

# Permanent bus passes will be issued Monday

By Drew Leder  
Staff Writer

Bus Operations will begin issuing permanent passes Monday at Rudder Tower to about 1,000 students who have been using temporary passes. The temporary passes expire Sept. 15.

Doug Williams, manager of Bus Operations, said the department followed its usual policy of ordering 10,000 passes for the semester and as caught by surprise when a record number of students ordered passes. Williams said 11,417 students are expected to pick up passes this

semester, an increase of 3,919 over the spring and 2,611 over last fall.

The rider increase also spurred the department to purchase more buses and hire extra drivers. An addition of six buses brought the number used to cover the nine off-campus routes up from 27 in the spring. The drivers total 165 this semester, which is a slight increase over the spring, Williams said.

The increase of passengers on every route is creating some delays for students, Williams said. He said the department received a complaint Wednesday from a student who was passed by at a bus stop Wednesday morning because the bus was full.

"We've had minor problems on just about every route," Williams said. "There have been some problems with getting people to school on time."

Williams attributed part of the delay problem to inexperienced drivers.

"The biggest problem with the new drivers is that they are uncomfortable with carrying a full load (of passengers)," he said.

Williams said he expects the delays to be reduced as drivers get more experience on their runs.

"We're getting the bugs worked out," he said.

# West Texas couple rebuilds old hotel into country home

## Restored building provides peace, quiet

MULLIN (AP) — From a rocking chair on the second-floor balcony of an old hotel, Warren Duren looks out over a peaceful little lake.

A horse grazes on the far bank. A breeze and the shade make the afternoon heat bearable. Deer and turkey abound in the hills surrounding the lake, but are not to be seen this time of day.

The old hotel is everything a country home should be — quiet and comfortable, quaint and relaxing. Duren's only regret is that he and his wife, Oleta, cannot spend more time here.

This was once the Star Hotel, built sometime between 1900 and 1907. The balcony, where Duren now sits, once faced the noisy Santa Fe Railroad tracks in downtown Mullin, some three and one-half miles from where the hotel now stands.

Neither the hotel nor the lake were there when Duren bought this land nine years ago. Duren built the lake and wanted to build a cottage beside it. Driving past the old hotel one day, Duren mentioned to his wife how good it would look next to the lake. The idea stuck, and when the price was right, he bought the hotel.

After the big move in January 1985, work began on the interior. A

previous owner had restored the outside of the hotel and given it its wine color trimmed in white. Two carpenters worked four months and the Durens worked six months to transform the hotel into a home.

Much of the hotel's personality has been restored. Old flooring and ceilings, a six-foot bathtub, and numbered doors remain. Plenty of antiques furnish the rooms or find new uses such as the old wagon wheel from which kitchen utensils hang.

The rooms are small by today's hotel standards.

"We want king-size now, we don't even want queen-size," Duren says.

"They probably got about two bits a night for this room," he says.

"This is kinda my favorite spot," Duren says of the balcony. "The water goes back for half a mile."

His granddaughters' favorite place is the playroom in what used to be the attic, he adds. Or, maybe the tree house he built for them.

"We've spent two nights here during the last couple of months," Duren says. The couple live in nearby Goldthwaite.

"We'd like to spend every night here if we could, but there always

seems to be a meeting in town or something to go to," he says.

The hotel gets plenty of use from friends and the Durens' sons, Tom and Phil, and their families. Several youngsters often come by to ask if they can swim in the lake. Sometimes they bring along a hammer to fix some loose boards in the pier. Duren gives them permission.

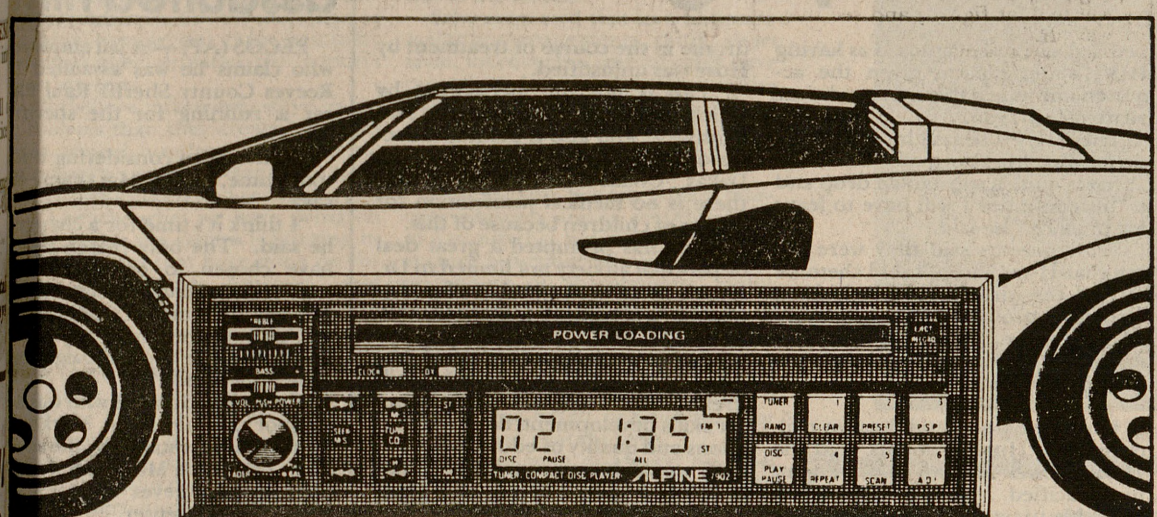
Growing up near Mullin, Duren didn't get a chance to stay at the Star Hotel, but remembers eating here when it was the McNeill Boarding House.

"Mrs. McNeill was a great cook," he says. "I think you'd pay about two bits and sit around a big table, family style, and eat all you wanted back in the Depression days."

Duren ran a grocery store and locker plant for several years in Mullin. A friend encouraged him to go into the banking business in 1947 and by 1953, he was president of the Mills County State Bank. He retired in 1980 and is now chairman of the board of the bank's holding company.

The Durens, married 50 years, say the time and money they have put into the hotel was worth it.

"We've enjoyed every minute out here," he says.



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