

Handicapped finds dorm life beneficial

Brazos resident states students, administration helpful

By **CHRISTY WICKER**
Staff Writer

Mike Snyder, the first handicapped male student to live in a dormitory doesn't think dorm life is much of a hassle, and instead sees it as a key to college life.

"This is the first dorm I've lived in," said Snyder, who is in a wheelchair, "and I wouldn't take for it."

The 20-year-old journalism major from Tyler moved into Brazos House last semester. Alterations on his first floor room included lowering book-

shelves and towel racks as well as widening the bathroom door and installing a shower seat. An outside ramp was also constructed.

Another handicapped student, Jim Hayes, has since moved into the dorm.

Snyder said school administrators had been helpful. "As soon as they learned I was coming, they started fixing up the room," he said. "They even inquired about getting me a room in one of the fraternity houses because they were afraid my room wouldn't be ready in time."

Getting an assistant was Snyder's only real problem and that was solved by his roommate, who volunteered to help.

"I think it scared my roommate more than it scared me," Snyder said. "For the first few days we didn't talk much, but then everything worked out."

Snyder, who previously went to Tyler Junior College, first considered coming here after reading a newspaper article describing plans to make the campus accessible to handicapped

students. The compactness of the campus and the number of handicapped students already here also were factors in his decision, he said.

But the clincher was the friendliness of the students.

"People here will stop and ask you if they can help," he said. "That's really different. I'm used to having to ask them."

"At most places it's hard enough to get a guy to help you. But here if you are going down a hill and your wheelchair stops, girls will stop and ask if they can help. I sure wasn't used to that."

Snyder said the large number of handicapped students on campus might encourage students to be helpful.

"Sometimes the motor goes out on my wheelchair and I have to ask someone to help. Deep down I'm really afraid they will say no or they will help me just because they think they are supposed to and not because they want to."

"It could be that people at other schools don't know many handicapped people and they are afraid."

Snyder said he would recommend dorm life to anyone.

"It is probably the best way," he said, "to get indoctrinated into college life."

Students 'hear' answers

on the back where the answer to a math problem is recorded by Heath or his assistant, Marc Vernon.

On the front of the oxide sheet is a visual explanation of the problem that is written on regular paper, copied and taped to the oxide sheet.

The oxide sheet is placed on a sound-on-page machine for listening. Heath judges the success of the program on statistics from last semester when there were only two machines.

"Students who used the machines most," Heath said, "seem to have made better grades."

During that time the program was

used 500 hours. Students receiving an A averaged eight hours and 30 minutes of usage compared to five hours and 25 minutes for students receiving a D.

The machines of last semester are in 129 Hammond Hall. Four more machines, purchased this semester by the Veterans Affairs Office, are in 313 Library. One is designed for conference use.

"When you consider the cost of tutoring, the machines have more than paid for themselves," Heath said. "It's like a free gift."



Shorthorn: Steve Fortner
Mike Snyder . . . first handicapped male in dorm