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Join TAMU Outdoors for  
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in beautiful  
**COZUMEL!**

December 15-18

Registration continues until November 1.  
For more information contact Patsy at 845-7826.

Divers \$450.00 (\$470.00 for non-A&M)  
Non Divers \$375.00 (\$395.00 for non-A&M)

**EVERYONE TALKS  
ABOUT CHANGING THE WORLD.  
THIS YEAR  
3750 PEOPLE WILL  
ACTUALLY DO IT.**

Not everyone is cut out to change the world. After all, it takes education, skills and a spare two years.

Also a willingness to work. Hard. This year 3,750 Americans will join the Peace Corps to do just that. They'll do things like build roads, plant forests and crops, teach English, develop small businesses, train community health workers, or even coach basketball. However, what they'll be doing isn't half as important as the fact that they'll be changing a little piece of the world...for the better.

And when they return, these 3,750 Americans will find that experience doing hard work will have another benefit. It's exactly what their next employers are looking for.

So, give the Peace Corps your next two years. And while you're out changing the world, you'll also be making a place in it for yourself.

Peace Corps Representatives will be on campus to discuss opportunities for overseas service. BA/BS candidates on AGRICULTURE, MATH & SCIENCE are particularly needed. To learn more about how your skills can be put to work, plan to stop by or call: 1-800-442-7294 EXT 124.

**INFO TABLE**

Tuesday, OCT. 24  
MSC Lobby  
Wednesday, OCT. 25  
Rudder Fountain  
9:00-4:00

**FILM SEMINAR**

Tuesday, OCT 24  
MSC, ROOM 228  
Wednesday, OCT 25  
MSC, ROOM 302  
7:00 pm both nights

**INTERVIEWS**

Thursday, OCT 26  
Career Planning & Placement  
Rudder Tower  
8:30-4:00

\*\*Please bring a completed application to the interview\*\*



**CLASS OF  
1991**

AGGIELAND PICTURES  
ARE BEING TAKEN NOW!!

**OCTOBER 23-27**

at AR PHOTOGRAPHY  
707 Texas, Suite 120B

Hours: Monday-Friday  
9a.m.-5p.m.



**Polly wanna forest?**

Texas Environmental Action Coalition member Kiki Jones acquaints students near Rudder Fountain with the damage of the world's rain forests for World Rain Forest Awareness Week.

**Aggie hauntrepneur**  
Former student's architecture training helpful in designing haunted houses

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

Leonard Pickel, Class of '79, spends most of his time hunched over a drawing board designing strip shopping centers, car dealerships, hotels and the like.

But late every summer, Pickel starts to get restless and his mind and his pencil turn to other projects. Projects such as the Slamming Door. Or the Trap Door Room. Or the Hall of Mirrors. Or the Boo Corner. Projects designed to scare the daylights out of his clients.

When he is not working as a project architect for James Pratt Architecture, a Deep Ellum design firm, Pickel is designing haunted

and turning to more humdrum architectural tasks.

In fact, he didn't think about haunted houses again until seven years ago when he heard on the radio that the March of Dimes was planning a haunted house. He volunteered his services.

"They had already built the house," he says, "but they wanted me to come do the operations. I really don't like to do operations. I like to build houses and then go see what everybody else is doing."

The following year, the March of Dimes called on Pickel. But they had already drawn up their plans and put up their walls.

"I redesigned the whole house," he said. "They made \$24,000 that year — the most they had ever made

two weeks, he says, should earn that much.

Pickel has learned, however, that a haunted house is no rose garden. Security is a big problem. "Guys with their buddies will occasionally try to punch out one of the actors."

Small children can be troublesome. "Our age is 13 to 25. We do recommend it for kids 12 and older. Most of the little kids who walk in are carried out."

And occasionally, members of certain fundamentalist churches show up to picket one of Pickel's haunted houses because they believe in something to do with Satanism. Pickel is perplexed, but pleased. "The houses have nothing to do with Satan, he says, but the publicity that comes, all the same."

Not quite so welcome was the attention he received from the law at New Line Cinema, the folks who make all those "Nightmare on Elm Street" movies.

Pickel's houses were doing so well for the March of Dimes that in 1984 he was inspired to do his own architecture and take on a haunting full-time. "I thought I could do them for money rather than just fun and giggles."

"I started with zero capital," Pickel said. "I didn't have any money, couldn't interest investors because I had no collateral except two trailers full of lumber. I just put everything on my credit cards."

He did three houses. Work on them progressed smoothly. But the third, which was to have been located in the West End, ran into building code problems.

"The city fought us step by step," he says. "As a result, we were open only four days."

A haunted house, he soon discovered, can empty a bank account faster than Dracula can drain a vein. He was still grappling with the \$9,000 loss when he got a phone call from New Line Cinema.

Pickel had given one of his houses a "Nightmare on Elm Street" theme. His newspaper ads prominently displayed a drawing of the "Nightmare" house, and his actors were

houses for his own company, Elm Street Hauntrepneurs.

Pickel figures he has designed about a hundred haunted houses in the 15 years since he created his first — a haunted room, really — in his college dormitory.

"The reason I do haunted houses," he says, "is that I'm really a frustrated designer." Architectural projects these days are team efforts, often involving dozens of individuals. "When I do a haunted house, basically it's me from start to finish, putting pencil on paper."

Pickel became a connoisseur of haunted houses as a result of a childhood visit to a house sponsored by a local radio station. It was pitch black inside, he recalls, until a strobe went off. Then something brushed against his ankle. All he could think of were the monsters he'd always imagined under his bed at home.

"I was gone," he said. "It was the only haunted house that ever scared me."

The experience taught him something: It's not what you see that scares you most. It's what you imagine.

His Texas A&M haunted house grew out of a Halloween custom at the school: male students would trick-or-treat at the women's dorms, and then the women would reciprocate.

For Halloween during his sophomore year, Pickel and his roommates redecorated the TV lounge in their dorm with a coffin, candles and an Aggie made up to look like a corpse.

"We were the last and least important dorm on campus," he recalls, "and the evening went by without a single visitor until, finally, four coeds showed up."

"Three of them peeked around the corner of the door, but the fourth walked right in and screamed. We said, 'If they're that easily scared, we gotta do a whole haunted house.'"

The house became a dorm project and, at 25 cents a ticket, earned \$1,000 on its \$200 investment. Pickel went on to design one other haunted house at A&M before graduating

— and they asked me to design their next house."

The third year, Pickel perfected the principle he adheres to today. He calls it The Pickel Theory of Haunted House Design: Create scary spaces and let visitors' imaginations do the rest.

"Everybody's haunted house is the same," he says. "It's got a guy who sits up in a coffin and a guy who hangs by a noose. I hate houses that show me things that don't frighten me. And I hate gore."

The trouble, he says, is that almost everyone approaches haunted houses as though they were a kind of theater. They use lots of props, elaborate sets, costumed actors and actresses.

All this slows things down, Pickel believes. And it's not always very scary.

Unlike the rooms in ordinary buildings, which meet at right angles, Pickel's rooms are laid out on a triangular grid, creating lots of odd

**"...We don't recommend it for kids 12 and under. Most of the little kids who walk in are carried out."**

— Leonard Pickel

angles where surprises are lurking. Hallways are narrow and meandering so it's hard to see around corners. The whole thing is finely calibrated to produce a vague sense of unease relieved only by moments of stark terror.

And calibrated to produce revenue.

"The only way to make money on Halloween is to crank them through," he says. "People ask me, 'how long does it take to go through your house?' I say, 'How fast can you run?'"

Working with waffle-board panels, black and white paint, a lighting system, a few special effects and a rented tent, Pickel says he can put up a haunted house for about \$6,000. Any house that's open

dressed like the movie's clawed, geger terror, Freddy Krueger. New Line Cinema was pleased.

"They kept gritching at me, wanting to know how much money I was making. I told them a haunted house could make about \$20,000 and they said, 'We can work with that.'"

"But when I finally told them how much I had lost, they never got back to me."

Convinced that haunted houses will never make him rich, Pickel has since returned to his architectural career. But he will continue to build haunted houses for charities. This year's houses will benefit the March of Dimes and the Denton State School.

Besides, he has learned that scaring people is its own reward.

**Horse blankets make big bucks for small firm**

QUITAQUE (AP) — A horse is a horse — unless its wardrobe is exclusively designed by Texas Horse Pad, Inc., a maker of horse comfort products.

Of course not all horses need clothing from head to hoof, but this West Texas company is prepared to "deck out" any horse for any kind of weather. And, according to Texas Horse Pad Vice President Norlin Mora, that makes a lot of "horse sense."

"We make anything that's made out of cloth for

horses," said Mora, who manages 12 employees in the expanding business. "We make horse pads, winter blankets and hoods, breast collars, cinches, sheep covers, shipping boots, feed bags and fly nets, to name a few."

"Some people wanted to see Quitaque grow so they invited Troy Skinner of Clarendon to put in a business here," she said. "At that time they were selling a lot of pads that weren't the right size or quality. They decided to open Texas Horse Pads to improve quality."