

# UNLV faces a 'super' challenge

by Georgia West

Recently the capacity of the Cray Supercomputer housed at UNLV was increased five-fold to meet the growing demands of state agencies and university researchers.

The supercomputing center was established with \$10 million in federal funds in 1990. Installing the 1.2 million DS-41 disc sub-system added 19.2 billion bytes of memory, an increase of 500 percent.

According to Bahram Nassersharif, director of the center, "Users can (now) attack a larger set of computational problems."

Nassersharif described the

system's users as "researchers who are doing frontier-breaking research, who are exploring problems at the forefront of their fields."

However, other systems exist which carry out this research without the use of the Cray Supercomputer. Some may be significantly less expensive.

National laboratories, such as the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, have chucked the Cray and replaced it with 14 IBM RS/6000 work stations, each the size of an orange crate and wired together. The new network, which cost about \$1 million, turned out to be just as

powerful as the old Cray X/MP which had cost about \$20 million several years before. And the network may have the potential for power equalling that of the latest model Cray, the Y/MP C-90, which costs \$20 million to \$30 million.

Connecting several smaller computers together to replace a supercomputer is known as parallel or distributed computing. In parallel computing, a task is divided into smaller tasks allowing several computers to work simultaneously on a problem. Each of these networks contains computer power that sits largely untapped. But the idea of harnessing idle power has not been

explored before.

As a graduate student at Yale 13 years ago, David Gelernter wrote a prodigious computer programming language called Linda that made it possible to link computers together to work on a single problem. Many of Gelernter's ideas are now being picked up by corporations such as IBM, which competes with the Cray by offering networks of RS/6000 work stations. What Gelernter calls a "computational membrane" is rapidly being used around the world to join information together at high speeds in digital form. There are computer networks for airline reservations, automated bank

tellers, credit card verification and corporate electronic mail.

The speed of networking is usually not a problem, as corporate research laboratories, Wall Street brokerage houses and several government agencies have discovered. Some programs actually run much faster together, as United Technologies executives discovered when they ran a complex air turbulence program.

Gaining the power of a supercomputer without losing speed has resulted in substantial savings for the companies which have heeded the message of the '90s, getting the most for your dollar. Is UNLV prepared to take on this challenge?

## TDD phone line installed at Performing Arts Center

by Angela Ramsey

Although UNLV strives to make communication devices for the hearing impaired more accessible on campus, "it's a long, slow process," said Rick Romito, director of the Performing Arts Center.

For more than two years, Artemus W. Ham Hall has housed a working Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD). Not until recently, however, has it received a dedicated phone line making it usable and ready to take calls.

Now, hearing impaired individuals can call a TDD line at 597-4717 to learn about events and ticket information.

In essence, the TDD acts as an interpreter between outside callers and receivers. Each party communicates by typing in dialogue on a computer screen. The caller must be us-

ing a similar machine.

The offices at the Academic Advancement Building, the James R. Dickinson Library, Students Services and the Thomas & Mack Center are equipped with TDD computers as well. According to Joyce Jones, program analyst of telecommunications, the Moyer Student Union will be the next recipient of a TDD.

In the future, campus viewers will experience more changes to accommodate the handicapped. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which went into effect on Jan. 26, requires all private enterprises that affect commerce and public entities, such as places of education, to modify a percentage of their facilities for the benefit of disabled persons. Wheelchair access and TDDs are two major concerns on the ADA's agenda.

## RIDER

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"At this time we feel that there was no benefit (for Rider). J.R. will have to make restitution on the impoundment (of the vehicle)," Weaver said.

Weaver said that restitution will be made tomorrow before the appeal is made to the NCAA. Weaver also stated that at the time of the press conference Rider had taken no steps to pay for the bail or the impoundment.

Academic Advisor Ron Allen had stated that Rider's girlfriend, Shunta Rose had paid for the bail when talking to reporters. However, court records show Allen and not Rose had signed for the bail. This is

the NCAA violation for which Rider was suspended by Weaver.

Weaver refused to comment on the status of Allen other than saying he would be at work tomorrow.

"We (Allen and Weaver), have reached an agreement, an agreement that we won't discuss Ron Allen," Weaver said.

Lawyer Steve Stein, representing Allen, said that he could not comment on Allen's status, saying that everything has been resolved and affirming Weaver's statement that Allen is still employed by the university.



J.R. Rider.

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