

# THE VOYAGER

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### FEATURES



## Students voice grievances at forum

Chris Louie  
Staff Writer

Dormitories with mold on the carpet, no guests allowed past 10 p.m. and the occasional unfriendly staff member — not exactly hospitable conditions.

That was exactly the point that attendees had to make at the open forum the Student Government Association held Feb. 11 in Martin Hall.

The meeting drew a crowd of about 30, some of whom were lured by the smell of free pizza, but stayed once they realized they had a chance to voice their grievances. Kimberly Gregoire, a freshman engineering major, expressed a sentiment concerning indifference and rudeness on the part of some of the housing staff.

"I've had friends outside with stuff in their arms, and the desk assistant wouldn't open the door for them," Gregoire said.

Natalia Lopez, a Martin Hall resident assistant, agreed that this was indeed rude. The reasoning behind it, though, was housing policy rather than simple discourtesy.

"If you don't have your key to open the door, we charge \$5 for a replacement," Lopez said. "But I think that situation went too far. I open doors for people who need help." Gregoire did have positive comments, however, about the speed in which certain computer problems are addressed. "I've filed repair paperwork when the Internet goes down," she said. "They fixed it pretty quickly."

Some of the problems, however, require more laborious solutions.

Although pets aren't allowed in Martin Hall, some students say their dorms have become havens for certain fungal companions. Mold has appeared in some of the rooms. Accusations of mold's being in the air conditioners, sinks and on the windowsills drew a response from Steven Russell, SGA director of student lobbying.

He said he knew the staff has been working to correct it. "I lived here last summer, and we worked on it then," Russell said.

Kelly Sullivan, coordinator of residence life for Martin Hall, said after the meeting that she has only heard of three complaints regarding mold. She also stressed that the molds are not the toxic kind such as stachybotrys or aspergillus, which can pose serious health risks.

"We do a test each time we find mold in the rooms, and it's never been the dangerous type," Sullivan said. She also said that anyone who is inconvenienced or simply grossed out by their slimy new roommates can ask to be moved to another room or even another residence hall.

"Since August, we've moved one student, and we're in the process of moving another," Sullivan said.

Unwelcome fungi have been staying overnight, but more-than-welcome fun guys or girls cannot, and this was another point of contention for the attendants. One student said that living off-campus would be cheaper and that doing so allows more freedom.

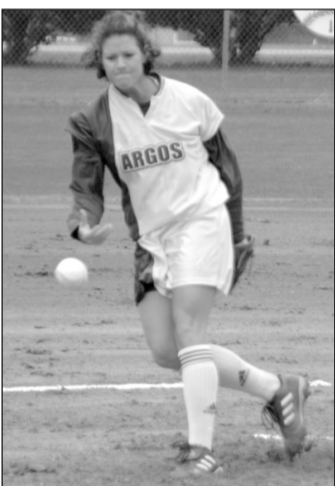
Erin Sandonoto, SGA president, is a for-

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## Ideas Spark Projects



Photo by Meg Kohr

Bryan Demuth, 14, shows one of 80 judges, Cmdr. Paz Gomez, how his project, *Electricity from Water and the Sun*, works at the West Florida Regional Science Fair. The event was held in the Conference Room at the University of West Florida on Monday, Feb. 16. Demuth's project displays the use of solar energy and water to create an endless cycle of energy as a clean, renewable resource.

## UWF student appointed to Florida Disabilities Council

Vicky Kramer  
Staff Writer

University of West Florida senior Stephanie Kovacs, 18, was recently appointed by Gov. Jeb Bush to the board of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. Kovacs will begin to learn about the council and her responsibilities in an orientation meeting Feb. 13.

Her term will run from Jan. 9, 2004 to Sept. 30, 2007.

"I got appointed through a meeting I had with Gov. Bush to personally thank him for two statewide initiatives that are dear to my heart: the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and Vocational Rehabilitation," Kovacs said.

While in the governor's office,

Kovacs talked with him about her positive experiences with these programs and encouraged him to keep up his efforts in maintaining their effectiveness.

It was during this meeting that Bush asked her if she would be interested in volunteering, and she accepted.

Kovacs is acquainted with these programs because she has a genetic disorder called Spinal Muscular Atrophy, which forces her to use an electric wheelchair.

Kovacs is currently working on campus with the Students with Alternative Needs organization to make all campus buildings accessible and up to ADA standards.

Her voice has been heard on one of the "Angels in our Mist" segments that are regularly presented on the local WEAR Channel

3 news. Kovacs is also secretary on the Board of Directors for the Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida.

"A couple of years ago, Stephanie was at Eglin Air Force Base giving a presentation regarding people with disabilities," said Frank Cherry, executive director for the Center for Independent Living, "and because of her outgoing personality, I talked with her afterward and asked her to be on our board."

Despite her physical limitations and busy schedule, Kovacs still enjoys activities that she loves such as playing the piano and swimming. She first came to Pensacola five years ago from a small, Rocky Mountain town in

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## UWF plans welcome home party for student soldiers

Event set Monday to mark return

Andrew Kilgo  
Sports Editor

This Monday, Feb. 23, the University of West Florida will welcome back its group of student soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division from their tour of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The two-part ceremony is called "Hero's Welcome."

The first part of the event kicks off at 11 a.m. with a private luncheon for the soldiers.

This event will last until noon when those attending will proceed to the second part of the ceremony, which is to be held in the University Commons Great Hall.

This part of the ceremony is open to all students, staff and the community.

The second ceremony will feature speakers from UWF, there will be a presentation to UWF of a flag that was flown by the soldiers while on duty in Iraq and there will be an orchestra performing for the attending guests.

Douglas Pearson, Deborah Ford, UWF President John Cavanaugh and members of the student community helped organize the event with donations from local community businesses.

The soldiers were deployed to Kuwait on April 4, 2003.



Submitted Photo

Stephanie Kovacs, right, is pictured with Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. The governor recently appointed Kovacs to the Florida Disabilities Council.