

'Rose' with thorns

By JEFF GILLEY
Something's wrong with Deborah. Deborah is 16 and pretty. She slashes her arm with a tin can lid, sears it with burning cigarettes, pounds her head on the floor, and lives in a kingdom called Yri. Debbie is schizophrenic.

"I Never Promised You a Rose Garden," starting Friday at the Cinema I and II, is the fine film version of Hannah Green's bestselling novel detailing a young girl's battle with madness. Like "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Rose Garden" takes place in a mental institution well-populated with loonies. "Rose Garden," however, doesn't exploit madness as an allegory, but exposes its anguish with touching realism.

Through the doctor we receive hints of what triggered Deborah's illness: a childhood trauma, hatred of her sister, and an overpossessive father. But the basis of her illness is left as shadowy as her parents, two areas that need further exposition. The film is also weakened by low production values and a contrived baseball sequence, but these are comparatively minor annoyances.

Most of the film's success rests on the superlative ensemble of players, led by Quinlan as Deborah. Always fascinating, her interpretation of a

schizophrenic includes such marvelous details as a painful, shuffling walk, an upraised hand caressing the air, and any motion of a uniquely expressive face. The result is a character of depth and power rarely seen outside the best Broadway has to offer.

Director Anthony Page wisely allows the performances to unfold without interference. Still, he gives the film impact without letting it turn into an "Exorcist"-styled freak show.

Easily rising above its faults, "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden" is simple, moving, and agonizing. Like "Rocky" of last year, it is a brave little film that made good; unlike "Rocky," it is sentimental without being manipulative. In an age of empty superspectaculars and exploitation cinema, what higher virtue can a film claim?



Battalion photo by Lyle Lovett

Robert Keen and Sunny Fitzsimmons, members of the "Front Porch Boys" singing group, practice for an upcoming concert. Performers' auditions are held at the Basement Committee meetings every Monday night at 7:30.

City Council beseiged with merger proposals

By RUSTY CAWLEY
Battalion Staff
Merger, merger and more merger. That's the subject of the week for College Station City Council.

Two proposals are before the council. One is to merge the city's office with the A&M Consolidated School District's office. The other is to merge the entire city with Bryan.

The councilmen are considering the first proposal but thumbing their noses at the other.

In a meeting Wednesday, Councilman Lane Stephenson asked for an informal poll of the council to gauge the members' interest in merging tax offices with the school district.

The poll was taken at the request of the A&M Consolidated School Board.

The school board seeks to join the city tax offices. The trustees claim the offices duplicate information, spending tax money needlessly.

Councilman Larry Ringer moved to instruct the city manager to look further into the proposal.

The motion passed with one dissent. Councilman Jim Dozier said, "We'll end up with the property owners screaming at us rather than the school board," Dozier said.

The school district is just trying to solve their problems.

"It's a school board problem, not a city problem, and I don't want any part of it."

City Manager North Bardell said the city had once collected taxes for the school district.

"But we just couldn't put up with Bardell said. "That's why the two offices were divorced,"

Councilman Gary Halter said he wouldn't see that merging the two offices would save any tax money.

"There's nothing economical about consolidating bureaucracies,"

Halter said. Still, he favored studying the matter further.

Councilwoman Anne Hazen said the council should consider the merger.

"We owe it to our taxpayers to look into this," Hazen said. "If we turn it down, we should have a good reason."

But Dozier remained firm.

"We're not going to take over the school board's problems," Dozier said. "That's the biggest mistake this council could make."

The other councilmen, however, want to review the school district's proposal.

But Bryan's proposal to merge with College Station is another story.

College Station Mayor Lorence Bravenc made it clear that the Council would call no special meeting to consider Bryan's proposal.

The proposal, contained in a letter from Bryan City Manager Lou Odle, had not been received.

Odle called Bardell yesterday and told him the letter had been posted.

"We should get the letter in the next couple of days," Bardell said.

"I guess we'll read about it in the paper tonight," Bravenc said.

"Why don't they just send us a paper instead."

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suicide ruled in Smith case

Suicide is the ruling in the death of Texas A&M University psychology professor William R. Smith, announced Wednesday morning. Smith was found dead in his car on Friday on the west feeder road Highway 6.

Investigators said Smith shot himself in the chest with a .22 magnum weapon. Smith resided at 1826 Shadowood.

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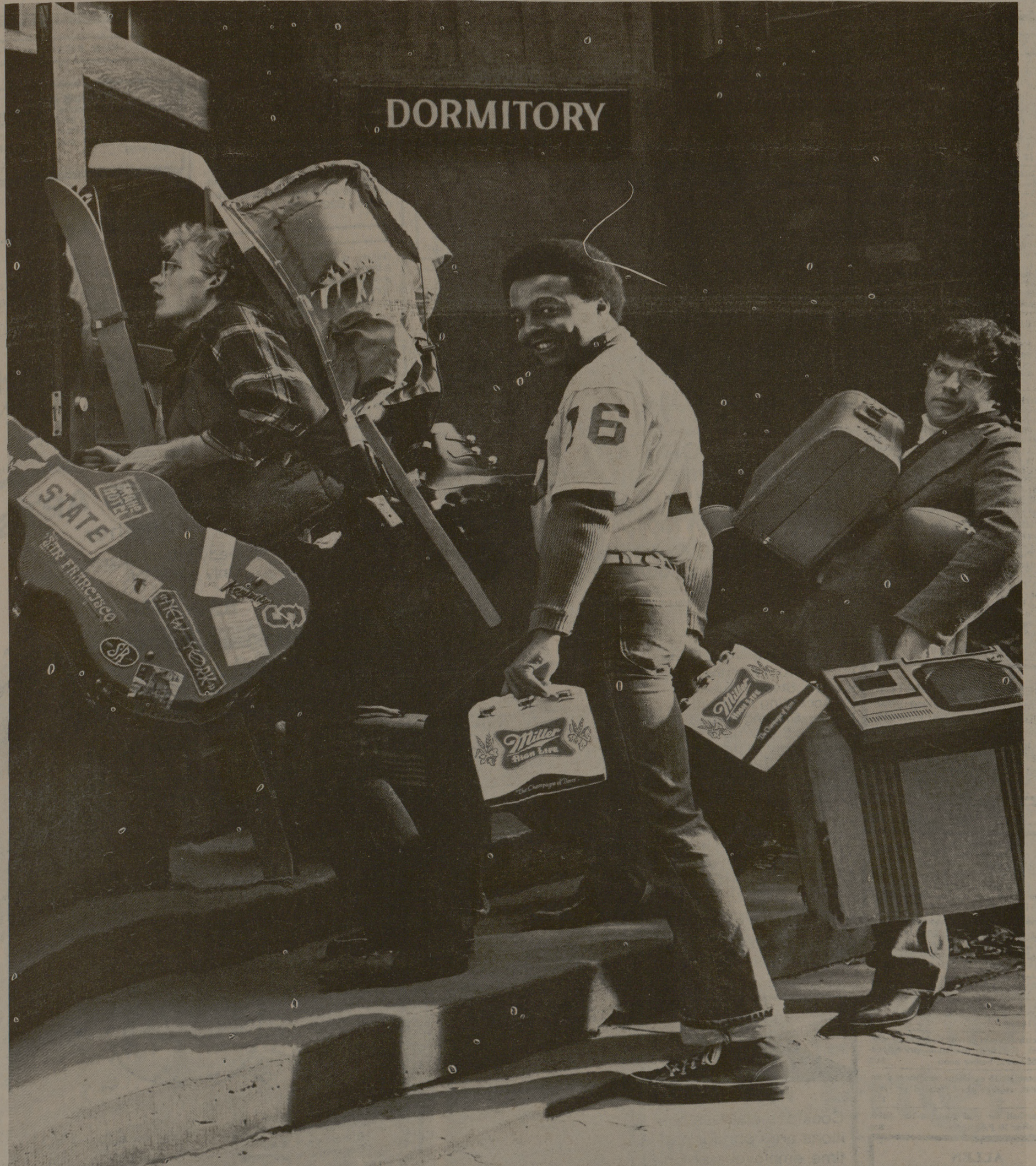
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