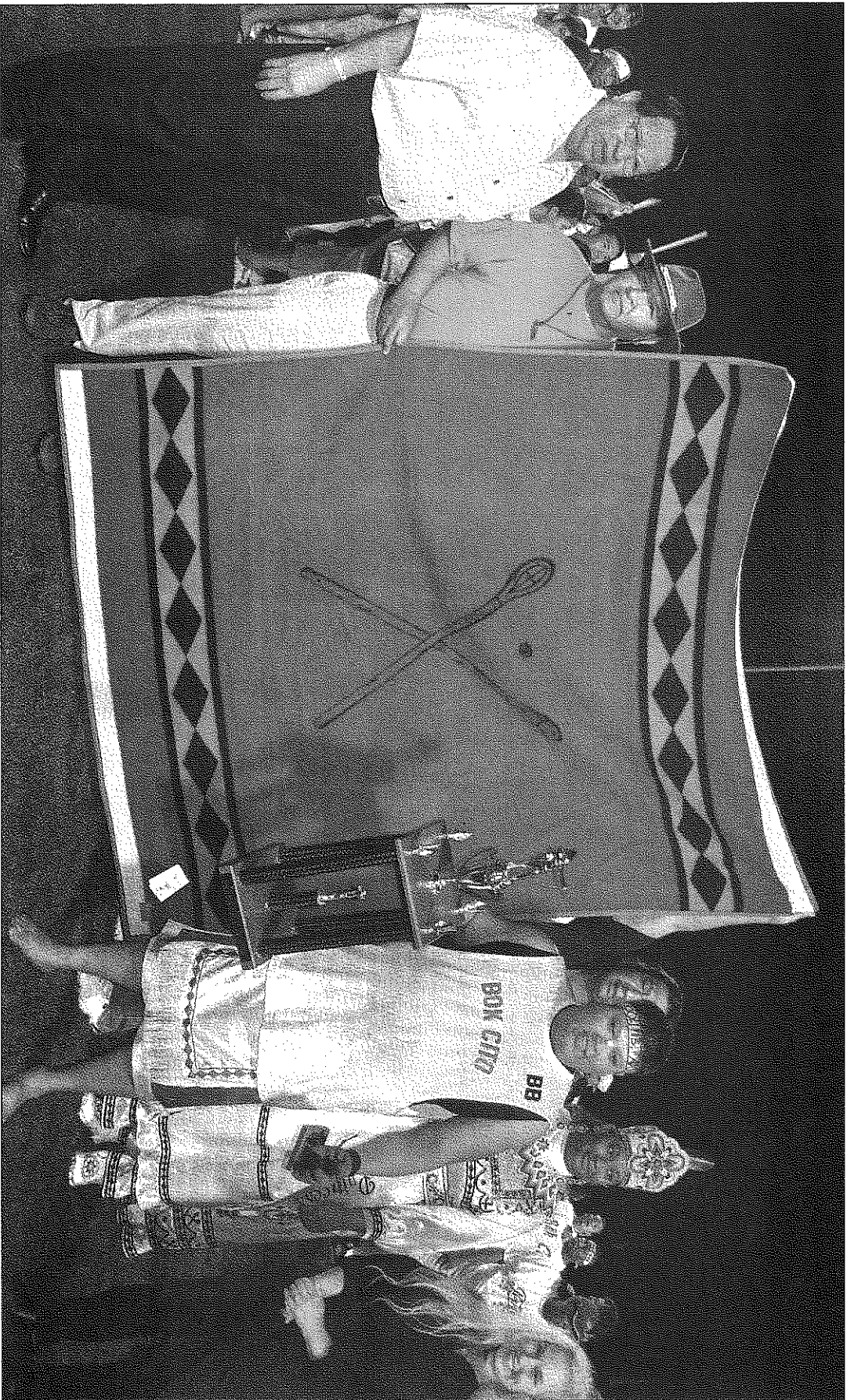


Photo by Baker Holmes, Red Dirt Journal

Stickballer blanketed with honor

'Little Brother of War' was designed to share Choctaw tribes' culture

By **Lyndsey Carson**
Red Dirt Journal

Like many Native Americans, Nancy Southerland-Holmes, a Choctaw quilter and fabric designer from Clayton, sees legends and deep historical and cultural meaning in a blanket.

Because the majority of Americans do not see such things, Southerland-Holmes wants to share her culture with them.

Southerland-Holmes designed the "Little Brother of War" blanket, produced by Pendleton Woolen Mills, to honor Choctaws and the Native sport of stickball. The blanket's name refers to a game traditionally played to settle disputes and avert tribal war.

"The blanket is one of the highest forms of honor and recognition," Southerland-Holmes said. "It is to honor that person's position or achievement."

Cain Chickaw, the most valuable player in the Choctaw Stickball World Series in Philadelphia,

Miss., July 13-16, received a blanket in addition to his trophy after the game. Chickaw said it felt good to receive the blanket, and he will hang the 64-by-80-inch crimson blanket on the wall.

"The blankets will be displayed out in the open, to display and share," Southerland-Holmes said.

Phillip Martin, chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, also received a blanket during Chief's Hour, an invitation-only event during the celebration that includes the stickball championship.

"The moment I presented the blanket to Chief Martin, I felt such deep appreciation for his support of the game, and I just wanted to thank him for it," Southerland-Holmes said.

This is the first blanket Pendleton designed to honor the Choctaw tribe and it depicts two stickball sticks and a ball shown in the manner they would be placed on a wall when not in use. Along the top and bottom are orange bands with black diamonds, a

motif and colors traditional to Choctaws.

Bob Christnacht, manager of Pendleton's Blanket and Home Division, said people submit about 100 designs annually to Pendleton Woolen Mills in Portland, Ore., a garment maker for more than 140 years and producer of a series of Legendary Blankets honoring Natives.

Each year, Pendleton introduces eight to 12 new designs and nearly all of them are created by the company's own designers. In 2005, Pendleton chose only one outside design, Southerland-Holmes' "Little Brother of War," to include in its line.

Christnacht said to meet Pendleton's standards, a blanket must be historically correct and have great meaning. "Little Brother of War" goes on sale Aug. 15 for \$175.

Southerland-Holmes said she wanted to honor her tribe and its history with her work. Christnacht said the company wanted "to tell, embrace and romance Native American customs and cultures."

Christnacht said the legend behind the blanket was a major reason Pendleton selected it.

"The message was compelling, and it really resonated with me," Christnacht said.

Southerland-Holmes described as "wonderful" her work with Pendleton and its ability to make the blan-

ket widely available.

"Stickball is such a big part, a representation of our culture," she said. "It was a very great honor. It was like a gift."

Southerland-Holmes has been quilting since age 3 when she made her first, using a needle and thread with fabric pulled from her mother's scrap bag.

"In our family, all the generations of grandmothers on both sides passed down quilting," she said. "I've never not known it."

She has taught quilting at a community college, done a how-to sewing segment on a local news channel, had her Native American theme patterns published and still designs Native American fabric.

When she begins to work, Southerland-Holmes said she thinks, "How can I do my work? That is my focus. How can I do it so that it is meaningful?"

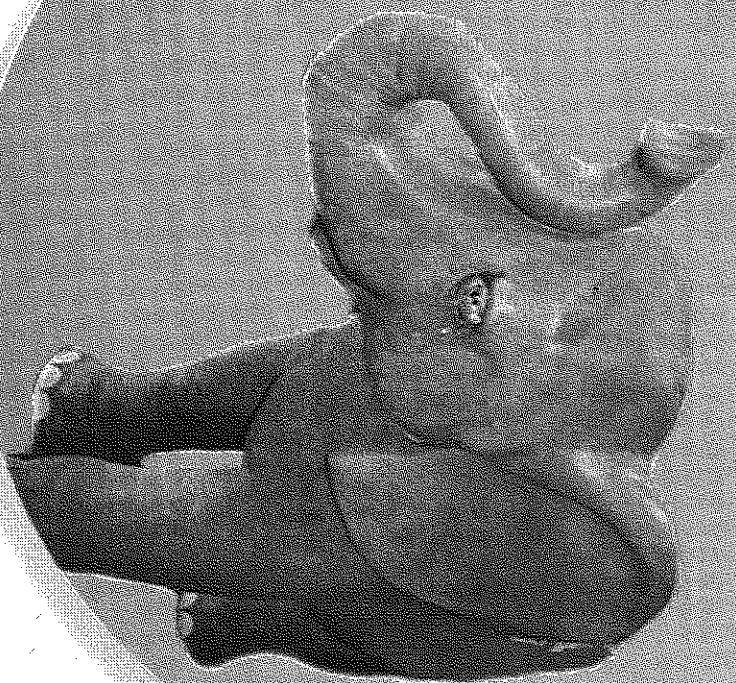
She designs not for herself, she said, but for Native Americans with limited access to culturally appealing fabrics and for other people interested in Native traditions.

"I look at my work as being meaningful," she said. "I am so inspired by my culture, and I try to share the beauty of it. Native America has really yet to be discovered by much of the dominant American society."

66%

Republican ticket

Founded in 1906, the Oklahoma Republican Party has 1.2 million registered voters, according to the State Election Board. In 2004, Republican candidate George W. Bush captured 959,655 votes, or roughly 66 percent of the vote.

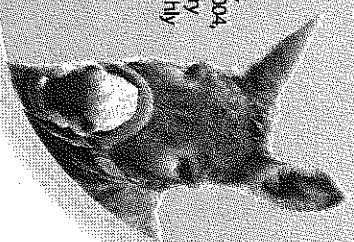


How Oklahoma voted in the 2004 presidential election

34%

Democratic ticket

Founded in 1906, the Oklahoma Democratic Party also has 1.2 million registered voters, according to party officials. In 2004, Democratic candidate John Kerry captured 504,077 votes, or roughly 34 percent of the vote.



Research by Da'Shail Ables; graphic by Joni Alexander, Red Dirt Journal

Feeling blue in a red state

Political clubs target teens, offer safe forum for ideas

By Da'Shail Ables
Red Dirt Journal

In Oklahoma's electoral vote count for the 2004 election, George W. Bush collected a whopping 65.56 percent (or 959,655 votes) defeating John Kerry, who picked up 34.44 percent (or 504,077 votes).

While Oklahoma is a Republican state, there are many Democrats, including teen Democrats, who are not ashamed to say so.

In public schools, Democrats are starting to become bolder.

At Norman High School during the 2003-2004 school year, current Young Democrats club sponsor Larry Steele observed on 10-15 students at two meetings he was invited to.

In the 2004-2005 school year, the students involved in the Young Democrat club rocketed to about 125 to 130 students, becoming the largest club at Norman High School, Steele said.

They got along really well because of a role reversal activity Steele planned, he said.

In this activity, the political parties exchanged roles. The young Democrats became the young Republicans and vice versa. They had to debate according to their new party point of view.

The teens liked this because it helped them see what it was like in the other party's shoes.

"Usually in high school, the party you are is the party your parents are," Steele said.

Steele said as the majority of the people in the party clubs grew up together, they usually just joke and enjoy speaking their minds without causing any harm to their friendships.

In other schools, many students with minority opinions are facing discrimination because of differences among high school students.

Two schools with active political minority groups are Santa Fe South in Oklahoma City and Jenks High School in Jenks.

At Jenks, student Lizzy Pircock said political clubs at her school made T-shirts, and her club, Young Democrats, sponsored lively political discussions.

Sell, Pircock said, members of the Young Democrats feel left out because of being surrounded by mostly Republicans.

"I've gotten 'oh, my gosh, you're a liberal?" Pircock said. Pircock said the difference of opinions didn't harm friendships in the school.

Santa Fe South, on the other hand, is a less tolerant environment, student Isabel Orozco said, noting the school didn't have a club for Democrats or Republicans.

In the 2004-2005 school year, the seniors were mainly for Kerry and the juniors were mainly for Bush. Orozco said with the seniors graduating, the school would become a majority Republican school with the exception of a handful.

Orozco said a lot of her teachers assume she is Republican because she is Catholic and keeps her opinions to herself.

"I'd love to voice my opinion, but I don't think I could be treated fairly in school if I did," Orozco said.

Most friends don't share their political preference so they can remain friends, Orozco said.

Teens from the two schools agreed that being a Democrat is like being an outsider, and it is harder to buck the norm than people think, especially in high school.

When students enter college, organizations such as the OU Young Democrats are available to keep them plugged into political issues.

The president of the Oklahoma Young Democrats, Katy North, feels involvement will get today's teens in politics.

For some, participation in the party clubs has become a way of life and a way to stay plugged into current political events.

Kira Self was a 2004 graduate of Norman High School who belonged to the Young Democrats. Self, who is enrolled in the University of Georgia, said, "If you are involved, you will stay involved."



Da'Shail Ables
Pathways Middle College
High School

Da'Shail Ables lives in Spencer with her eight family members. The 16-year-old will be a junior at Pathways Middle College High School, which is in Oklahoma City Community College. She has a 3.63 grade-point average, is an honor student and designs pages for The Pathways yearbook.

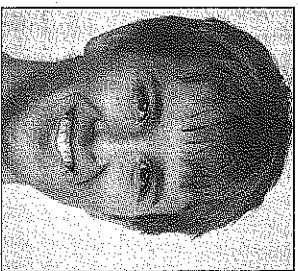
Ables, who volunteers at nursing homes and the Ronald McDonald House, hopes to earn a scholarship to Spelman College in Atlanta and then transfer to Washington University in St. Louis. She wants to study pediatrics because she likes and wants to help children.

Ables loves horses and traveling and is a dancer at heart. Her dream trip would be to the Bahamas so she could lounge on the beach while reading her favorite romance novels. She admits and wants to be like her mother because she is caring and puts others' needs first.

"I won't settle for less."

Ables said, "so I know that I can achieve all that I want to."

—By Lyndsey Carson



Blake Hoss
Bishop McGuinness
High School

Blake Hoss, 18, a former football player, found his passion for writing early in life.

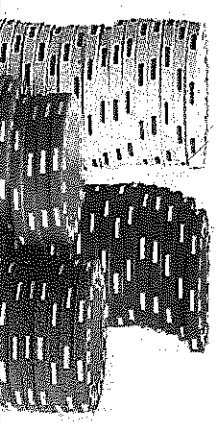
He was born and raised in Oklahoma City with two younger brothers, one younger sister, and two dogs. Although "there's nothing to do in Oklahoma," he spends his time writing, reading, watching movies, preferably "Scarface," and hanging out with friends.

Hoss works at a law firm and drives a 1994 Mercury Sable. He listens to classic rock but not the Eagles, and enjoys watching the "Sopranos" and "Family Guy." In high school, Hoss won the award for the "Most Cynical," and one time got kicked out of class for crawling out the window because he was bored.

The aspiring writer said he hopes to be a "poor and starving author someday." He recently graduated from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School in Oklahoma City, and will attend the University of Oklahoma this fall.

—By Jady Lee

Hold'em



Online poker raises the stakes for youth addictions

By Blake Hoss
Red Dirt Journal

With a green felt table for their court and cards rather than basketballs in their hands, a new group of high school athletes is emerging.

They are poker players, and for most of them, fairly low stakes Texas Hold 'em is their game.

For a few, however, the much more financially dangerous online poker is seductive. Ladbrokes.com, the largest online poker site in Europe, reports that 25,000 people play every day, and during peak hours 6,000 to 7,000 people play on 400 virtual tables.

In January 2003, total cash wagered online every day was \$10 million; in 2004, \$60 million; and in 2005, \$180 million, according to the Scotsman.com news site.

Some psychologists, researchers and even students say that gambling is potentially addictive, as dangerous as drug or alcohol use, and that even low-level poker is gambling. Others say that poker is an inexpensive way to spend a social evening. They consider poker a group sport or game like chess.

"My friends started a regular game every week," said Alex Duncan, University of Oklahoma junior. "We're all hanging out together. It incorporates thinking and strategy."

Michael Smith, a Tulsa psychologist who earned his doctorate in applied behavioral science from Oklahoma State University, has worked with teenage gamblers for 20 years. He takes a darker view.

"It's all about that adrenaline rush, waiting for that next card," said Smith, executive director of the Oklahoma Association for Problem and Compulsive Gambling. "It's like a shot of cocaine."

Inexpensive fun

In local high school and college games of eight to 10 players, a buy-in can range anywhere from \$5 to \$50. A night at the movies would cost about \$15 with concessions. On a date, that amount would double.

The buy-in is all a player spends for the night, and games can go on for several hours. The winner gets most of the pot, with second place getting his buy-in money back and, sometimes, a little extra.

Online gambling can be free, but betting versions are limited only to the amount of money the player has.

Many players say it isn't just the social activity or the money that draws them.

"Guys like the thrill of gambling and the competition," said Andy Morris, an incom-



Photo illustration by Blake Hoss, Red Dirt Journal

Texas Hold'em is the game of choice for students today. However, psychologists worry that student gambling may have serious repercussions.

ing OU freshman who has tried online but prefers in-person poker games.

Serious players study the game in books and on television. An Amazon.com search for poker books turns up more than 1,000 books with titles like "Doyle Brunson's Super System: A Course in Power Poker" and "Play Poker Like the Pros."

They spend hours watching games on ESPN and wait for the World Series of Poker, which showcases the skills of poker pros like Greg "Fossilhart" Raymer, who won the Series in 2004, dominating not with athletic prowess but with

mental agility.

Players study pros like Phil Ivey or Daniel Negreanu as an aspiring basketball star might watch LeBron James or Kobe Bryant.

"I watch it just because it shows you how the best of the best play," said Todd Lockard, a May 2005 Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School graduate who said he has tried online games but prefers playing with friends. "It's like watching tennis or anything else. And it makes you better."

"It's all about how well you are able to

read people and subtle techniques. You have to be able to change personalities, change styles quickly because if someone starts reading you then you know you're done. You have to have the ability."

Morris said that mental ability obviously matters more than physical in poker.

"A fat guy can do it to kill time, and there are a lot of fat guys out there trying to kill time," Morris said.

The game is also relatively easy to set up.

"It's something you can just do," incoming OU freshman Dara Mirzaie said. "You just need a table and a deck of cards and a few friends. It's easy, and you can win money."

The dark side of poker

Experts and even some students say, though, that while friendly poker can be inexpensive and fun, some young players may be taking their first steps in a dangerous direction.

Smith said high school students who gamble on poker might also gamble on action sports such as basketball or football.

According to the International Centre for Youthful Gambling Problems and High Risk Behavior at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, at least 55 percent of adolescents are involved in gambling of some form and that one in every 25 teenagers has a serious gambling problem.

"Gambling is definitely very addictive, just like any type of drug or alcohol or anything," Morris said. "It really can get a hold of you. Once you lose, you just got this feeling that you want to get your money back. The more you play, the more you keep playing."

Most high school students acknowledged the threat of a possible addiction, and some said they had friends who might be addicted to gambling, but all said they could quit any time.

"I'm not addicted," Lockard said. "I enjoy it. That's the way to put it. It's the thrill. I'm an adrenaline junky; I can quit whenever I want, though."

Kevin Ewing, Edmond North High School junior, had similar thoughts.

"I know you can get addicted, but I enjoy it as a hobby, and it's only five bucks," he said. Ewing said he has played free online games but not in any involving betting.

Smith said students who gamble are more likely to become depressed and turn to drugs or alcohol to pick themselves back up.

"Playing cards is a game of thrill," Smith said. "If you gamble enough, you'll win, and then when you lose, you'll keep trying to win it back."