

The Ampersand

UIC Honors College

October 2001

Important Upcoming Dates

Blood Drive	10/9 & 10/10
HCAB Social	10/12
Study Abroad Info. Session	10/17
Public Service Leadership Luncheon	10/23
HCAB Luncheon	10/30

Like a Thief in the Night

by Justin Sadhu

Sometimes we need to stop long enough to catch our breath. Sometimes it seems like we have no choice.

Three Tuesdays ago, I rose early to head out to my 8 a.m. Analytical Chemistry lab. It would be just another bleary-eyed morning spent slaving away doing titrations while my body complained for lack of sleep. Or so I thought. I focused my gaze on the drip drip steady flow from my buret as HCl reacted with the tris in solution. "Come on methyl red... almost there. Agh! How many more titrations do I have left?" I thought to myself.

Suddenly, our routine was interrupted by a surprise visit. It was a member of the chemistry department. Obviously flustered, speaking hurriedly, he said we could go home as soon as our lab was over due to "what happened in New York." "What is this guy talking about?" I wondered to myself. New York? What does that have to do with anything? Go home? Why? This wasn't making any sense. My interest piqued, I headed over to a classmate who was explaining to someone else what she knew. "Two planes were hijacked. They crashed into the World Trade Centers. Both are totally leveled. The Pentagon was hit by another plane. It has suffered severe damage as well." Huh?

In a matter of seconds, it had gone from being just an ordinary Tuesday morning to one rife with happenings. The Pentagon? World Trade Centers? Leveled? By a plane? Rather, planes? This just seemed too bizarre to be true. Sure, I wouldn't be too surprised if a hijacking took place aboard an airline. My cynicism is a product of the turbulent times we live in, I guess. But several hijackings? And the planes were crashed into buildings? Her statements had to be just the product of wild rumors. Where was she getting her information? From the radio evidently. She said she passed by the stock room where all the workers were listening intently.

Woah. This was too novel a circumstance, too much at once. And while all this was going on, after the initial news coverage, instead of being outside and staying informed of the situation, we were scurrying about trying to finish up our experiments. The absurdity was almost laughable. What relevance, what importance in the whole scheme of things does Experiment 29-4 of Chem 222 hold? Who really cares how much ~0.1 HCl is needed to make 0.5752 grams of tris base with 3 drops of methyl red indicator change colors, thereby indicating the end point of the titration?

At that moment I felt like I was more awake than I had ever been. In one way, it could have seemed like a dream with all that was going on. But on the other hand, all my senses were heightened. I was alert and conscious like I had never been before. I felt as if every day I had just been cruising through life, running on autopilot. When we get so wrapped up in day-to-day matters, our consciousness is lulled into a state of passive acceptance. Being forced to confront in-your-face evidence of the fragility of human life jarred me back to reality-the REAL reality. Wow. How many people went to work thinking it was "just another day at the office" and then their lives were cut short?

In this issue, read about:

- * Cell Phone "Hell"
- * Society of Future Physicians Induction Ceremony
- * Places to study & eat
- * Local music scene
- * Focus on a Fellow...

...and lots more!



Society of Future Physicians Inducts New Members

by Rishi Garg



The Society of Future Physicians held its annual Induction Ceremony for 78 new members in the College of Medicine West on Wednesday, September 19th. Guest speaker Leslie Sandlow, MD, Head of Department of Medical Education, spoke about the changes in the medical field in the 21st century. Stacie Williams, SFP's co-advisor, spoke about the Honors College and touched upon the medical school admissions process. Dinner, courtesy of Pizza Ville, and a mandatory general body meeting followed all presentations. New SPF member **Pinak Shukla**, said the event was "a great way to meet new people also interested in medicine."

The Society of Future Physicians is an Honors College student organization whose goal is to provide opportunities for premedical students to discover what a medical career is all about. The group's mission is to deliver information regarding the medical school applications process and coordinate activities that give some insight into the work and lives of physicians.

Executive Board (2001-2002)

President	Jeff Meglin
Vice President	Gaurav D. Gaiha
Treasurer	Rishi Garg
Secretary	Grace Lee
Volunteering Chairperson	Joyce Chen
Activities Chairperson	Shifali Arora

Although the application deadline for this semester has passed, we encourage all interested students to apply in the spring semester 2002. For additional information, contact **Jeff Meglin** at jmegli1@uic.edu or visit SFP's web page:

http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/prof/sfp/

Honors College Tutoring Service is There for YOU!

With mid-terms upon us, the Honors College tutoring service can provide you with that little bit of help you might need to coast right through those exams. Check out the tutoring schedule link on the Honors College web page: <http://www.hc.uic.edu/tutorintro.htm>

Tutoring takes place Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Room B-21 on the lower level of Burnham Hall. Schedules are also available at the Honors College front desk.

Good luck with mid-terms!



"Celebrate the Fall" Luncheon

No, we won't have a singing mariachi band, but we can offer you delicious Mexican cuisine! Mark your calendars now for the Honors College Fall Luncheon. All Honors College students and faculty are invited to enjoy fabulous food from El Presidente Restaurant. Come "Celebrate the Fall" with us on **Tuesday, October 30th**, from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. on the lower level of Burnham Hall.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Study Abroad Information Session

Plan to attend the Honors College Study Abroad/ Great Cities London Program information session. You will learn about the program, get application tips, and meet the program coordinator and have the opportunity to speak with GCL alums.

When: Wednesday, October 17th

Where: Honors College Conference Room,
114 Burnham Hall

For more information, contact Lexy Sobel in the Study Abroad office, 502 UH; 312-413-7662 or sobel@uic.edu

Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship Winners

The following Honors College students were recently awarded scholarships from Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year Colleges.

- Joy DeRusha, Biological Sciences
- Soraya Khoury, Philosophy
- Salvatore Militello, Mechanical Engineering

Congratulations to all!



Thief in the Night

(cont'd. from 1st page)

It certainly changes your perspective. All the petty things of daily life faded into insignificance as I contemplated life itself, so transient, so fleeting. My focus was shifted from the temporal to the eternal. As I continued through the day, all my actions had a feeling of deliberateness about them. Each choice was made with my mind actually processing the alternatives instead of just picking one haphazardly. It was as if I had been given an extension on life, a feeling I had experienced earlier, this past summer, as others and I walked away from a car accident unhurt, though it could have been so much more serious.

Events like that, days like September 11, make us stop our frenetic pace and come to a halt. We realize our vulnerability, how fleeting is apparent stability, how deceptive is our everyday sense of security and normalcy. We learn to appreciate that which can be snatched away, to treasure that which is truly valuable, and to disregard that which is of no consequence. If we are wise, we will keep our eyes open, our senses alert, and look for the shelter from the storm. May we find the lee before the tornado bears down on us, and may we often stop to catch our breath. I don't want to be asleep any longer.

Next Social is Oct. 12th!

Watch your email for details about the next Honors College social. It will be held Friday, October 12th, from 4 – 5:30 p.m. in the Honors College lounge. There will be refreshments and many other surprises!



We Want Your Blood!

Donate blood to the student organization sponsored Blood Drive to contribute to our nation's blood shortage.

Alternative Spring Break is co-sponsoring this blood drive to be held on Tuesday, October 9th and Wednesday, October 10th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on both days at the Illinois Room C and Ft. Dearborn Room.

To make this blood drive a success, we need your help! If you or a friend would like to donate blood on one of the two above days, please call the Campus Programs office at 312-413-5070 (between 8:30 am to 4:45 pm) or email Sharlene Holly at sholly@uic.edu to sign up for a donation time. Please let Campus Programs or Sharlene Holly know that you are an ASB donor.

Throughout the two days, there will be ASB representatives helping out at the blood drive. If you are interested in joining us, please drop us an email at ucasb@hotmail.com.

We really encourage you to take part. Thank you for your contribution.



Public Service Leadership Luncheon

Honors College students are invited to attend a Public Service Leadership Luncheon featuring Joseph A. Dailing, Executive Director, Prairie State Legal Services, Rockford, IL

The luncheon will be on October 23, 2001, 12:30-1:30 PM in Room B-11 (lower level of Burnham Hall).

For the past twenty-seven years, Joseph A. Dailing has been involved in the administration of legal aid programs for the poor. In the role of Executive Director, he has been able to shape and guide the development of two different legal aid programs to meet the unique needs of low income clients through the work and cooperation of attorneys and client board members, staff attorneys, paralegals and support staff. Through involvement with the organized bar, Mr. Dailing has tried to represent the needs of low-income clients to the organized bar and mobilize its resources to help meet the needs of these clients in Illinois.

Lunch will be provided at this lecture without charge; however you must RSVP if you plan on attending & eating lunch with us. Reply to Jennifer Kosco: jkosco@uic.edu or Kara Alden: kalden@uic.edu

This luncheon is co-sponsored by the Honors College & The Integritas Institute of the John Paul II Newman Center

For more information about Prairie State Legal Services, go to:
<http://www.prairiestatelegal.org>

Focus on a Fellow

by Nafisa Patel



Dr. Jennifer V. Schmidt

Each issue of the *Ampersand* features a profile of an Honors College fellow. This month, Assistant Professor **Jennifer V. Schmidt, Ph.D.**, of the Biological Sciences department answers some

questions about her career and research work at UIC.

What type of research are you involved with?

My laboratory studies groups of genes that are regulated by a process known as genomic imprinting. These genes are found only in mammals, and appear to be involved in controlling how rapidly an embryo grows during development. Genomic imprinting regulates the manner in which the two alleles of a gene are expressed. Unlike most mammalian genes, in which both alleles are expressed equally, imprinted genes are expressed from only one allele - either only from the allele inherited from your father or only from the allele inherited from your mother. We don't know how or why these genes are controlled in this manner but their regulation appears to be quite important, if it is disrupted a number of human disease syndromes and various types of cancer may result. My lab is generating mouse models to understand the functions of imprinted genes and the mechanisms by which they are regulated.

What motivated you to go into research?

Science has interested me for as long as I can remember; when I was in elementary school it was science courses, and biology in particular, that came most easily to me. As an undergraduate, I trained to be a medical technologist and worked in that position for several years. Eventually I grew tired of running the same assays each day and began looking for more of a challenge. A supervisor who had been sort of a mentor to me often talked about the research she did during her Ph.D. training and this sparked my interest. She encouraged me to consider graduate school and I decided to take a few graduate courses part-time. I found I enjoyed the courses and the research lab environment. The following year I got up the courage to quit my job and become a student again, and joined the Northwestern Ph.D. program full-time.

Where did you complete your higher education?

I'm a native Chicagoan and have lived here for all but 4 years of my life. I obtained my undergraduate degree in Biology from DePaul University and my Ph.D. in Biological Chemistry from Northwestern. In 1996 I moved out to New Jersey to do my postdoctoral work at Princeton University. Last fall I was offered a position at UIC as Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences.

What keeps you motivated when research can be a tedious and long process?

For me the most exciting part of science is the discovery of something new. It may be a large step or a small one, but answering even a small question - fitting another piece into the puzzle - is the reward of science. I suppose research can seem like a long process if you focus on the very end result of a series of experiments as the only goal. Science rarely works like that. However, few questions unfold in a single major discovery. More often the answer comes slowly in little bits. The challenge (and the fun) is in recognizing and interpreting these small steps, then forming them into a single coherent theory. A friend once said that doing science is "as though every day were Christmas morning." I often borrow her analogy because it conveys so well to non-scientists the eagerness we feel coming to work each day, knowing there will be something new and exciting to discover.

What advice can you offer to undergrads pursuing research?

I often find undergraduates, and even junior graduate students, tend to focus only on their particular task in the lab. Cloning a particular piece of DNA, for example, or getting a certain PCR assay to work. While it's necessary to master these technical skills, focusing only on the technical aspect can make a research project feel like a laboratory exercise rather than an important scientific contribution. I would encourage undergraduate researchers to take full advantage of the educational resources of their department to learn more about the "big picture" of their lab's research. By reading papers, attending seminars, and talking to their advisor and others in the lab, undergraduates can come to have a better understanding of science in general and their own contribution in particular.

The New and the Tried and True

by Anne Sromek

As a senior at UIC, I understand the meaning of “burnt out”. To define it more specifically, it’s the awful way you feel after studying for hours upon hours: that feeling of “oh-my-gosh-if-I-read-one-more-word-my-brain-will-explode.” The wish to end the torturous studying is often accompanied by extreme exhaustion (usually from lack of sleep). Yes, my friends, I know this feeling well. Thankfully, these past four years at UIC have allowed me to explore ways in which I can eliminate or at least minimize these burn-out symptoms. The secret: LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

Of course sitting in the same dorm room, same library, or at the same kitchen table only amplifies your problems! Being constantly surrounded by the same setting is detrimental to any studying plan. Lucky for you, I’ve got a few places for you to go to take a well-deserved study break, and others where you can actually go and study your heart out in a different and pleasant setting. And they’re all available to you, thanks to the sacred U-Pass.

Bourgeois Pig, 738 W. Fullerton Avenue
This independent coffee/tea shop is study-friendly, unlike the corporate coffee shops that surround it. The large tables and white-noise filled atmosphere, as well as the late hours of operation, make the Bourgeois Pig my favorite choice for a study spot. Not only is the staff friendly, but they make excellent drinks, too! Sandwiches, shakes, and baked goods are also on the menu, but I’m partial to their simpler coffee and tea drinks.

Intelligentsia Coffee Roasters & Tea Blenders, 3123 N. Broadway
This shop is a favorite simply because it’s large enough to accommodate the masses that have discovered all the greatness it has to offer. Not only is the atmosphere pleasant, but the drinks are as well. The staff doesn’t mind if you study there, and many people do. I’m especially fond of their tea.

Ten Ren Tea & Ginseng Co. of Chicago, LTD., 2247 S. Wentworth
This Chinatown teashop is not a place to study, but it’s surely a great place to come on a study break with some friends. Chinatown itself has so much to offer, with all of the shops and restaurants concentrated in one easily accessed area. Ten Ren Tea is a favorite of mine because I can get a quick caffeine fix and take in the relaxing setting at the same time.

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Iguana Cafe, Halsted and Milwaukee

This newly opened cafe offers a delectable menu and superb service. If you’re over 21, they also have a great bar. The wait staff was extremely attentive and the food was great. Not a place to study, but worthy of a visit for a meal. It’s also a great place to meet friends for coffee or a drink.

Chicago Fries, Halsted and Randolph
You can’t miss this chic fast food restaurant from the #8 Halsted bus. It’s been open a little over a month, and I finally had a chance to stop in for lunch. The Italian beef sandwich was incredible, and the staff is extremely friendly. It’s affordable and excellent. Another bonus is that they’re open 24 hours from Monday through Saturday, which makes it a great place to stop and eat after a night on the town.

La Creperie, 2845 N. Clark Street
This French restaurant/bar is small but quaint and inviting. Its interior is decorated with prints of French scenery and Parisian paraphernalia. The food is to die for. Of course, the main items on the menu are crepes, but the variety of the crepes is mouth-watering. I’ve been to France, and I can honestly say that La Creperie’s outdoor seating area is extremely reminiscent of Paris. Stepping into that part of the restaurant makes you instantly feel as if you were in a garden café in Paris, and not in the middle of Chicago.

To find a way to access the above-mentioned locations, go to the CTA’s website:

<http://www.transitchicago.com/> and run a trip planner from your location to the addresses above. Sure, the library may be sufficient enough of a setting change, but you can’t eat or drink there. Besides, you have the entire city of Chicago at your doorstep, so get off of campus and explore all it has to offer! I wish you the best of luck with your midterms. Happy studying!



Chicago's Music Scene

by Jenna Kim

Itchin' to hear some good music? If so, Chicago is the place to be. From big stars, such as Madonna, to fresh local stuff that is all around, you can always find shows to go to just about any day of the week. Let me tell you a little bit about the rock shows that have come or will be coming to Chicago.

On September 21st, I went to the Weezer concert at the United Center. Seeing that Weezer was only playing select cities in North America, it was awesome that they had chosen to stop in Chicago. They performed in front of 13,000 people, which is one of the biggest turnouts for a Weezer concert ever. The crowd was really into the music, as Weezer played songs off their newest CD such as "Hashpipe" and "Island in the Sun" and some classics from their first album such as "Buddy Holly." Standing in the general admission section, I got banged around and became wet from sweat that probably wasn't mine, but the show was definitely worth it.

If you don't see the need to pay \$30+ to hear some good rock, you should check out the local scene. One home-grown Chicago band that is definitely worth checking out is Kill Hannah. Their bassist Greg describes their genre of music as "original modern rock." He's correct in saying this, because one of the best features about Kill Hannah is that their sound is really original and different from whatever is being played on MTV nowadays. Plus they really know how to put on a good rock show. Billy Corgan from the former Smashing Pumpkins has described Kill Hannah as "the future of Chicago rock." Get more information on Kill Hannah at: <http://www.killhannah.com>.

So whether you want to go see a big act or some local music, it's pretty easy to do so whenever you want. You can go chill out at the Metro or the Fireside Bowl (an old bowling alley that also serves as a venue for music) for a low price, or go to one of the many venues in Chicago that will be hosting some big name stars. Some of the highlights for the next few months are Britney Spears, U2, and Aerosmith. So, go out and rock on!

The Magic of Music

by Melissa Kramer

Music is a part of most people's lives, but few ever comprehend what an impact a string of notes can make. Composer Gioacchino Rossini said it best when he stated, "The language of music is common to all generations and nations. It is understood by everybody, since it is understood with the heart." This quote communicates what most people seem unable to adequately express.

Similar to a smile, music is understood by all, and this is especially true in its use in silent films. Lacking speech, these films must find another way in which to communicate the mood of the scene. The printed dialog interjected during the course of the film is the only "speech" that viewers of "silents" receive. This printed dialog fails to communicate a definite mood. The music is therefore added to help guide the viewer through the movie. The musical notes tell the viewer when to be prepared for something scary, when to fear the person on the screen, and even when the situation is light and jovial. Without this guide, the viewer would be forced to determine the mood of the film alone. While music in silent films plays a large role in the viewers' understanding, music also seems to play a role in modern films. One cannot even fathom the idea of modern films without any sort of music.

Along with guiding the viewer through the film, music also has the power to remove the thoughts of the viewer from the present and transport these thoughts to a new and different place. Gabriel Faure explained this idea when he said, "Music exists to elevate us as far as possible above everyday existence." This idea of elevation is tied to the idea of escapism. The people living in the 1920's, during the era of silent films, often went to the movies to escape from their everyday life. While most can agree that the plot of a story allows the viewer to assume the role of the actors and imagine they too are in these lush and beautiful places, music is an important tool that transports the viewer into this fantasy.

Therefore, the music of a film should not be ignored; it should instead be investigated as a major role in the success of film.

Hanging Up the Phone

by Anne Sromek

My ownership of a cellular phone began exactly one year ago. I had just returned from a year abroad in Europe, where I saw children as young as 5 and seniors as old as 85 using cellular phones regularly on the subway and buses, as well as in stores and on the street. After seeing how convenient a cell phone could be, I invested in one as soon as I collected enough money. Because I'm a commuter student, a cell phone seemed essential to my survival. How else could anyone reach me while I was in transit or at school?



The best contract I found was 100 'anytime' minutes, and 500 night-and-weekend minutes for \$29.99 a month. Long-distance calls were no extra charge, and I was allowed to roam in a five-state area without incurring any extra charges as well. This seemed like an incredibly flexible plan to me, and at the time I bought into it, I had no clue just how fast minutes fly by. After purchasing my phone for \$100, paying an activation of \$25, and selecting my plan, I left the store with a feeling of accomplishment. I was also \$125 in the hole.

The first month went well. I tried to limit myself to talking at night. This worked pretty well at first. I did a lot of traveling to Michigan, downstate Illinois, and Ohio to visit friends, so the fact I could roam in these states was a bonus. The only problem I encountered was that in some places, my cell phone didn't get service. Maybe my company didn't have sufficient towers in the areas I was visiting, but I was annoyed nonetheless. What's the point of having a cell phone to be accessible when no one can access you?

The first few billing cycles went pretty well. During the second month I found out about the "fine print" in my cell phone contract. For one, I couldn't access my account to check how many minutes I had left on my plan, so I could easily go over and not know until I was billed.

Another feature that peeved me was that even if I held a conversation for 1 minute, 1 second, my phone company would round up and charge me as if I talked for 2 minutes. Since the first three months I had my phone I under-used my minutes (and even though I didn't use

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them all, I was still being charged for them), the fourth month I decided to just use the phone as I pleased, and not worry about day minutes and night minute distinctions. I didn't use the phone excessively, by any means. But when my bill came, I saw the damage: \$254.74. Excuse me?

How on earth could I have talked \$250+ away? It was impossible. There had to be some sort of mistake. I called my cell phone company and talked it through a customer service rep. "No, there really wasn't any mistake, Ms. Sromek. Every call over your plan is charged at \$.60 a minute." This includes people whose calls I answer, as well as people I call myself. As upset as I was, I had no way out but to pay the full amount, and try to monitor my minutes better. But, how was I supposed to monitor my minutes? It's ridiculous to walk around with a little "call journal" where I write down calls I made and the time they took. It's also impossible.

I wanted to quit my plan at that four-month point. I was willing to pay the \$29.99 a month plus taxes, but I couldn't afford anything more. I learned that my company would charge me a huge penalty for cutting my contract short, so that idea left as quickly as it came. By this time, I had a pretty good amount of cell phone traffic, from businesses calling me regarding interviews for summer positions to my friends calling me to my parents trying to reach me. My only option, it seemed, was to upgrade my plan. That's just what I did. It cost \$10 more a month, but I hoped it would solve my problems.

The more "generous" plan didn't solve my problems, but it only made them worse. I still had problems every month, by going over some months on my minutes and going under on other months. I never knew what my bill would cost me. It was like a sadistic surprise in my mailbox every month. I didn't like the idea of not having a phone at all, so I began searching for other companies with which to do business.

All I got out of my search was confused. Some companies offered minutes for a lower price than other companies, but they had a 2-year contract, or hidden fees, or poor service. One company had no contract at all, but because of this, their plans were horribly over-priced. Every company had an activation fee, as well as the cost of a new phone that is exclusive to each company. Some companies offered the service I wanted of letting me know how many minutes I have left on the plan every month so I wouldn't go overtime, but their contracts were bad, or the service was poor (many dropped calls), or the other "hidden charges" were high and frequent (long-distance and roaming charges). It seemed I couldn't win. I threw in the towel. All the research I did changed on a weekly basis, because all the cell phone companies constantly run new "specials" to entice more customers. I decided to tough it out with my cell phone, because my contract was only for a year.

Then, this past June, I experienced something that made me angrier than I've been in a long time. A friend and I were skating in the suburbs, when we had an accident. Going downhill and around a turn, a rock lodged between my wheels, causing me to veer off the road. My friend was in the way, and unfortunately, I knocked her over on my way toward the curb. I landed in a grassy ditch and escaped with a few grass stains and a mouth full of grass. My friend wasn't as lucky. She fell on the concrete with all her weight on her elbow. She was screaming for help, but no one was around to help us because we were in an unincorporated area, with houses pretty far away from the street. I remembered I had my cell phone with me and called 911. As soon as I pressed the "SEND" button, my phone gave me a message that stopped me cold. "Service not activated. Call Customer Service."

One of the most convincing arguments for owning a cell phone is so to have it available "in case of emergency". If it doesn't work during an emergency, what good is it? I was disgusted. Thank God, after a few minutes my friend was able to get up, and after going to the emergency room, discovered she hadn't broken her elbow after all. But the whole event was enough to convince me that a cell phone really wasn't that important anymore.

I've decided to discontinue service with my company as soon as my contract is up. I won't be buying another contract or investing in another phone until I have a steady job and until there is a plan that suits all my needs. The problem I see with this is that there will probably never be a contract that suits my needs, because each cell phone service provider only measures itself against the performance and service of the other cell phone companies. Each is only as good as the next. No company will go out of their way to provide a 100% guaranteed contract with all the good features and none of the negative hang-ups.

So from one experienced cell phone user to the next, I want to end by saying if you own a cell phone, I hope your experience is better than mine. For those who have had problems and can relate to what I've gone through, I'm glad to see I'm not alone.

Lastly, for those who haven't a cell phone yet and wish to get one in the near future, my advice to you would be to read all the fine print in your contract and make sure you can afford your charges, including the cost for the phone, the activation, your calling plan, your over-time minutes, and your accessories before signing on for any term of a contract. I've been to cell hell, and it wasn't enjoyable. Good luck avoiding it.

