Birthday madness dominates campus with festivities, free food

On April 18, University of Missouri–St. Louis hosted another successful Birthday carnival that was heard across the campus, which echoed with the sounds of music and screams from students taking advantage of rides such as the Scrambler.

For many students the tradition of Birthday is a chance to relieve stress brought on by the year's ongoing mid-term and final exams. The smell of hot dogs, burgers and funnel cakes being cooked on parking lots C and D brought students and faculty members by the dozens. The tradition of Birthday also gave students a chance to see what clubs and organizations the university has to offer through the use of fun games and activities.

The Delta Zeta sorority hosted a pie throwing contest at their booth, and several people were lining up to throw pies at the Delta Zetas and a few personal friends. Other groups had other activities, such as the Korean Student Association, which gave students the opportunity to write their own names in English and Korean characters. Alpha Xi Delta took in donations at their mystery sucker game and bean bag toss booth for their charity, Autism Speaks. The Catholic Newman Center hosted its own version of Plinko, which first appeared as a game on Wheel of Fortune.

The day-long event was definitely a treat for future students, as tours were given during the Birthday affair, giving prospective students an idea of what to look forward to next year.

"The best part of Birthday was the free food booths. The free snow cones, chips and salsa from Qlobala and the free cookies were an awesome treat. And the smell of the funnel cakes made my mouth water," Jessica Terrell, junior, art education, said.

UMSL students and faculty also brought their children to the event for a memorable family day out. Kids were playing and dancing. The music from the UMSL radio, the U, brought out the dancer in everyone, playing songs such as "You're Jerk," "Wobble" and "Party Rock Anthem."

With Birthday being such a huge success with its offering of free treats like cotton candy, it was easy to see why the inside of the MSC was almost deserted. The same could be said for the University's Subway, located in the Pilot House, which allowed the students to be caged inside and swing themselves back and forth with a stirring wheel.

"Even with the long lines and stuff my favorite was the Scrambler," Cameron Johnson, junior, communications, said. "Johnson was one of many students who braved the fast-paced ride and found it entertaining as he and friends started fist pumping to the music from the radio station's DJs.

"I loved the Scrambler, but when you do it by yourself, you start to get a little motion sickness because you're constantly being jerked around. It was even better when I went with my friends because I kept bumping into them," Terrell said.

Birthday has always been the big event of the semester. It keeps students and teachers motivated as they prepare for final exams and class projects. Many students who were able to participate in this year's event stated that they could not wait to see what rides and activities the University Program Board or other club organizations can cook up for next year.
**What's Current**

Your weekly calendar of campus events. "What's Current" is a free service for student organizations. Submissions must be turned in by 5 p.m. the Thursday before publication; first-come, first-served. Listings may be edited for length and style. E-mail event listings to thecurrenttips@umsl.edu, with the subject "What's Current." No phone or written submissions.

**Tuesday, April 24**

**Child Abuse Prevention Month pinwheel garden fundraiser**

From 10:00 a.m. to 11:55 p.m. Located at Children's Advocacy Services and open to all.

The pinwheel represents hope, health, and happiness. This uplifting symbol of childhood represents our efforts to ensure the healthy development of children, while recognizing that child development is a building block for community and economic development. Last year, CAAS served over 400 children and we would like a pinwheel in our garden for each of these children.

For more information, call Karen Banks at 314-516-7389.

**Thursday, April 26**

**Irish Gateway Conference Keynote Address**

From 12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Located in 331 SSB and open to all.

Gateways to Hanover and "Fusing Horizons" through Irish Traditional Dance Research and Practice Dr. Catherine E. Foley, The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick Thursday April 26, 12:30-1:45 pm Room 331. Social Sciences & Business Building Dr. Catherine E. Foley designed and is the course director of both the MA in Ethnomusicology and the MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Ireland.

For more information, call Bob Ellis at 314-516-7299.

**Wednesday, April 25**

**Celebrating the Arts 2012**

From 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Located in the Provincial House on South Campus and open to all.

Celebrating the Arts is an annual juried art show featuring original creative works by UMSL students, faculty, and staff. Prizes are awarded for Best in Show and Runner-Up. All students, faculty, and staff are invited to visit the show and vote for favorite entries.

For more information, call Geri Friedline at 314-516-7874.

**Friday, April 27**

**Faculty Colloquium: Preparing for Promotion for Non-Tenure**

From 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Located in 589 Lucas Hall and open to Faculty.

Preparing for Promotion for Non-Tenure Track Faculty Members’ colleagues share strategies for documenting effective teaching. Learn what constitutes evidence and how to collect and present it. Co-sponsor: Faculty Senate.

For more information, call Peggy Cohen at 314-516-4508.

**Monday, April 30**

**The Harlem Renaissance: 1890-1940**

From 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. Located in 402 IC Penney Conference Center and open to all.

Bobby Norfolk, internationally known story performer and teaching artist, celebrates the artistic achievements of the African American community that exploded out of the Harlem sector of Manhattan in the early 1900s. Recreating literature, music and poetry by such legends as Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston. Norfolk brings to life the excitement of the cultural awakening that was the Harlem Renaissance.

For more information, call Karen Lucas at 314-516-5698.

**Crimeline**

April 13, 2012 - 10:30 a.m. Report #12-155 - Institutional Vandalism

- Millennium Student Center. An UMSL Staff member reported that sometime between 7:30 p.m. on April 12, 2012 & 10:30 a.m. April 13, 2012 someone splattered what appeared to be blood on a wall and microwave in the Millennium Student Center. Disposition: Investigation continuing.

April 16, 2012 - 3:42 p.m. Report # 12-162 - Sick Case - Millennium Student Center. An UMSL Student complaining of shortness of breath was transported to the hospital via ambulance. Disposition: Information only.

April 17, 2012 - 3:00 p.m. Report # 12-163 - Found Property - Benton Hall. A woman’s purse was found unattended in Benton Hall. Disposition: Owner identified and item returned.

April 18, 2012 - 10:30 a.m. Report # 12-164 - Found Property - Lot A. A set of office keys were found on the Woods Hall Parking Lot. Disposition: Held for safekeeping.

April 19, 2012 - 10:15 a.m. Report # 12-165 Auto Accident - Florissant Road @ Highway 70. A University owned vehicle and another were involved in a minor accident on the exit ramp from 70 to Florissant Road. Disposition: Information only.

For further details, visit http://safety.umsl.edu/policelcampus-crimelineinfo/daily-log.html, or check out UMSL Campus Police on Facebook and Twitter.

**WEATHER**

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One year after Joplin tornado, what lies ahead for coming tornado season?

CATE MARQUIS
A&E Editor

It has been a year since a tornado struck St. Louis International Airport and neighboring communities and almost a year since another tornado devastated Joplin, Missouri. The airport just finished repairs and some work remains in nearby neighborhoods. In Joplin, the devastation was enormous.

On May 22, 2011, Joplin was hit by an EF5 tornado with multiple vortices. The official death toll was 160, with 990 injured. Damage was extensive. The insurance payout is expected to be the highest in Missouri history, estimated at $2.2 billion. The local Red Cross estimated that perhaps one-fourth of the town was destroyed. The Joplin city website notes that “Joplin is making a notable recovery,” but it also indicates that work is ongoing, listing information for volunteers and guidelines on rebuilding. Yet another tornado season is almost upon us.

Weather has been unusual since last spring. Southern states were hit by tornadoes on April 25-28, 2011 in the largest outbreak ever recorded in the nation and the fourth deadliest. Last summer saw record warm nighttime temperatures. This past winter was extremely mild. According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, this past March was the warmest on record for the contiguous United States.

What is the outlook for extreme weather this season? “Earth's climate is warming, and destructive weather is growing more prevalent. Coping with the changes will require collaborative science, forward-thinking policy and an informed public,” Jane Lubchenco, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Thomas Karl, director of NOAA's National Climatic Data Center, said in a recent report. The report, “Predicting and managing extreme weather events,” was published in “Physics Today,” a publication of the American Institute of Physics.

“Last year, new records were set in the U.S. for tornadoes, drought, wind, floods and wildfires. Heat records were set in every state. At one time last summer, nearly half of the country’s population was under a heat advisory or heat warning,” the article said. “This article focuses on the unusual weather and climate patterns we’ve documented in 2011 and in previous decades and identifies several actions that would help us to better predict and manage them.”

These scientists have access to government data and to results from calculations from models that have been run on supercomputers that are not yet published in the scientific journals,” Bob L. Henson, professor of physics at University of Missouri--St. Louis, said. “From their report, my conclusions are that the climate models show that we can expect global warming to cause a large increase in extreme weather events in this century, and furthermore the data and models are suggestive that this is already happening. However, in my opinion while we can’t absolutely conclude that the recent extreme weather events are caused by the present levels of global warming, these extremes might be.”

Regardless of cause, communities and individuals must be prepared to deal with extreme weather events. The “Physics Today” article noted the high loss of human life from extreme weather in 2011, almost double the yearly average, and stressed the need for “timely, accurate and reliable weather warnings and forecasts” in order for the nation to plan for and respond to weather-related disasters. The report further stressed that not just short-term forecasts were needed, but also “forecasts of slowly evolving events like prolonged droughts, snow and ice-melt flooding and heat waves,” which also cause loss of life and property destruction.

Something that may have saved lives in the Midwest, versus the south, was preparedness and having proper shelter, such as basements, which are rarer in the south. The article says we need “a weather-ready nation” where NOAA provides “critical environmental intelligence and a nation of informed citizens, communities, businesses and emergency managers who know how to use that intelligence.” Everyone needs to understand forecasts and warnings and use them to make the best decisions.

The UNDERCURRENT
by Ismael Adiputra

“What will you do following finals?”

Eun Jeong Jo
Exchange Student
Business Administration

“I will treat myself. Maybe I will get a soda.”

Wade Coonce
Senior
Business Administration

“I would start worrying about my job. I hope the place where I am working now would still be hiring for full-time position.”

Sohta Horie
Exchange Student
Business Administration

“After my last class, I would go to the Nosh, eat food, and then play games after that.”
The Political Corner - 
Delegate Primaries 
Revisited

Delegates continue to be selected and distributed as new nominees

HALI FLINTROP
News Editor

The Republican primary season seems over, opening the floor for the state party conventions to lead to the national ones, where the delegates selected in the past months will pledge support to a presidential candidate and effectively nominate him or her for November’s general election.

Even before the party conventions, many delegates have been selected and have pledged their support for a particular candidate.

“The New York Times” reported the support of Republicans in the race so far. Out of the 1,144 delegates needed to win the nomination for president, a total of 1,146 have already been attributed to candidates in the race for the nomination. “The New York Times” reported that Republican candidate Mitt Romney now has 685 delegates, about 60 percent of what he needs to win the nomination by numbers.

Senator Rick Santorum sought the Republican nomination for president until April 10, 2012, when he announced that he was suspending his campaign. With 262 delegates, he had been Romney’s leading competitor prior to his announcement. The delegates designated to Santorum will remain his and will not be re-attributed to other candidates, despite his absence from the race. Candidate Newt Gingrich has 136 delegates, according to “The New York Times,” and with 1,139 delegates remaining it remains possible for him to win the nomination by numbers.

The Democratic Party also utilizes a delegation system to select a nominee. Historically, it is extremely unlikely that an incumbent president like President Barack Obama will be denied his party’s nomination for candidacy. An incumbent has been denied his party’s nomination only four times in the past.

A recent Associated Press article reported that President Obama is assured the Democratic nomination. “He has won almost every delegate so far, with a few exceptions in some southern states that won’t vote Democratic in the fall anyway,” Associated Press reported.

The Republican and Democratic Parties employ different methods for selecting and distributing delegates and ultimately producing nominees. The Parties also have the right to determine their primary and caucus practices differently from each other, as long as they abide by federal law.

“Keep in mind that political parties are essentially private organizations, and they can make rules for selecting delegates (within the law),” Dr. David Robertson, Curators’ Teaching Professor, political science, UMSL, said.

Robertson described the primary season that took place in Missouri. “Missouri had both a primary and, for Republicans, a caucus this year (Democrats selected delegates in the primary, on February 7). The Republican schedule resulted from two things. First, the national Republican Party changed its rules for selecting delegates and penalized states for selecting delegates in primaries before March. For that reason, Republicans wanted to reschedule the primary. But, second, Republican legislators were unable to pass a bill that set the date later (even though they passed one bill that did so), it included additional provisions that the Governor opposed, and he vetoed the whole bill. So the Republican Party decided to use caucuses to select delegates instead of the primary, to meet the national party rules. The primary was held anyway, because it was legally required, but it had no impact on delegates. Instead, Republicans met in caucuses, mostly held on March 17, to begin to choose delegates,” Robertson said.

President Obama has earned the Democratic nomination for the 2012 race. Even though not all of the Republican delegates have been chosen, from their current distribution it seems likely that Romney will face him as the Republican nominee in November 2012.

What is it about that wheelbarrow?

Poetry is a mystery to most people, and poems like this one don’t help matters: so much depends upon a red wheel barrow glazed with rain water beside the white chickens.

-William Carlos Williams

Nothing happens in this poem. There are no people who might converse about or use the wheelbarrow. There is only the wheelbarrow itself, some chickens, and recent rain. And yet, the poet insists, it’s a great poem. But why?

Its sparse landscape is one reason I love it. Williams never tells us if he’s describing a suburban yard, a rural farm or some other place. He lets the objects stand in for the whole, and that is enough. Poems aren’t like essays or stories, which require some kind of closure or conclusion—they’re free to suggest, to evoke emotion without comment and they do so using image and sound. Williams takes this to the extreme. He tells his reader to pay attention, because “so much depends / upon” these three images. Then he delivers them in plain, everyday speech, without the distraction of overly “poetic” language.

First, “a red wheel / barrow” will call to mind a different association for each reader; even someone who has been a city dweller their entire life will think of outdoor work and, by extension, the person doing that work. For me, it is my grandmother, who was an avid gardener. She used her wheelbarrows until they fell apart.

Second, the wheelbarrow is “glazed with rain water” which adds a gleam that would not otherwise be present. The mud, dirt, dust, or dirt in the soil appear slightly moistened when coated with rain. Last, the “white

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Jennifer Tappenden is currently Poet Laureate of the University of Missouri - St. Louis, where she is an MFA candidate in poetry. She is also the founding editor of Architexture Press and a full time Research Data Manager at Washington University School of Medicine. Her poem “The Tooth Collector,” published by Slipsream, was nominated in 2011 for a Pushcart Prize. Other poems have appeared online at Sitting, in print in The MacGuffin, Cape Rock, Limestone, Bad Shoe and elsewhere.
Another Earth Day comes and goes, thanks to recycling habits

OWEN SHROYER
Sports Editor

Avid environmentalist or not, you need the earth to live. Sunday was Earth Day around the globe, a day for everyone to take a step back to think about, appreciate and help raise awareness about the sanctity of the earth.

Over the years, the human race has become more aware of how fragile our living environment is and the importance of taking care of it. Saving energy and reducing waste are two of the main ways we have gone about trying to conserve our environment. One of the best efforts we give in doing so is recycling.

History has shown that people have been aware of the importance of recycling for thousands of years, tracing original recycling practices back to Plato in 400 B.C. In times of war, recycling and donating metals as well as conserving fiber were ways we started to take recycling more seriously in the common world.

As we have become more aware of the issue, we have started to invest more in recycling, the results have led to more efficient means of recycling as well as government mandated rulings regarding waste material.

The biggest discovery pertained to aluminum. Recycled aluminum uses only five percent of the energy required to produce it than it does with virgin material. This is by far the largest energy-saving clip among other material such as paper and glass (five-40 percent energy savings).

The government has stepped in, mandating that certain manufacturers include recycling in their operations and that a certain percentage of a new product consist of recycled material.

Another way the government is trying to help the cause is by increasing bans on illegal dumping of materials such as used oil, batteries, tires and garden waste. This program needs more work however, as "illegal dumping" has actually increased. The government is working on programs to better serve consumers in the disposal of these materials. The Environmental Protection Agency has made huge strides in this field, including ordering certain companies to purchase recycled or refined materials whenever possible. The EPA is also responsible for the labeling of products with any recycled material used in the product and whether or not the material is recyclable.

Now that you know some of the history behind recycling, here are some relevant and eye-popping statistics that are helping people become more aware and encouraged to recycle.

44 million newspapers are thrown away every day in the United States. This is like throwing 500,000 trees into a landfill each week. If each person were to reuse a paper shopping bag for just one trip to the store, we would save 60,000 trees. How many trees would be saved if we all used reusable cloth grocery bags instead? Recycling a single aluminum can saves enough energy to power your television for three hours or run a 100-watt light bulb for almost four hours. Plastic bags made from recycled polythene rather than virgin materials save two-thirds of the energy required for production and reduce the water used by almost 90 percent. Glass is 100 percent recyclable and can go from the recycling bin to a store shelf in as little as 30 days. Making a glass container from a recycled container creates about 20 percent less air pollution and 50 percent less water pollution and uses only about half the energy of making it from virgin materials. Recycling a single glass bottle can save enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for four hours.

These are just a few examples of recyclable materials and how much we can save just by the simple practice of recycling.

However, there is a lot more involved in the recycling process than just saving energy. We are also reducing air pollution. In Great Britain, recycling efforts have led to a 10-15 million ton reduction per year in CO2 emissions, according to the Waste and Resources Action Programme.

Recycling can reduce the price of materials as well, due to the cheaper means of producing recycled materials as well as the saving of time, money and effort to produce a recycled product rather than a product from raw material.

So next time you leave the lights on in a room or chug a can of soda, just remember to reduce, reuse and recycle. While you may not see the direct effects it has on your life, the facts are there. Think about the generations to come who want to live on this planet years after we are done using it.

For more information, inquire at 388 MSC or email us at:
Thecurrentjobs@umsl.edu
Student Life hosted the annual Birthday concert last Wednesday, April 18, at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center at University of Missouri - St. Louis. The bands featured were Cobra Starship, Breathe Carolina and The Ready Set.

The concert began with a late addition to the show, a lone man who walked onstage and said his name was Noah and that he was from South Carolina. The people who showed up early seemed generally welcoming, even though Noah was not who they had come to see.

Noah was short on words because he was there to play his music. His smooth baritone was soothing. He did not look the part of a teen idol or sound like one. However, he did sound like a very good coffeehouse musician with good songs. His cover of "Billie Jean" seemed his own, yet the wonderful pop song did not overshadow his originals. He mentioned that he recorded an album titled "Adore," which will be out soon. Being a late addition, Noah was a welcome surprise. His music gave some sincerity and earnestness in what would be a vapid evening of music.

The lights went down, signaling the approach of electronic-pop outfit The Ready Set. The high school girls gave their sirens calling for their Odysseus. Jordan Witzigreuter, who looks like a long-haired Justin Bieber: The Ready Set is essentially Witzigreuter's solo project. His music relies heavily on studio manipulation, so the live set contained copious electronic drums and plugged-in sounds. The young crowd stood the whole time.

More angular haircuts and electronic cover-ups were on display when Colorado's electronic rock duo of David Schmitt and Kyle Even, Breathe Carolina, took the stage. Determining where the backing tracks ended and the live music began was a challenge. Although the drummer seemed more involved than Witzigreuter's did, the band relied heavily on their DJ. Within their songs Schmitt and Even exchanged guttural hardcore bellowing with slightly flat teen pop singing. The soulless auto-tuned vocals of Schmitt were replaced by Schmitt's nasally weak live vocals, which were not really an improvement, just a different kind of pain.

Breathe Carolina likes to think of themselves as "eclectic." However, awkward is probably a better word. Lacking dance moves, Even bounced around onstage as though he was filming some obscure aerobic video not even considered for distribution. Occasionally, he planted both feet for a second to head-bang and scream obscenities like he was in a heavy metal band. Breathe Carolina should thank the lighting technician for lending their show a club-like vibe to cover up the mediocre songwriting and shoddy musicianship. If the music is loud enough and the lights are fast enough, tricking novice concert-goers into a good time appears easy enough.

Finally, Cobra Starship landed, the most polished and professional band of the evening. Lead vocalist Gabe Saporta stood on top of the drum risers and shouted, "show me your metal horns!" Somewhere Ronnie James Dio rolled over in his grave. Saporta's almost constant pelvic gyrating was more obscene than provocative. Most of the 16-year-old girls were not sure what to make of a 32-year-old man wearing tighter pants than they were. Saporta's crotch-huggers would have made Spinal Tap envious as he jump-kicked and ripped off every move Elvis ever did 50 years before him.

More songs celebrating the invention of Redbull and vodka, mindless partying and reckless sexual endeavors landed in the form of Cobra Starship. "Tomorrow ain't real. Tonight is our truth," Saporta repeatedly sings. "I don't care if I'm a guilty pleasure." At least he is not trying to fool anyone. Cobra Starship invaded UMSL to party, not to save the world.

It was Mirthday. Who cares about a sugar-sweet electronic-pop hangover? Saporta was having fun playing rockstar.
Gallery 210's 'Parental Advisory' intrigues, inspires with annual art exhibit

CATE MARQUIS
A&E Editor

Once again, Gallery 210 showcases an impressive collection of intriguing artwork. The gallery is currently hosting "Parental Advisory," the annual art exhibit of works by University of Missouri -- St. Louis' Bachelor of Fine Arts candidates. The free exhibit runs through April 28 in Gallery B. Gallery 210 is located north of the Millennium Student Center, next to the North Campus Metrolink station.

If you need a break from late semester pressures, taking an art break is surprisingly relaxing because the art distracts, pleases and even provokes a bit of thought. "Parental Advisory" offers plenty of those "hmm, I never thought of it that way" moments or just glimpses of uplifting beauty.

The first room of the Gallery B space is devoted to fine art works, while the second room features commercial art. Overall there is a nice variety of art, from whimsical to practical.

The fine art works include prints and mixed media, with a few paintings, some photography and a couple of sculptures. One of the eye-catching pieces is Megan Greenburg's sculpture "Untitled," a fairly large, plaster-on-wire, sinuous shape, with a white exterior and a gaping mouth that reveals red inside.

Another sculpture, "Loose Change," is striking as well. It is a collaborative project by Haris Bacic, Jon Bruns, Taylor Donham, Spencer Gaines, Tierney Gater, Nick Gonzales, Sera Kim, Cheryyl McKibben, Lindsey Melickian and Rose Vandrau. Each artist contributed a large, coin-like sculpture, most of which are round with bas-relief faces. The "coins" lie in a pile on the floor, as if a giant emptied his pockets.

Another work that draws the eye is Linh Nguyen's "Face." In this large, colorful portrait done with big brushstrokes in an impressionistic style, the subject seems to be peering closely at the viewer. To the left, Sra Kim's pastel "Portrait" features a woman with a worried expression covered with a spiderweb-like shadow. The pair demonstrate both the quality of the work and the care with which they were arranged in the gallery.

Other intriguing works include Katherine Stucker's series of five photographs "Violin Shop," which used violins and confined space to create a sense of mystery, secrecy and story. One of the more colorful works was Caitlin Funston's "Fish," a waterless lithography and relief work in vivid greens and blues that repeated images of sea life. Nearby, Valeria Dextrick's stone lithography print "Jack the Ripper" used silhouettes, stairs and shades of red to evoke a sense of menace.

One of the more beautiful was Kirk Helfrich's "Mechanical Wonders," a series of color close-up photographs of the inner mechanisms of old watches, which was both formal and intriguing. Moving toward the second room, one spies Eryn Toebes two small, paired works. "Rooted Egg" is an etching featuring an egg from which an eye is emerging, along with roots into the ground. The second one, "Untitled," is even more surreal, a cartoon graphic face with closed eyes and a branch sprouting from the top of the head.

Next, Andrew Amsden's etching and drypoint "Defeat" is a portrait of an athlete with head in hands that movingly captures the feeling. In the second room, visitors find the commercial art portion, including such graphic art as movie posters, product labels, gameboards, brochures, book layouts and more. Jason Williams' "Llama Fair Map" is one of the playfully drawn maps that use children's board games and are often sprinkled with humor.

Dustin Mueller's poster for the movie "Gangs of New York" is simple, yet captures the film's bloody side perfectly. Mikayla Schneiril offers four watercolor cards depicting characters from "The Hunger Games" book series in bright color. It is well worth students' time to take a stroll over to Gallery 210 to heed this "Parental Advisory."

St. Louis Jazz Festival visits Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center, entertains crowds

DAVID VON NORDHEIM
Staff Writer

The Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival made its annual appearance at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center at the University of Missouri -- St. Louis on the weekend of April 20.

The festival is a yearly summit for seasoned jazz educators and aspiring performers, masterminded by UMSL's own Director of Jazz Studies Jim Widmer. Widmer juxtaposes some of the modern jazz community's most celebrated figures against the promising student musicians of the UMSL Jazz Ensemble.

This year's convention featured the headlining performances of the Poncho Sanchez Latin Band on Friday and the Christian McBride Big Band on Saturday. Both are renowned figures in their respective niches within the jazz community.

Both performances commenced with sets from the UMSL Jazz Ensemble, whose skilled performers were more than capable of keeping pace with the massive talents they preceded. The group tackled pieces from some of the jazz community's most iconic composers, including Count Basie's "Who, Me?" and Charles Mingus's "Moanin'." Lauren Sevian, a celebrated collaborator and formidable talent on the baritone sax, joined the ensemble for the Friday performance. Her valve-fluttering solos added an impressive degree of spectacle to the ensemble's characteristically exceptional performance.

Following the ensemble's more traditional big band and big band compositions was the Poncho Sanchez, whose group performed a rhythmically nimble brew of salsa and Latin jazz. Sanchez, a truly electrifying performer, dared the Touhill's traditionally genteel audience to resist the infectious pulse of his virtuosos conga. Accompanied by an equally fleet septet of solo sax, bass, brass, samba piano, and additional percussion, the group achieved the perfect balance between accessibility and technicality that characterizes the finest jazz performances.

In keeping with the educational spirit of the St. Louis Jazz Festival, Sanchez's set also functioned as a brief history lesson on the origins of Latin jazz. In particular, Sanchez and his band paid tribute to the historic pairing of jazz icon Dizzy Gillespie and conga drummer extraordinaire Chano Pozo by performing a series of the duo's most celebrated compositions. The Gillespie-Pozo collaboration is widely regarded as the impetus for the fusion of American jazz composition and Latin rhythmic sensibilities. Also, the Sanchez Band's inspired performance of the salsa standard "Oye Como Va," which was played in honor of Tito Puente's 89th birthday, served as a fitting homage to the late king of salsa.

To lend more clout to the commemoration of Latin jazz's most celebrated duo, the Sanchez Band brought in renowned percussionist, trumpeter and popular film score composer Terence Blanchard to play Dizzy to Sanchez's Pozo. Blanchard's work as a composer includes the scores to Spike Lee films such as "Malcolm X" and "Inside Man." In honor of the occasion, he added an appreciable Latin flavor to his usual hard bop stylings. Acting as a more traditional counterpart to the Sanchez Band's rubber-limbed percussion, Blanchard's hearty contributions to the Gillespie-Pozo compositions and ballads were eagerly embraced by the Touhill audience.

The powerhouse performance featuring two of modern jazz's most admired figures was a fitting kickoff for the annual showcase's ninth season. Call it another success for Widmer's and Jazz St. Louis' tireless efforts to maintain the city's reputation as a jazz Mecca.

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Thecurrentads@umsl.edu
A baby chimpanzee named Oscar is the focus of the visually impressive, heart-touching "Chimpanzee," a family-friendly nature documentary film as well as the Disney company. Directors Alastair Fothergill and Mark Linfield exceed high expectations particularly in their astounding photography. The filmmakers get very close to the chimps and their world, which draws the audience into the lives and the drama of what happens to little Oscar and his group. There is also some breath-taking time-lapse photography of plants, fungi and insects that is both impressive and beautiful.

Narration by Tim Allen adds both a clear storyline and a good dose of humor. Following a playful baby chimp scampering and tumbling with other youngsters, pestering adults, learning and exploring a world where all is new to him offers plenty of opportunity for comic and dramatic moments. When the ape family moves to the nut grove at the center of their territory to crack some nuts, Allen cracks jokes about power tools, referring to the heavy rocks the experienced adults use to crack nuts. As Oscar and the other young chimps mimic the adults, their less successful, sometimes finger-smashing efforts offer plenty of slapstick humor, while also describing how chimps use tools and teach their methods to their young.

"Chimpanzee" offers a skilful balance between entertainment and education that is polished and well-edited. The filmmakers get amazingly close to their subjects, often inspiring us to wonder how they accomplished this feat. The proximity and the well-crafted narrative structure allow the audience to see striking parallels between chimps and humans. This is especially apparent when the film homes in on a neighboring troop of chimpanzees, who are threatening to move in on Oscar's family's territory. Close-ups on the faces of the invading apes as they wait for a chance to attack or size up the relative strength of their own leader capture expressions and nuances of emotion that would fit in a political thriller. The humanity of the expressions is remarkable, even disturbing.

The film focuses on a narrative about Oscar and his group, a dramatic, touching and uplifting story. While there is plenty of pure fun, there is a realism too. There are moments of dramatic tension and some sad events, but all is handled with sensitivity and turns out well in the end. We never forget people, only animals, in this world and the film says nothing overt about the challenges chimpanzees face from habitat destruction, leaving all that to the imaginations of the viewers.

Besides the intimate look at the chimps' lives and their personalities, photography by Martyn Colbeck, Bill Wallau, and Warwick Sloss give us a wondrous sense of the natural world. Aerial photography by Michael Kelem adds spectacular big picture looks. Tim Shepherd's time-lapse sequences of twisting vines, the darkness giving way to daylight, mushrooms sprouting and light and mold spreading over the aging mushrooms, all give a sense of the pulse of life in their jungle habitat. Towards the film's end there is a brief making of sequence, in which the talented nature filmmakers talk about some of the challenges of making the film.

The film is short, dramatic, entertaining and uplifting with a little education and some pure beauty thrown in, all of which make "Chimpanzee" an excellent family film.

Grade: A
Society wants women to continue to ‘Think Like a Man,’ film shows

ASHLEY ATKINS
Features Editor

Last Thursday, a selected few, along with Hot 104.1, met up at Clayton’s Esquire Theater, where they were shown an advanced screening of comedian Kevin Hart’s latest film, “Think like a Man.” Inspired by Steve Harvey’s self-help book “Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man: What Men Really Think About Love, Relationships, Intimacy, and Commitment,” the film was not due to hit theaters until April 20. Was this highly publicized film worth all of the commotion?

Directed by Tim Story, the man behind films such as “Barbershop” and “Fantastic Four,” the film starred some well-known faces such as Oscar-nominated Taraji P. Henson, Michael Ealy, Gabrielle Union and Jerry Ferrara. There were even a couple of appearances from public enemy #1, Chris Brown. So where did this movie go wrong?

The storyline revolves around five gentlemen—six if you include the married one who is useless to the plot—who discover that their girlfriends are using Steve Harvey’s self-help book about relationships against them. The men plan to use the book to counteract whatever strategy their female friends have already planned. Confused yet?

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This is when the film turns to comedy, with appearances from the amnesia-stricken Brown (who was actually one of the funniest characters), an attempted date ditch, and the film’s intro cartoon, which kills the ideas of marriage between men and women. Men will generally appreciate the cartoon. It may rub many women the wrong way.

The most interesting female character in the film—besides Henson, who plays the female version of a dude—was Union’s portrayal of the smart girl who falls for the Transformer-loving, comic-book-convention-attending boy-man. The

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His character is unrealistic, with his big flaw being that he does not have his own restaurant. Wow. That is certainly a deal breaker.

Meanwhile, the other male characters struggle with the idea of becoming men, which involves commitment, marriage and “leaving your mother behind.” Their traits are common in the world of dating and because of that the viewer is able to understand their separate stories. But what could their stories offer to an audience that is already familiar with their M.O.

The movie would have been better if it offered something that made it stand out from among the rest. Throughout promotion Hart did not want the film to be labeled as a black film, and it is not. It is “He’s Just Not into You” with another director. Tim Story was not ready for this one.
New application for Iphone’s and Androids now available to UMSL

ASHLEY ATKINS
Features Editor

It is ALIVE. April 17, the University of Missouri – St. Louis mobile App was released to the public. Praised for its ability to make the life of the UMSL student easier through mobile phone, the App offers its user the option to create a daily planner, check campus news at UMSL Daily, access to Triton Sports, live streaming from St. Louis Public Radio and the U-UMSL Student Radio, and a campus map, among many other features. The application contains a total of 16 different features. Need to find quick contact information on your current college professor? It is in the App. Tired of waiting for the next available computer to open up in the computer lab? Use the App. The app was created by Nathan Halley, data base programmer/analyst-specialist for information technology and Paul Pratte, data base programmer/analyst-principal for information technology. "Our hope is that the UMSL community takes interest in the app. If so, we plan to implement future improvements," Hinderliter said.

Jordan Witzigreuter of the Ready Set talks to The Current

MATT SALMI
Staff Writer

The Birthday concert on Wednesday, April 18 at University of Missouri – St. Louis included musical groups Cobra Starship, Breathe Carolina and The Ready Set. The Ready Set is the solo electronic-pop project for which Jordan Witzigreuter has been writing and recording since 2007. The Ready Set is currently on tour and plans to release new music this spring. The Current spoke to Witzigreuter shortly before the Birthday show. The Current: Have you played in St. Louis several times now, what are your memories from those shows?

Jordan Witzigreuter: I think the Six Flags one was the first day of the VMA tour. So that was awesome. The Warped Tour was pretty brutal because of the heat. But probably the most memorable show was the last one at the Firebird, because it was a really small crowd. It's so packed and intimate.

The Current: Can you talk about your hometown, Fort Wayne, Indiana?

Jordan Witzigreuter: It's the second biggest city in Indiana, but it feels pretty small. It's very suburban. I don't spend a lot of time there. When I was growing up, there was a really cool music scene that kept me focused on music all through high school. So that was the spark, I think, for all this stuff.

The Current: Can you talk about the early recordings you did at home?

Jordan Witzigreuter: They were all in my basement with a laptop, a really cheap condenser mic and a little keyboard. I'd record around, taught myself programming and Logic and put it up on MySpace. There was a niche for that at the time. Eventually, I turned them into full-on productions.

The Current: On your last album, "Beneath the Medicine Tree," your songwriting has turned into a band rather than just you playing with a laptop. What do you think is the biggest thing you've learned this year?

Jordan Witzigreuter: Yeah. For a couple years I've been writing songs with piano first, melodies and lyrics. Recently, I've been working on instrumental tracks first, a verse and a chorus. Write it, record a rough demo and go back to it later. If it still stands out to me, then I take the time to make it into something.

The Current: Having been discovered on MySpace and with the Internet integral to daily life in this day and age, it is getting more difficult to reach an audience.

Jordan Witzigreuter: There are a lot of ways to do things where you don't need any of that at all. If you can go through the right avenues online, you can definitely build up a huge fan base and culture around what you do. I caught the tail end of MySpace. If I was starting now, I would put everything out for free and try to build things up through word of mouth. It's a little different now since MySpace is irrelevant. It's a different way of doing things. I've been working on instrumental tracks first, a verse and a chorus. Write it, record a rough demo and go back to it later. If it still stands out to me, then I take the time to make it into something.

The Current: How do you consume music?

Jordan Witzigreuter: Before flights I'll go to iTunes and download a bunch of stuff. I haven't bought a physical copy of an album in a long time. It's all digital.

The Current: What are your three favorite albums?

Jordan Witzigreuter: The first one is 'Beneath the Medicine Tree' by copeland. Second is 'Stay What You Are' by Saves the Day. The third one is 'The Greatest Story Ever Told' by The Lawrence Arms.

The Current: What is your earliest musical memory?

Jordan Witzigreuter: When I was young, my brother was in the high school band, so I would go to his competitions. I was always fascinated with the drums. I vaguely remember that, I think that was the start of the whole thing to me.

The Current: Is that where you're most comfortable? Behind the kit?

Jordan Witzigreuter: I would like to play drums a little bit more. It would be cool, at some point, to play drums in a band again. But I always wanted to be the one going crazy onstage, jumping around. It's a whole different thing, being the frontman, being in control of the show, writing the songs. But drums are my first and foremost musical passion.

The Current: How does The Ready Set live differ from your solo studio work?

Jordan Witzigreuter: It turns into a band. Instead of just being Jordan. When we tour, it goes from the studio with some organic elements to a full show. I want the energy and intense party feeling that drew me into shows when I was younger. There's still all the electronic stuff. Everyone writes their own parts around that.
U-Radio celebrates five years of progress in campus entertainment

ASHLEY ATKINS
Features Editor

The U-Radio station celebrated its fifth anniversary in the Nash of the Millennium Student Center at the University of Missouri--St. Louis on Thursday, April 17. Together, disc jockeys from the old and new school came together to give voice to such an achievement.

It was not until the first week of classes this year that station manager Keith Robinson realized that the station was approaching its fifth year. With it being his last semester, he wanted to exit with a celebration for the U.

"We have been through a lot in five years. I think that our organization has been through anything you can possibly imagine," but we were able to overcome it and still do what we do," Robinson said.

The celebration consisted of giveaways of prizes such as candy, a free movie screening to anybody present in the cafeteria during that time and the cutting of the anniversary cake. The event was set up just like any other radio show, but with DJs rocking the mic for 30-minute increments, meaning that for the first time in a while the student body was able to get a close look at its DJs.

"I was at the U since the beginning, since they first started planning it, when Dr. Granger called a meeting for anyone who was interested in starting a radio station on campus. That was in the fall of 2005," DJ Special K, Kerry Mander, graduate student, communications, said. "We started off in what we call Dr. Granger's closet, a small room with biology samples and frogs in jars." Mander was thankful when they were all able to convince "the powers that be" that a professional student-run station was in the college's best interest and mentioned that one of his radio pupils, Michelle Brooks, is now working for Majic 104.9.

In the middle of the event, a video was shown that consisted of various interviews from U DJs on how they became apart of the station and what they have gained from the experience.

"Having a radio show has been like a dream. It is something that I have always wanted to do. I have always wanted to talk on the air. I have spent a lot of time listening to talk radio and thinking about different responses and why people bring up different aspects and certain things," Jodie Wagner, senior, computer science/philosophy, said.

To the students who may doubt their ability to do radio, "Pirate Joe" believes that if you are going to start radio anywhere, start it at the station here at UMSL, because it is a learning experience. There are people who can help you, which make for a great experience.

"Involvement in the U has made a huge impression on me and how I look at UMSL because I feel like I could not get an opportunity like this at any other school, just to be able to run your own show and the level of independence that you get," Ryan Haynes, junior communications, said.

Haynes, who acts as Senpa treasurer for the U, believes that if you are a creative person you are fortunate to have a place where you can bounce ideas off of other creative people.

One of the final prizes that was given away for the afternoon was a Twilight calendar that went to a video game player huddled in a corner with his gamer friends. His friends welcomed him back to the table with cheers as he proudly took his seat.

In all of his time spent with U-Radio, Robinson found himself reflecting on the future of the U. In his absence, he hopes that the station survives and continues to branch out throughout the campus and participate more in the community. "I hope that we continue to do good radio," Robinson said.

Joshua McNew raises 'The Stakes' with latest film

MATT SALMI
Staff Writer

The bonfire-pitched scream of a metal wheel grinding a weaker sheet of metal to its will ripped through the cold winter air, spreading a shower of fire in a myriad of orange and red sparks.

On January 7, bunched in the Ford Asphalt Company building in Bridgeton, University of Missouri -- St. Louis students were shooting a 15-minute short film, "The Stakes." As UMSL alumnus and director Patrick Lawrence called "action," sparks cascaded down to the cement floor.

Joshua McNew, junior, media studies, observed them intently before anxiety overwhelmed him. He darted from the set to seek refuge with a plastic trashcan. It was his first feature film project at the forge.

"I got sick to my stomach," McNew said. "I had to sit in another room, close my eyes and calm myself."

After five months of writing, raising money, organizing, having everything fall apart and starting over, McNew's project had reached its first day of production. "I worked really hard to get everyone in that room at that time to do what we were doing," McNew said.

As producer and co-writer, McNew was the driving force in bringing "The Stakes" into existence. He first approached Dr. Thomas McPhail, professor of media studies, fellow in the Center for International Studies, UMSL in August to inquire about raising funds. With assistance from University Research & Development, the College of Fine Arts & Communications, the Student Electronic Media Professionals Association and the media studies department, McNew garnered enough support to make a professional small-budget film.

After the first writer dropped out, McNew wrote a script based upon an idea from UMSL faculty and feature film director, Jack Snyder. Lawrence wrote the second draft before Snyder completed the third draft of a concept he originally had as a teenager.

"A pretty twisted idea for a teenager," McNew said.

The twisted nature and darkness are incarnate in St. Louis actor Joshua Thomas in the lead role of Jared, who is as harsh and dirty as the industrial atmosphere. "Too many times people lose sight of their dreams and find themselves in a bad place 15 years down the line. Jared is one of those people," Lawrence said.

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The twisted nature and darkness are incarnate in St. Louis actor Joshua Thomas in the lead role of Jared, who is as harsh and dirty as the industrial atmosphere. "Too many times people lose sight of their dreams and find themselves in a bad place 15 years down the line. Jared is one of those people," Lawrence said.

To Jared's perverse amusement, his younger boss, Marc (played by Maurice Walters II, junior, media studies), finds himself in a game of Russian roulette with a (unknown to him) fake bullet, though Jared's true intentions may be darker still. "A game of Russian roulette allows Jared to live out the fantasy of pointing a gun at his boss's head," Thomas said.

"By the end, the world the audience thought they knew at the beginning of the film is quite different from the one they are left with," Lawrence said.

A social media campaign was launched to promote the film. Its Facebook page contains photos, artwork, a behind-the-scenes video and a trailer. "We've really tried to engage people online to pay attention to the project," McNew said.

With post-production nearing completion, McNew plans to debut "The Stakes" at the St. Louis Filmmakers' Showcase in July before submitting his project to film festivals. Because of all the hard work by UMSL students, he would like to host a sneak-peek on campus in May if the film is complete.

"We're not going to rush," McNew said. "We want it to be what we envisioned."
Freshmen contribute largely as the season closes out

The University of Missouri -- St. Louis women's softball team has been playing their best softball lately, starting off April at 6-2, their best stretch of the season, and are heading into their biggest games of the year on the road in the hopes of a post-season birth.

In order to get to the Great Lakes Valley Conference post-season tournament, the team had a lot of ground to make up. The team came home for three crucial conference double headers. Their first opponent was William Jewell. The Tritons split the first double header with William Jewell in a low-scoring affair. The Tritons bucked that trend in the first game, scoring 11 runs en route to an 11-3 win. Jena Boudreau, freshman, nursing, got the win on the mound, going four solid innings without allowing a run and striking out two batters. The big offensive inning for the Tritons was the fourth, in which Katie Wood, freshman, biology, hit a grand slam. The Tritons needed some of that offense in the second game, in which Boudreau was again the pitching hero, going a complete game without allowing a single run on five hits and two walks. In the UMSL half of the second inning, the girls took advantage of an error and sloppy defense by Rockhurst by scoring four runs behind runs batted in by Wood and Katie Ruthledge, freshman, elementary education.

The Tritons did not let up in the second game. Leslie Davis, junior, psychology, held Rockhurst scoreless again in a complete game effort. Wood had three hits and two runs batted in, and Haleigh Jenkins, junior, education, had a big three-run double in the first. This was a great double header for the team, who dominated Rockhurst by an overall score of 13-0.

The team plays their final double header of the year against Quincy, a team just ahead of them in the standings, whom the Tritons could overtake for fourth place in conference. Two victories could keep the Tritons' hopes alive for a slot in the post-season field. Check back next week for the team's fate, as well as an in-depth look at the team, its season, and its future.
Conference season winds down as Tritons anticipate upward mobility in future

LEON DEVANCE
Staff Writer

With the future of the Great Lakes Valley Conference playoffs becoming clearer, the University of Missouri -- St. Louis Tritons are ascending toward the play-offs.

Ten games remain in the regular season, and the Tritons have six conference games and against McKendree. The Tritons sit in fifth place in the Western Division of the GLVC with a conference record of 12-12 and overall mark of 20-17 and went to Springfield on an eight-game winning streak.

The Tritons managed to stretch the streak to nine games, splitting the twin bill when they defeated the Prairie Stars 10-3 in the first game. The Prairie Stars won the nightcap 8-7 after the Tritons committed two errors. The Prairie Stars are 8-30 overall and 2-22 in the GLVC.

The Tritons outhit the Prairie Stars 14-8 and trailed 3-0 in the second inning before John Pilackas, junior, nursing/education, got the Tritons on the scoreboard with a two-run single in the third inning. The Tritons added three runs in the seventh inning, as two runs scored on an error. Pilackas plated Charlie Mohr, senior, business administration with a sacrifice fly.

The Tritons got a complete team performance beginning with starter Adam Radick, junior, communications, as he tossed a complete game. Radick struck out five Prairie Star batters and walked one batter to improve to 4-3 this season. Justin Lois, sophomore, business administration, had three hits among five at-bats, and Pilackas supplied two hits and three RBIs.

In the eighth inning, the Tritons received an RBI single from Lucas Matecki, junior, business administration, Nolan Craig, junior, business administration, and Mohr to further the advantage. The final runs were scored in the ninth inning as Trevor Nathanson, junior, business administration, scored on a wild pitch and Joel Ayala, junior, communications, plated Pilackas with an RBI single.

While the Tritons had one game under their belts, the teams' roles were somewhat reversed in the nightcap as the Prairie Stars battled for a split. Chris True, freshman, business administration, started the second game but never found his rhythm. True's pitching line showed that he allowed five runs to be scored, three earned on four hits in 2 2/3 innings. True struck out three batters and issued four walks. Kyle Renud, junior, communications, took the loss as he surrounded three runs on three hits in 3 1/3 innings.

True's previous start against the McKendree Bearcats went much better as he limited the Bearcats to six hits and pitched a complete game, allowing both McKendree runs as one run scored because of an error. True struck out three batters and McKendree received only one walk.

The Tritons went ahead, grabbing a 2-0 lead as Lois and Paul Richmond, sophomore, communications, doubled. The Prairie Stars then got one run back. The Tritons stretched the lead to 4-1 as Nathanson unloaded a home run. However, the Prairie Stars immediately scored four runs in the third inning to lead 5-4. The Tritons regained the lead at 6-5 as Lois scored on a wild pitch. The Tritons then manufactured a run as Matecki delivered Richmond with a sacrifice fly for a 6-5 lead. But the Tritons failed to hold on as the Prairie Stars scored three runs to lead 8-6. Pilackas then drove in the final run with an RBI double.

After the four-game double-header concludes, the action begins at noon. The Tritons the go on the road against Southern Illinois in the Ohio Valley Conference on April 24. The schedule has three important conference games that will affect seeding as the Tritons face Missouri S&T both at home and away before the GLVC conference tournament.
Will proposed limits on alcohol sales make East St. Louis a safer place?

Limiting alcohol sales not the answer for East St. Louis

Alcohol sales are not the cause of East St. Louis’s safety issues, and it would be wrong to limit those sales. Limiting the sale of alcohol would decrease much-needed city revenue and place further stress on local businesses, which rely on alcohol sales to survive in an already sluggish economy. This stress would result in the loss of jobs and the closing of some businesses, exacerbating the real issues which include a terrible job market.

There are other cities in the United States that do not have the alcohol sales limitations that are being considered for East St. Louis, and these other cities do not have the same extreme issues with violent crimes. The key issues that lead to violent crime are drug trafficking, illegal guns and domestic issues. It is obvious that more police resources are necessary to battle these violent crimes. Taking away city revenue is not the answer.

As stated previously, one of the key issues is domestic violence and other related problems which would be greatly exacerbated by the loss of jobs and revenue. If the limitation of sales were imposed, then the loss of revenue for the city would have far-reaching effects like the reduction of policing jobs, workers in the call centers, crime scene investigators, etc. Also, within the private sector, many businesses would have to let some of their staff go, including security, wait staff, cleaners, etc. This brings us back to the domestic issues, which are greatly affected by a terrible job market. In a sluggish economy, where jobs are already hard to find, the worst thing anyone could do is to further reduce the amount of jobs available. Many crimes are committed out of desperation by people who are out of work and trying to support their families.

The next big issues that should really be focused on are illegal gun sales and drug trafficking. These two issues are the leading causes of violent crimes. Many would like to attribute violence to alcohol, but causation and correlation are not the same thing. Crimes are mostly committed around establishments that sell liquor because that is where the people are at the time of the crime. If these businesses become limited, the crimes will not cease, but scatter to other locations.

Average citizens go out to socialize and have drinks with friends, just as criminals do. Alcohol doesn’t turn good people into criminals; criminals will be criminals and behave as such, regardless of what they drink. So who are we really hurting here by imposing these limitations? Not the criminals, who will continue to sell their drugs, fight over territory and trade in illegal weapons.

Rather than reducing much-needed city revenue, why not reallocate resources to fight the causes of the problem instead of misdirecting our attention to correlating activities that really have nothing to do with the problem? As for criminals, especially those who traffic drugs, what could be better for business than the city losing revenue and police resources? This reduction would only aid illegal activities and increase their numbers.

If we really want to help East St. Louis, how about we use our valuable resources wisely and attack the causes of such violent crimes? We should promote businesses and growth, not limit them. Focus on creating jobs and raising the standard of living. History shows that poor living standards and fear promote crime, while employment and a quality standard of living reduce crime. Drug dealers go where the business is. If people are happy and do not need to resort to drugs, then the drug dealers will leave in search of better revenue.

Proposed rules are the first step toward a better city

Cracking down on club hours and limiting liquor sales after a certain hour could help to decrease the violence amongst residents of East St. Louis. These changes could keep murder rates down as well by stopping events before they happen. While it is true that people can get drunk and engage in violence anywhere in East St. Louis, club owners and residents are tired of it occurring in their neighborhoods.

Illinois senator Dick Durbin has recently stated that he would like to make a requirement for club owners to close clubs at 1 a.m. Those in favor of the changes want to create a safer environment, and in order to do that as a community, residents of East St. Louis need to speak out about what they want and what city officials can do to get the job done.

Attorney Stephen Wigington reported that because East St. Louis was the nation’s number one murder capital last year—with about 109 killings per 100,000 residents—the clubs should have started closing earlier years ago. Thanks to what seems like a never-ending stream of violent events, East St. Louis locals know that the violence in the area will only get worse if someone doesn’t take action.

According to KMOV, the latest reports show that even with a possible economic recovery, the city plans on taking away jobs from at least 50 police officers by the year 2014. Even if 50 seems like a small number over the two-year time limit, for every officer that loses his or her job that ratio of increased violence will go up at least another two percent per officer.

What we need in this city is for club owners to hire reinforcements such as security and bouncers in order to keep the customers in line or remove those who show that they are going to be a problem. Club owners, as well as government officials, should know that you cannot be responsible for every person, but with an increase in security and a police task force, along with the decrease in hours that clubs are open, the violence we see around East St. Louis will start to decrease. The people of Saint Louis need to learn that these are the consequences for creating a violent and destructive atmosphere, especially for students of all ages.

Other states such as New York, California and Florida have all had their ups and downs with violent club atmospheres, but they have learned to overcome those obstacles by asking the community what it needs. In many cases, the general consensus is that clubs should be closed down earlier because it stops people from making bad decisions early on.

Though it might sound counter-intuitive, another solution to creating a better environment is to have more clubs. If there were clubs around the East St. Louis area that are catered to different types of people, the violence would start to decrease because club-goers would be more spread out. Also, because clubs would be catered towards different types of people of all different ages, club owners could choose freely what to serve and what not to serve.

The quickest way to fix the problem of violence in both St. Louis and East St. Louis is for the government officials to decrease the amount of time clubs are open and help club owners find bouncers and security officials to work at their establishments during their business hours.

The authorities need to give the people who actually live around these violent neighborhoods in East St. Louis a chance to speak and tell the city officials what they want to be done. Though implementing a decrease in open club hours and limiting liquor sales after a certain hour wouldn’t fix the problem entirely, it is a good way to start.
SCIENCE MATTERS

Post-Earth Day reasons why recycling still helps

Sunday was Earth Day, so people may be thinking about our environment and probably about recycling.

With the increasing trend in this country to see things in black and white, some may decide that recycling is not worthwhile if it doesn’t save them money or can’t reverse all environmental problems. Why bother? Just hop in the SUV and forget the whole thing. But while reduce, reuse, recycle may not be the answer to global warming, it is still worth doing.

Recycling does reduce the amount of trash that goes into landfills, and who needs more stuff in landfills? Of course, it is better not to be wasteful to begin with. We certainly should be doing more to move toward a sustainable system for using resources, but that does not mean we should give up and do nothing until then (as much as that would delight oil companies). It just means that one action is not enough. A change of attitude, even lifestyle, is needed.

Glass is something to consider. Glass is a perfect recyclable material, so buy or use glass containers wherever possible. Glass is durable, non-reactive, non-corroding, easy to clean and easy to melt down and reuse as new products. It is made from a natural material—essentially sand—that is abundant.

One of the worst trends to appear in recent years is the increased replacement of glass containers with plastic ones. Manufacturers argue that shipping plastic uses less energy, but that is about saving money shipping goods from overseas. Better to package in glass locally and save the energy (and cost) of shipping great distances. This is what the country used to do, and doing so again would add jobs in addition to saving energy. Arguments that overseas labor is cheap conceal the real issue: that our tax laws favor imported goods over domestically made ones.

Here are some other reasons to recycle, from naturalist Leah Thorpe. Her sources include: Anchorage Recycling Center, University of Colorado at Boulder, The Resourceful Schools Project, Oberlin College Recycling Program, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Glass Packaging Institute and Glass Recycling and the Environment.

On the topic of paper, Thorpe says: “We can save more space in our landfills by recycling paper products than any other materials. 4.4 million newspapers are thrown away every day in the United States. This is like throwing 500,000 trees into a landfill each week. Each ton of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil and 7000 gallons of water. If each person were to reuse a paper shopping bag for just one trip to the store, we would save 60,000 trees.”

On the topic of aluminum: “It takes about 95 percent less energy to make aluminum from recycled aluminum than to make it from raw materials. Aluminum dumped into our landfills today will remain there for over 200 years.”

On the topic of plastics: “Plastic bags made from recycled polyethylene rather than virgin materials save two-thirds of the energy required for production and reduce the water used by almost 90 percent. It is still difficult to recycle plastic containers and make them into new containers for food and beverages because the separation process for the various different types and colors of plastics is labor intensive and not cost efficient. The best option is to reduce plastic wastes by purchasing items that have less packaging.”

On the topic of glass: “Glass is 100 percent recyclable and can go from the recycling bin to a store shelf in as little as 30 days. Approximately 80 percent of recycled glass containers are made into new glass bottles and glass can be reused an infinite number of times. Recycling one ton of glass saves the equivalent of nine gallons of fuel oil and one-sixth of a ton of carbon dioxide. Making a glass container from a recycled container creates about 20 percent less air pollution, 50 percent less water pollution and uses only about half the energy of making it from virgin materials.”

The slogan “reduce, reuse, recycle” is a good one, and in the proper order. We can all use the power of the marketplace to pressure companies to offer less wasteful products and operate in a more sustainable manner. We can do more with our own choices than many think.

MAD WORLD

Why is our society so obsessed with celebrities?

Marriages are causes for contrived joy, divorces and inappropriate speculation. Death brings about an odd mixture of artificial remorse and barely-contained excitement. When everyday things happen to famous people, there are those who want to know all there is to know about it, whether it’s who’s broken up with whom or which tragic pop star has hit a new low.

The celebrity obsession of the culture we live in is a strange one indeed. Our obsession with famous people desensitizes a portion of society when it comes to basic human emotions like empathy, causing some to view very real painful human experiences - from death to divorce to addiction to a bad haircut - as occurrences in a soap opera conducted for our own selfish entertainment, just because it's happening to a celebrity.

Celebrity obsession just seems like a national waste of time. Everyone loves entertainment, but I have a hard time writing off the shared obsession with celebrities that this nation nurses as a completely harmless phenomenon. Maybe it’s the lack of self-examination and self-awareness inherent in this culture. After all, how is it that someone can report on the ups and downs of Jessica Simpson’s weight with complete and utter seriousness? If the celebrity obsession was used as a lens to examine ourselves and the world we live in, perhaps anyone could believe that the obsession has a purpose, but those who report on the comings and goings of Lindsay Lohan seem never to pause and wonder how and why, in our society, they can make their living (a better living than most) by holding a metaphorical magnifying glass to the life of a stranger.

Tabloid headlines never ask any harder questions than “Do you know whose un-photoshopped cellulite this is?” Perhaps that’s part of the appeal for some. Indulging in the pointlessness and shallow world of a celebrity-obsessed culture where famous people are American royalty can be an honest effort to escape the more demanding realities of life, where divorce, death and addiction have real-life repercussions and are not just blog fodder for the entertainment world. Perhaps there are times when it’s just nice to stop and laugh when someone else’s train-wreck of a life instead of getting caught up in our own.

But with the creation of reality television shows showing pseudo-celebrities at an all-time high, has the casual indulgence in the inconsequential morphed into a monster that drives tabloids to pay in the millions for snapshots of celebrity babies and makes it possible for people like the Kardashians to have as much money as a third world country? Is it not even the existence of those so-called “news” shows full of completely irrelevant information about the lives of celebrities – it’s the fact that many of those shows seem unaware of their own pointlessness. Reporters have been known to detail the divorce proceedings of a 1990s adult contemporary singer in somber tones that would perhaps be better suited to topics that actually affect the public at large. While it is baffling how anyone can report on such things with an earnest belief that one is doing very important, totally legitimate work, Ryan Seacrest has certainly made a career out of it.

What values are we teaching the youth of our society by focusing on such ridiculousness without ever indulging in deeper thought on the matter? While it’s true that strangers will judge you for the way you look and what they think of your life, why leave such behavior unchallenged? When the way things are is questioned, it implies that the way things are is not only normal, but acceptable.

Ideally, more people should have more conversations with kids about why people care enough about Angelina Jolie’s eating habits to put them on the cover of a magazine. No one is calling for mass burnings of “People” magazine, but a little widespread self-examination never hurt anyone. Really, a society where the cast of “Jersey Shore” can become so financially successful is one that could do with engaging in a bit of reflection.

Sharon Pruitt is the Opinions Editor and a columnist for The Current.
Comics

Simply Beagle by Karlee Sellars

Where the heck have you even BEEN?

It's been weeks since I left. Did you only just notice that I was gone?

Pidgiots by Stefano Ragonesi

Greek life at UMSL is a great bond amongst the fraternities and sororities and greek week is just another week of that bond growing into a bigger family to represent UMSL students and athletes.

We would like to congratulate Pi Kappa Alpha for winning this year's Greek Week by a long shot. Everyone else made it a great competition.

Except for SIG TAU... you guys pretty much sucked the entire time during greek week. Maybe next time show up to the events and you might win something.

The Current is now accepting applications for Editor-in-Chief
All are welcome to apply - stop by 388 MSC.