



WEATHER

FORECAST for SATURDAY:
Partly cloudy and warm during the day, turning mostly cloudy by mid

One in five fail part of basic college skills test

AUSTIN (AP) — Almost one of every 5 students who took the new basic skills test for college students failed at least one section, and the failure rate is expected to go up, state education officials said Thursday.

Of those who took the test, 42 percent of the blacks, 31 percent of the Hispanics and 13 percent of the whites failed at least one section of the Texas Academic Skills Program test. It was given March 4 for the first time.

The reading, writing and mathematics test is required for freshmen and transfer students entering Texas public colleges beginning this fall. The test also served as a

substitute for the exam formerly given only to education majors.

One reason the failure rate is expected to rise is that 6,135 of the 7,763 students who took the initial test are education majors who already are in college, officials said.

The remaining test-takers were high school students who chose to take it instead of taking an exemption. Students are exempt from the test if they have earned at least three semester credit hours of college-level work before fall 1989.

Also, only 6 percent of those taking it indicated they plan to attend a community college. Students must pass the test to com-

plete associate degrees or certificate programs that include nine or more semester hours of general education course work.

The passing rate "is somewhat higher than we had anticipated, and we're pleased with that," Higher Education Commissioner Kenneth Ashworth said. "But it's higher because this group is not representative of the total group that's going to be taking this test in the months ahead, and certainly next year."

Of those who took the test, 419 were black, 1,600 Hispanic and 5,339 white.

In the fall of 1990, the full entering class of freshmen will be taking the test, a num-

ber estimated at about 100,000 students. The test cannot be used to bar college admission, but a student must pass it to take upper-division courses.

Students who fail could need several semesters of non-credit remedial courses in a particular area. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requested \$36 million in additional state funds for remediation for the next budget period.

Ashworth and Education Commissioner W.N. Kirby said they see no reason to change the 70 percent passing standard on the test, which has been criticized as too high by the Mexican American Legal De-

fense and Educational Fund.

MALDEF also does not want the test used as the sole criteria for determining whether students can take upper-level college courses, said Norma Cantu, director for educational programs for the group.

On the reading section, a 45 percent failure rate had been predicted for all students. On the math section, a 46 failure rate for all students had been predicted. A prediction had not been made of those students expected to pass the entire writing portion of the test, because scoring for the essay was combined with performance on multiple-choice questions.

IRS closes 24 Hour Gyms for unpaid taxes

By Fiona Soltes

STAFF WRITER

The Internal Revenue Service seized and closed 24 Hour Gyms of Texas Thursday morning because of \$32,435 in unpaid employment taxes.

Bob Branson, public affairs specialist for the IRS, said a lien against the gym had been in effect since March 8. The gym, located at 700 University Drive East, is owned by Kyle Myers, who was unavailable for comment.

"Once seized, the property is owned by the government," Branson said. "The (previous) owner still has a chance to pay. But if he fails to pay, the government has the right to sell it."

Branson said the IRS will work with Myers to determine the deadline for payment.

Hector Mendoza, manager of the gym until January, said his job included overseeing personnel and coordinating aerobics.

Mendoza, who worked at the gym for more than three years, said:

"When the gym first opened several years ago, it made its mark in College Station and was a positive impact for a long time." However, he added, lately there have been problems with management of funds.

Mendoza said the previous owners, Dan and Laurie Coyer, were genuinely interested in the gym and were there from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day.

"Myers was only in the office for a few hours a day," he said. "I was responsible for things when he wasn't there, which was often. I saw the accounting on a daily basis and heard the bank call several times."

"But unless I could have con-

trolled all of the money, I couldn't have done anything about it."

Mendoza said he and other personnel talked to Myers about the financial situation on several occasions, but it was his opinion Myers didn't see the problem until it was too late.

"I think Kyle honestly thought the facility would run itself," Mendoza said. "It's not that we didn't have the money to pay the bills. He wasn't there to open his mail."

Mendoza said another problem was that members did not pay monthly dues.

"In the past, we had members paying (monthly) dues, but the system was weeded out," he said. "The short-term (membership) idea worked for a while. But under the current system, we had a clean slate every month, with the salespeople having to sell their quota (of memberships)."

Randy Lemmon, who taught aerobics at the gym from July 1988 to March 1989, said the employees had felt for some time the gym was in trouble.

"It started with little things," Lemmon said. "Equipment wasn't being repaired, bathroom tissue wasn't being replaced, and cleaning and vacuuming of carpets wasn't being done."

Some employee paychecks began bouncing in February, he said. Paychecks for the month of March also bounced, he said.

"It's really a shame," he said. "The gym has many student employees who rely on those paychecks for operating funds."

Lemmon agreed that a large part of the problem concerned the sale of short-term memberships for quick cash.

"There are about 3,000 members at the gym," he said. "Granted, only



Photo by Ronnie Montgomery

Jennifer Jones, left, a sales representative for Gold's Gym, talks with Sara Kingsley, a senior elementary education major, outside the recently closed 24 Hour Gyms of

Texas Thursday. Several local gyms are trying to entice people who had memberships at 24 Hour Gyms to workout at their facilities.

about 1,000 or 1,500 are active, but they don't pay monthly dues."

Charles Gonzales, co-owner of Gold's Gym, said he felt more long-term memberships are necessary.

"A gym needs to have the typical attributes of any well-run business," he said. "It needs to provide service and satisfy its customers. All gyms need to maintain a balance of long- and short-term memberships to have a future."

Gonzales said in his opinion the management is responsible for the current situation.

"It's a large facility at a good location, and (Myers) came in at a good time," he said. "But being able to look at problems before they happen and maintaining the system and the facility are important."

Lemmon said he had seen many letters from commercial collection agencies and heard of unpaid bills to local businesses while working at the gym. Equipment also has been removed from the gym by other companies, he said.

"I don't ever expect to see my money in any kind of paycheck from Kyle Myers," he said.

Other International Physical Fitness Association gyms are offering transfers of membership or incentives.

Local gyms including Lifestyles and Gold's Gym are asking that members of 24 Hour Gyms come in for consultation. Aerofit is offering a deal with no enrollment fee if the member pays monthly dues. Jay's Gym is offering six months free with a year membership.

24 Hour Gyms of Texas is an individual business and not part of a chain or franchise.

House OKs \$4.55 wage minimum

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted Thursday to raise the hourly minimum wage from \$3.35 to \$4.55 by October 1991, rejecting a more modest increase to \$4.25 proposed by President Bush and sending the partisan battle to the Senate.

The House adjourned for a week-long Easter recess after voting 248-171 for a bill that included compromises long resisted by its Democratic sponsors but still left the Democratic congressional leadership and the Republican president far apart on the issue.

Bush proposed raising the minimum wage to \$4.25 an hour by 1992 provided newly hired employees could be paid a subminimum wage for six months. That plan was offered by Republicans as a substitute for the bill supported by the House leadership but was defeated 218-198, with more than 40 Democrats defecting to the GOP effort.

Bush has insisted his offer is his last and says he has the strength to sustain a veto of minimum-wage legislation he considered unacceptable. But the House sponsors refused to accommodate the president and the showdown now shifts to the Senate, where floor debate is scheduled early next month on a proposal to raise the hourly minimum wage to \$4.65.

The Senate sponsor, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., hailed the House action and

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Friends, relatives express surprise at actions of Horak

From Staff and Wire Reports

When Harry Louis Horak was arrested in his ex-girlfriend's Texas A&M dorm room after a shooting incident, he gave police permission to search his room under the condition they waited 3-and-a-half hours to avoid waking the quadriplegic roommate he cared for.

Friends, relatives and former teachers described Horak as a nice, intelligent young man who was considering a military career. They said they were shocked to learn he had been arrested and charged with two counts of attempted murder, two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, use of a prohibited weapon, and burglary with intent to commit aggravated assault.

Horak, 20, a sophomore nuclear engineering student from Corpus Christi, remained in the Brazos County Jail Thursday in lieu of bonds totaling \$100,000.

If convicted on all charges, he could face a maximum of 169 years in prison.

Bob Wiatt, director of University Police, said Horak entered the room of his former girlfriend, 19-year-old Trisha Michelle Sexton, of Newport, N.C., and her roommate, Sandra Dolores Alcala, 19, of El Paso and pulled out two rifles hidden under an overcoat. Horak was also carrying a hunting knife and more than 160 rounds of ammunition.

The women each grabbed a rifle barrel and were able to disarm Horak, Wiatt said, but during the

scuffle, seven rounds were fired from the rifles. The women suffered minor powder burns but were otherwise unharmed.

The shots were fired from a .30-06-caliber rifle and a .223-caliber Ruger Mini-14 semiautomatic rifle.

After taking the weapons, the women fled to the hall area and Horak went into the closet with the hunting knife, Wiatt said, where five UPD officers later disarmed and removed him.

"He never got into a fight when he was little and going to school," Horak's brother, Nick Horak, 21, told the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*.

Dr. Malon Southerland, associate vice president for student services, said Horak is not in the Corps and is not currently enrolled at A&M. He declined to comment on whether Horak had enrolled for Spring 1989.

Horak was in Company E-2 his freshman year.

Harry Horak has been involved in military-related activities since the 10th grade at Richard King High School in Corpus Christi, where he was a member of the Navy Junior ROTC program.

While in high school, Horak was a student council member for a year, a Spanish club member for two years, a mathematics honor society member for three years, a computer team member and an NJROTC participant for three years.

Food technologist: Pesticides get bum rap

By Denise Thompson

STAFF WRITER

The saying used to be, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." But because of celebrities such as Meryl Streep and television shows such as "60 Minutes," the saying has become, "An apple a day can kill you."

Dr. Al Wagner, Texas A&M extension food technologist, said he understands consumer concerns about pesticides and chemicals used on fruit crops. However, he said for the new saying to be completely truthful, it would have to read, "28,000 pounds of apples a day for 20 to 30 years can cause a benign tumor in humans — maybe."

While debate surrounding apple pesticides has increased in the last few weeks, Wagner says the controversy started in 1985, and the culprit of the debate — the chemical daminozide, commonly called Alar — has been around even longer.

The purpose of Alar is two-fold. It serves as a growth regulator to help prevent pre-harvest drop. This is important because apples that drop from trees too early are bruised and cannot be sold.

Most importantly, Alar is used to maintain the firmness and crispness of the fruit during storage.

Although apples are available in grocery stores throughout the year, apples do not grow year-round. Therefore, they must be placed in control-atmosphere storage. If Alar is not placed on apples prior to storage, the fruit loses its firmness.

However, because of a study performed in 1985, the controversy probably will cause the discontinuation of the helpful and safe pesticide, Wagner said.

"When the safety of Alar was first questioned," Wagner said, "a study was done that showed when a breakdown product of Alar was fed to laboratory animals in massive, massive quantities — the equivalent to a person eating 28,000 pounds of apples a day — tumors occurred in the blood vessels of these animals. What recent

Apples rank high in pesticide usage

By Denise Thompson

STAFF WRITER

Despite the fact that apples are a minor crop in the United States, they rank 11th among American crops in usage of pesticides, statistics in the Good Fruit Grower show.

The study shows that apples have the highest use of pesticide per acre per season than any other fruit or vegetable. This accounts for about one percent of the total amount of pesticides sold in the United States.

Although these figures make the apple out to be inevitably dangerous to consumers, Dr. Al Wagner, an extension food technologist, said no case exists to show pesticides ever have killed or seriously injured anyone.

"The only case where pesticides have ever been questioned was in California," Wagner said. "A certain pesticide was being used on watermelons without being approved for use on watermelons, and it made some

people ill. However, the EPA identified and controlled the situation quickly. That's the only case, and it was a case of a grower misusing a product — not someone becoming ill from a product that was approved and in use."

Wagner said a misconception exists that growers eagerly use pesticides regardless of whether they're needed. This is refuted easily by the great cost involved, he said.

The study in the Good Fruit Grower shows that purchases of pesticide average 21 percent of the total cost of production for apple growers. However, for every dollar spent, the value of the fruit increases by \$2.80.

For adamant consumers who feel pesticides are a financially-based decision for growers, another study was cited where no pesticides were sprayed on an apple crop for two years.

The result? No saleable fruit for any market — consumer or processor.

reports have failed to point out was that these were not malignant tumors.

"That particular study was reviewed by a scientific panel appointed by Congress, who refuted the whole study and said it was ridiculous because of the amounts and levels on which the study was based."

Despite the fact that Congress dismissed the study, retailers and processors reacted strongly to the report.

"Even though there was nothing proven in the report, because of public furor over sensational publicity, several of the major retailers would not accept apples treated with Alar," Wagner said. "Processed products — apple juice, apple baby foods, apple cider — are rarely made with any apples that would be exposed to Alar."

"The only way this would happen is if a grower who wanted to go all fresh-market or all storage with his crop could not sell them all that way and was forced to sell to a processor.

There's no advantage to put Alar on apples that are going to go into processing, and no grower is going to waste the money to put it on for no reason."

Although the Alar controversy has not diminished since 1985, a recent report filed by the National Resources Defense Council is the fuel behind the recent fire. The NRDC is a Washington-based consumer group which targets the safety of consumer food.

"The study said that the Consumer Union picked up some examples of apple juice and apple sauce that contained residues of Alar," Wagner said. "What they didn't include in their report is that the residues they found were way below the accepted amount the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) allows, which is 20 parts per million."

"Another study, conducted by the National Food Processors Association, involved analyzing more than 5,000 samples of both adult and baby-food apple products. Of the adult products, they found only one

that contained a trace of Alar and none were found in the baby-food products."

Another allegation made by the NRDC was that because of Alar and other chemicals, one additional cancer victim would be found in every 4,000 people. Wagner says the NRDC gave only half the story in this case, too.

"What they didn't say when they broadcast this in the '60 Minutes' report is that this estimate would be true if all pesticides approved to be used on apples were used to the maximum level possible and a person were eating a large amount of apples a day, he might run into this increase," he said.

In addition to facts being misconstrued by consumer organizations, Wagner said additional fear has been caused by celebrity involvement.

"Meryl Streep was on 'The Phil Donahue Show' discussing this very

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