The stirring music is familiar from countless films, but Nashville Ballet's "Carmina Burana" blended dance, choir and symphony into the perfect intoxicating cocktail at the Anheuser-Busch Performance Hall this weekend.

The program opened with a dance piece by Johann Sebastian Bach. Cantata Number 10 was danced by members of MADDCO, the university's artist-in-residence dance troupe, with choreography by Dance St. Louis' artistic and executive director, Michael Uthoff, and accompanied by music from the University Symphony and Singers.

Music and dance were perfectly paired. Soloists were Markou, Heyl, tenor Anthony Heinemann and mezzo soprano Erin Haupt. The dancers mirrored the singing, dancing in unison with the choral portions, with solo dancers taking center stage when soloists sang and a pas de deux with a duet. The piece offered the perfect appetizer to the main course to come.

After intermission, the curtain rose on the main course, the visual and aural feast of "Carmina Burana."

Composer Carl Orff wrote "Carmina Burana" in 1937 as a musical setting for a series of eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth century poems discovered in Bavaria in 1803. The poems, written by clerics and students, explore the cycle of life and questions of fate, loss, hypocrisy, love and finding balance in life. Dance St. Louis provided translations of the poems for interested audience members.

"Carmina Burana" is a long work, with 29 pieces, but the addition of dance transformed it into an extravaganza so entrancing one was simply swept along for the ride. Because the music is rhythmic and energetic, it makes a great choice for dance. Paul Vasterling, artistic director and CEO of Nashville Ballet, choreographed the piece, and the visual dynamic of the dance enhanced enjoyment of the music. The Nashville Ballet dancers, the University Orchestra and the assembled singers were all splendid.

The part of the work familiar to most is Fortuna, or Lady Fortune. Fortuna was danced by Sadie Bo Johnson, who was a principle dancer throughout. A wheel of life spins around her, determining the fate of human beings.

"Carmina Burana" is divided into five portions. "Spring," "In The Tavern" and "The Court of Love" are bracketed by the "Fortuna" dances that serve as prologue and epilogue.

The prologue was riveting. The most impressive bit of staging was the huge spinning skirt that encircled Fortuna, symbolizing the wheel of fortune. Dancers dressed in light-colored medieval cowls and hoods surrounded it, paying homage to fate by dancing in unison, commanded by a stern Fortuna at the center, while the powerful music washed over the audience.

The stage was bracketed by tiers draped in black, upon which stood the robed singers. Dancers entered and exited the stage from either side but also from under the elevated center tiers, through black curtains underneath them. Costumes and lighting effects enhanced the storytelling of the dance.

"Spring" represents the dawn of youth with a celebration of nature, a dance around the Maypole and infatuation. Krisy Johnson danced the part of Flora, representing the natural world, first with the company of cowled medieval dancers and then in a pas de deux with Brendan LaPier as The Sun. The more broody medieval times were reflected in some of the dancers, with a joyful and comic touch. The Medieval Solfos, danced by Kevin Terry, was a standout.

"In The Tavern," the program notes put it, is "not a good place," symbolizing a descent into debauchery, despair and the appearance of evil and hypocrisy in the form of an abbott. The segment portrayed lust, drinking, gambling and other indulgences of excess through dances titled "Burning Inside," "The Roasting Swan," "The Bad Abbott" and "Drinking Song."

The most striking part of this — and another visual highlight — was "The Roasting Swan." The Swan was danced by Alexandra Meister, wrapped in an enormous cloth decorated with flames and withstanding as a woman consumed by the hellish life of the tavern.

Balance is restored in the Court of Love when Cupid, danced by Kayla Rowett, brings love and humanity to triumph over more hedonism. Joy returns, but so does Lady Fortune, who reminds us all that fate is changeable. A final pas de deux was danced by Harris as Lady Fortune and Josh Upton.

The second Fortuna reprised some elements of the prologue, but now text from the poems were projected on the walls and the huge white Wheel of Life skirt swirling around Harris. The dancers were now dressed in costumes that evoked the parchment pages of the ancient poems.

The evening concluded with a rotating standing ovation.
Suffering Sobriety: Alcoholism and Masculinity in Japan

In this talk, 5-6:30 p.m. in 331 Social Sciences & Business Building. Dr. Paul Christensen argues that the admission of alcoholism in Japan challenges masculine gender norms of drinking and homoeroticism, placing men who identify as alcoholics in a struggle between medicalized conceptions of sobriety/recovery and societal expectations.

For information, contact Bob El at 314-516-7299.

Experience St. Louis: Roller Skating and Pizza

Join the University Program Board for roller skating and pizza. Departs Peninsula House at 6 p.m. to arrive at SkatePort plaza by 6:30 p.m. From there we will have two hours to roller skate on a private rink, while listening to a DJ kicking out some tunes, and eating some free pizzas, compliments of UBP. $5 deposit required at sign up. For information, contact Scott Morosney or other UBP member at 314-516-5531.

Kanjum & Cornhole Tournaments

Play Kanjum & Cornhole, 7-9 p.m. at the Mark Twain Theater. Play one or both games. If you don’t know how to play, staff will teach you. No advance registration necessary. For information, contact Campus Recreation Office, 303MT at 314-516-5326.

Paco Peña: Flamenco Vivo!

Paco Peña embodies both authenticity and innovation in flamenco. As guitarist, composer, dramatist, producer and artistic mentor he has transformed perceptions of this archetypal Spanish art form. Performance is 7:30 p.m. in Touhill PAC, Anheuser-Busch Performance Hall. For information, contact Touhill Ticket Office at 314-516-4949.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Arianna String Quartet: Razumovsky concert

The Arianna will perform a long-awaited, extended evening of music rarely, if ever, performed live on one program, 8 p.m. in Touhill PAC Lee Theater. Beethoven’s three Op.59 “Razumovsky Quartets” are known as three of the most monumental and pivotal works ever composed. In two performances, made possible with support from the Program Board, the master composer at the height of his compositional prowess.

For information: Touhill box office 314-516-4949.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Tema Choir concert, presented by International Studies and Programs

Africa’s vibrant choral music tradition takes center stage, 8 p.m. in Touhill PAC Lee Theater, with one of Ghana’s most dominant youth choral programs, the energetic and absolutely adorable Tema Choir of Ghana.

For information: Touhill box office 314-516-4949.

MONDAY, MARCH 4

Monday Noon Series: ‘Poetry of Social Protest’

Members of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures, in the UMSL Department of Anthropology, Sociology & Programs, share international perspectives on the poetics of social protest in Chinese, French, German, ancient and modern Greek, Japanese, Latin, Portuguese, and Spanish, along with translations in English, 12:15-1:15 p.m. in 402 J.C. Penney Conference Center. This annual event is in recognition of National Foreign Language Week. For information: Karen Lucas at 314-516-5698.
Town Hall meetings set priorities for UMSL

MADDIE HARNEH STAFF WRITER

The third and final gathering in a series of three town hall meetings was held on Feb. 14 in Century Room A of the Millennium Student Center. The event, which lasted from 2 to 4 p.m., was one segment of a three-part sequence. The three town halls were held to unite University of Missouri-St. Louis faculty and staff who share the internal goal of setting priorities for the campus.

"Town hall meetings like this one are important to get feedback from UMSL faculty, staff and students who aren't members of the various strategic planning committees so we have more information about what the whole campus community thinks is important," Gen. Corp., provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, said. "This will help set priorities for the plan for the next five years.

Like the previous two town hall meetings, at the Feb. 14 gathering, Tom George, UMSL chancellor, and Cape met with faculty, staff and students to discuss the priorities and goals in the university's strategic plan. Also present was UMSL's Faculty Senate, headed up by Christopher Spilling, professor of chemistry and department chair, who serves as the chair of the Senate.

"I was the moderator; I was supposed to motivate the audience to participate and keep the conversation moving and on topic," Spilling said. "The topics discussed are important for the future of our campus. The faculty members who spoke shared their perspective to what the campus says about these important matters."

The strategic planning process outlined at the town hall meeting was created with the intention of guiding the campus in making determinations about the future of UMSL. The subjects of the first town hall meeting, held on Jan. 28, were the academic array and innovative teaching. The general theme of the second town hall meeting, held on Feb. 5, were the university's growth plan and community partnerships for retention. The main topics up for discussion at the final meeting, held on Feb. 14, were the UMSL experience and reduced costs to students.

"We introduced questions surrounding strategic planning to determine what our campus constituents are thinking about these important issues," Spilling said. "There are ongoing issues that we must decide about as a campus, and the solutions will drive campus decision-making for years to come.

With the 2012 Fall semester bringing in more new undergraduate students since 1995, as well as cuts to funding for higher education, the town hall meetings aimed to deal with UMSL's growth plan and the challenges it presents for students, the campus community and faculty alike. Additionally, the town hall meetings dealt with strategies to promote retention of students, a prominent issue for almost all sources of higher education, as well as issues facing the university such as maintaining a competitive edge, staff compensation and what the campus says about these important matters.

University faculty and Senate met Feb. 19

MARCUS BARNETT STAFF WRITER

The University Faculty/Senate Meeting was held at 5 p.m. on Feb. 19. These meetings, which are intended to be reflective of the long-standing commitment to shared governance at University of Missouri-St. Louis, have been held since the 2000-2001 school year.

University Faculty/Senate Meetings are run by the members of the new Board of Trustees. The members of the University Assembly and the Senate advance the mission of UMSL by contributing their time, talents, insights and experiences to the governance of the campus. On behalf of an intellectually and culturally diverse campus community, the Senate has primary responsibility for making educational policy decisions to create a rigorous, innovative, student-oriented environment for learning, research and community service. The Senate and Assembly, together and through their committees, advise the chancellor and other senior administrators on matters related to students, faculty and staff. Through these efforts, the Senate and Assembly strive to make UMSL a premier public urban research university. Although meetings are open to the public, faculty and members of the Senate are generally the only attendees of the monthly meetings.

Chancellor Tom George began the meeting by speaking on possible salary increases for faculty and staff (the precise amount is still to be determined). George also spoke about UMSL's attempts to bring in more funding and grants.

Robert Peterson, member of the Staff Council since the 2009-2010 school year, briefly spoke about the upcoming Staff Association Meeting, during which will be the selection of new staff in early May. No further details were given.

Steven Breckenroth, representing the Student Government Association, presented new information about the new Recreation Center, along with a rough idea regarding how it will look. Thanks to Cannon Design, those present were able to see a rendering of the new Recreation Center, along with a rough idea regarding how it will look. Design, affordable and green, was the catchphrase of the presentation. The new Recreation Center will be the closest to the Millennium Student Center in the area. The new Recreation Center will be the closest to the Millennium Student Center in the area.

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"I think that we have a lot of people that are interested in seeing this happen," Peterson said. "We have a lot of people that are excited about this happen.

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"The new Recreation Center will be the closest to the Millennium Student Center in the area."

Jubilee Flashback

ALBERT NOLL STAFF WRITER

On Jan. 13, 1988, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case of Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier that public school curriculum materials need not be screened by students whose views have not been declared forums for student speech. This resulted in a backlash against curriculum materials that were considered to be as independent student communication vehicles.

The court delivered a five-to-three ruling that was in the majority decision. The decision was made by the majority Justices, John Paul Stevens, Sandra Day O'Connor and Antonin Scalia with Byron White reading the majority opinion. The majority board their ruling in favor of the administration of the Hazelwood School District on the following criteria.

First, copies of the paper were distributed to student and community members during the school year. Second, the costs of producing the paper, as well as the cost of supplying, were covered by the taxpayers, who earmarked the costs of producing the kids' this. Third, the board pointed out that student and District's Board of Education covered the expenditures of $4,668 for printing Hazelwood High School's Spectrum, which included their paper's content, as well as those related to students, faculty and staff.

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There were two fours already on the table. With a seven and a face card, the player wrestled between staying and folding. "I knew the winning hand was Hold 'Em. Those that fared well had a pile of money to bid on a variety of attractive prizes at the end of the night. While not a pre-determined goal of the event, one notable feature was Casino Night's consistency with the collegial teach- ers. The dynamic of the Honors College. Dan Gerth, assistant dean of the Honors College and advisor for PLHCSA, Dr. Birgit Noll, Dean of Black and others joined in the fun, serving as dealers for the game tables. Their mimesis was a success. The laughter and suavities that ensued once the games began were quite amusing. "Isn't the dealer supposed to win?" Blais said after losing $460 to an opponent bidding on his blackjack table. At one table, the bid went up to about $20,000, and Noll finally had to put a cap on the bidding after being cleaned out early on in the night. It was all play money, of course, but the winnings were quite real. Those with pro-status skills — or great luck — had over $60,000 in winnings to fight over the prizes in the auction. According to Gerth, the organization serves "two broad functions. One is to promote campus life with social activities, and the other is to act as a sort of 'dean's council' to Bob and the Honors College. Obviously, there is a component of the atmosphere. It was not Saint Louis area (again, Lydia's House this year) as well. They also just do nice things for Honors, too — like the free hot chocolate on the first day of winter classes and the free cocoa on the first day of summer classes," Gerth said. Other celebrated events include Trivia Night and the Halloween Faire. Gerth explained that in the past two years, PLHCSA has incorporated additional service components into their activities. Last year's Casino Night benefited St. Patrick's Center. Organizers soldaffle tickets for an Unplugged bookstore gift card and collected personal hygiene items for Lydia's House this year. Lydia's House offers transition­al housing as well as support services for abused women and children. PLHCSA coordinates a number of can and item drives throughout the year for various local organizations and causes. The 2013 Casino Night was a great success. The games drew Honors students, donors, staff, and others who were just itching to gamble for free or who came for the free food.

"It turned out very well. We planned for eight tables of games with an overall attendance expectation of around 80 people or so, and we ended up almost exactly like that," Gerth said.

Bellerive, the Pierre Laclede Honors College's literary publication, celebrated the release of its thirteenth volume, titled "Penem­bra," with a small reception at the launch, Tony D'Souza, adjunct instructor at the Honors College. It was the first day that copies of "Penembra" went on sale, and many members of the editorial staff, as well as quite a few other guests, showed up to honor those who labored to put this work together as well as the gifted authors and artists whose pieces were published in it.

Many of the authors considered it quite an honor to have their work selected to be included in the publication. It was notably mentioned that only about 20 percent of submission are selected for final publication, so this is definitely not a small honor. When asked to describe the experience of having something published, poet and University of Missouri-St. Louis gender studies department teaching assistant Jason Vasser said, "[You] write all the time and submit for publication, but you don't expect to get published... It feels good to see your work out." Vasser, who has been writing poetry since middle school, had never before submitted to Bellerive but has poems previously published in other publications. While he says he might try "[his] hand at fiction," he showed extreme pride in a particular poem that was included in "Penembra." "Sons of Singletons." A member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, he said, "I'm proud because I wrote for my fraternity. I think a lot of people will get to know Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and what they mean to this country's history.

People came together out of pride for this accomplishment. Bob Bliss, dean of the Honors College, gave a brief speech telling how Nancy Glazun, associate dean of the Honors College, brought Bellerive to the Honors College and how in its thirteenth year it is no longer a "busy bender," as it had come to be known, but a "vigorouis adolescent." D'Souza, a freelance journalist and novelist, graced this vigorous adolescent and all who had come to celebrate it with a brief but motivational speech about writing as a career. [When I started out at 18], I thought I had something to say, whether I did or not, and I thought I was saying it very, very well." He spoke about his first course for undergraduates, and although he did not win first prize, he got something better when he saw five stars in the corner and a note from a judge saying, "You could be a real writer if you wanted to." While this might indicate extreme talent on his part, D'Souza also lamented on the truth about pursuing a writing career. If "I wanted to have a career as a writer, then I needed to treat writing as a career... Discipline was working on those days I didn't want to work; writing on those days I didn't want to write," D'Souza said. Ten years later, he had three published novels, two short stories in the New Yorker, and a slew of freelance articles to his credit.

The reception for "Penembra" was by no means grandiose, but it had the same atmosphere of awe and aonosphere as the Catholic Newman Center. Everyone who had made it past the threshold of tiling to create and get exposure, along with those who were interested in both, had a pride of carriage that could not be hidden. Two great speakers gave jaw-dropping speeches that really could have inspired anyone with dreams in any area of life, not just writing.

The attendees seemed to have fun. Short story authors, poets, photographers and sketch artists alike came together to share their moment of glory with each other. Bellerive's staff has announced that they are now taking submissions for next year's volume.
Indie pop maestro Kishi Bashi headlines a sold-out performance at the Firebird last Saturday, transluscating the lush orchestrations of his debut, "15/1," into a phenomenal display of technique and showmanship.

Though his compositions, brought to life on album with an army of patrons, are seemingly too intricate for a live performance, Bashi, otherwise known as K, used an impressive array of looped recordings to recreate the album’s orchestral swirls.

In a clever gimmick, a technique frequently employed by Andrew Bird and other similarly ambiguous indie pop composers to better translate their studio sound to a live setting.

K was not the only performer at the Firebird with a knack for the looping, either. Ross Christopherson, a local St. Louis artist who was the technique for his set. A sort of interim folk revue.

Plume Giant, a Brooklyn-based indie pop, their music markerung into a phenomenal display of character magic.

"Philosophizing for a Japanese cell phone commercial."

As one would expect from the Southern Gothic aesthetic, Murder by Death were an earnest, heartfelt performance, a fitting juxtaposition to the Man Man madness that followed. If there was one gripe to be had, it was the absence of multi-instrumentalist Vincent Edwards, who memorably engineered a fireworks-spewing Theremin during Murder by Death’s last St. Louis performance.

Edwards is recovering from an apparently gruesome injury that required facial reconstructive surgery, which frontman Adam Tufts likened to John Woo’s "Face/Off" (whether or not the injury is Theremin-related is unclear).

The group then closed the performance with the most somber, confessional material of their 2011 release, "The Life Fantastic," a jarring reminder that this impervious goofball is, in the truest sense of the word, just a man (man).

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Honors College ‘Battle of Bands’ set for Apr. 11

ALBERT NALL
Staff Writer

The Pierre Laclede Honors College Student Association will be holding the annual "Battle of the Bands" on April 11 in the Pkdes House at 7 p.m. The event is open to the entire University of Missouri-St. Louis community and guests.

The benefit will raise funds for Lydias House of St. Louis, an organization that offers transitional housing for abused women and their children.

Lydias House provides programs and services that include Personal Advocacy, support groups and community and family activities. Lydias House has a licensed counselor on their staff that assists women during the time of transition. Therapists counsel women one on one and support groups organized by the charity.

"For the past two years, PLHCSA has chosen a charity in the St. Louis area at the beginning of the school year. Again this year, we will be raising money and/or canned goods, as well as other items, to be donated to Lydias House, our chosen charity," Marry Ivey, senior, psychology, PLHCSA treasurer, said.

Ivey said that as part of the UMSL’s 90th Anniversary Jubilee celebrations, PLHCSA will be receiving funding from the Jubilee Committee.

“We are currently in the process of requesting co-sponsorships from both the University Program Board as well as the Student Government Association, and both organizations have given us aid for the past two years," Ivey said.

Jessica Bleile, PLHCSA president, said that those who attend "Battle of the Bands," the items that are the most needed include household goods. Lydias House also welcomes community supplies for the children such as diapers, baby supplies and paper products and decorations for birthday parties.

For a list of items needed by Lydias House, as well as more information on events organized by the charity, visit their website at http://lydiashouse.org. Also, you can check out Lydias House on Facebook and Twitter.

Bio Lunch featured talk by bio historian McKain

HEATHER WELBORN
Staff Writer

How is the ancestry of ancient families revealed? Michael McKain, a post-graduate student and biological historian, has the answer. On Feb. 20, McKain presented his research at the Beilogy Lunch, a public event held each Wednesday in Benton Hall 445 that provides students and faculty with a platform to present their scientific findings.

McKain works with the genes of desert plants, like the tequila-producing agave, to determine relationships between similar species. The more genes two species share, the more related they are, forming a genetic family tree.

Once the tree is known, McKain can map when and where the "diversity events" took place that caused older species to change into newer ones.

These events, called polyploidy, are mistakes in meiosis that cause an unseen division of information when cells divide, forming cells different from either parent. If the cell survives and reproduces, its success over time can result in a novel species. This is common in plants and can occur within or between species. When is a common example, being a hybrid of four different parents species.

During his hour-long presentation, McKain covered a dizzying amount of highly technical data with ease and enthusiasm. Because of the size and quantity of information he works with, maintaining the correct context can present a challenge.

"It’s like reconstructing a photo using pixels," he said, carefully considering each experimental detail: how he generates data, what he uses to analyze it and how his experiment relates to his original question, which isn’t always straightforward. "If you’re doing a good job, you get an answer along with 10 more questions," McKain said, adding that the experimental process is less about the answers and more about defining how to ask the right questions.

As a life historian, McKain enjoys putting a modern spin on established research, using new technology to answer old questions. Yet while contemporary invention drives biological thought to a previously impossible place, it risks marginalizing the achievements of the past as outdated and irrelevant, limiting understanding. "As an undergraduate, I was a child of the Internet age. If it wasn’t on Google, it didn’t exist," McKain said. He resolved this through discussions with older faculty members familiar with primary literature, an experience he says enriched his educational philosophy. "If I don’t think of the past," McKain said, "I’m doing myself an injustice."

McKain’s research holds potential for vital agricultural applications, from breeding to biotechnology and increased food security. He views scientific inquiry as a continuous cycle of collaboration and is excited to see how the raw data he harvested will feed future efforts to elaborate on new technology. "Knowledge is fluid, not fact," he said, claiming that expertise arises only from using the ideas of others.

McKain recommends that undergraduates remain passionate in their research and choose pursuits that satisfy their interests. He urges students to become part of a larger community and try out research. "Being able to add to the human history knowledge base is awe-inspiring. When you climb up the mountain of knowledge, you make a path for others. I want it to be more of a ski-lift," he said.
A Student Abroad
Tokyo: a popular destination

RACHELLE BRANDEL
STAFF WRITER

Tokyo is Japan's largest city and rivals many cities throughout the world; 13 million people—around 10 percent of Japan's population—are crammed within its cityscape. Since the city is a popular foreign tourist destination, it's not at all uncommon to see lost foreigners. When I first set eyes on Tokyo, I was a little disappointed. I'd heard Tokyo described as a metropolis with concrete stretching farther than the eye could see, and I'd always imagined a city much like Batman's Gotham. Instead, the city was a little more subdued (so many in purple suits and green hair) and still held the charm of Japan.

After I picked my friend Kristina up from Narita airport, we dropped our bags off at our hotel in Asakusa, a section of the city known for its old world charm. Down the road from our hotel was the Kaminari Gate, which is known for the enormous paper lantern that hangs above its entrance. The lantern spans the width of almost two people, and visitors can stand under the lantern without touching the bottom of it.

We then went to Akihabara, which was only two train stops away. Akihabara is a section of the city known for its electronic stores and arcade/anime/video-game buildings. The streets are bathed in fluorescent lights and signs for every type of game and amusement hang from every building. On every street corner are cure Japanese girls dressed in maid outfits and other flamy outfits promoting hostess clubs or maid cafes. This section of Tokyo is best seen toward nightfall when the signs are lit.

The next day we hit Shinjuku, which was on the other side of the city. We had to navigate our way through Tokyo's train and subway system. Tokyo stations can be confusing and during most hours look a lot like St. Louis after a Cardinals game, but in the end we found our way.

Tokyo was recently named a fashion capital in the last few years, and many sections of the city are known for their fashions. Shinjuku is filled with tons of malls within buildings filled with stores that can range from reasonably priced to super brands such as Louis Vuitton and Prada. A station away is Shibuya and Harajuku, both known for their pop culture and trendiness. Shibuya is home to the famous dog Hachi who, as the story goes, would walk to the station with his master every day, until one day his master was killed and never came home. Hachi then continued to wait and return to Shibuya station, showing a dog's fierce loyalty to his master.

A cause-saint next to Shibuya station in his honor. Shibuya is also known for its intersection, which is constantly used in films. The four-way intersection stops traffic in every direction, allowing people to cross the street from any direction.

In Hanajuku, some of the latest and most outrageous teen fashions can be found. On Sunday, teens are known to come to Shibuya and Harajuku to shop and hang out in outfits they normally can't wear to school or in regular life because of uniforms and societal pressures.

After our long day, Kristina and I hit our hotel's onsen, which boasted both an indoor and outdoor bath. The view from the outdoor onsen included the Tokyo Skytree less than a mile away. The Tokyo Skytree is a large tower from which visitors can see a bird's eye view of the entire city. The warm waters, cold air and beautiful views of the city made the onsen incredibly enjoyable.

After our weekend of taking over Tokyo, Kristina had to return to work in Korea, and I had to head back to Osaka. On the bus ride back home, we ended up driving around Fuji. It was luckily a day of clear skies, so the view was spectacular. Fuji was much larger than I could have imagined.

Missouri's 30-day waiting period between filing for divorce and a judge finalizing a dissolution of marriage is arbitrary, stupid and possibly harmful to the divorcing couple. A bad marriage is long enough without an extra state-law-enforced 30 days tucked onto the end of it. Let the people out, already!

The argument in favor of the waiting period could be that if a couple has been married for years, what is the harm of 30 more days? The harm could actually be significant. In many cases, the divorcing couple are certainly very disappointed, probably emotionally traumatized and just looking to move on with their lives. Having already spent an extensive number of hours with lawyers composing a divorce agreement that each half of the couple could live with in addition to days or months or even years of mental anguish and horrible guilt over whether one or one to divorce, 30 more days of being trapped in a stage of life they have tried very hard to avoid could be crazy-making.

Then there are those that believe Missouri's 30 days might be all the divorcing couple needs to reconcile and that those 30 days ultimately save marriages. But that is not the case at all, and anyone who believes that it is has clearly never been in or broken off a serious relationship. Real relationships and healthy marriages do not swing back and forth tenuously between super-duper and horrifyingly divorce-inspiringly terrible. Mature couples who choose divorce will stick to their decision, 30 days or no 30 days. Immature couples who might change their minds and decide to get back together because they are allotted 30 days are almost surely too silly ever to be happy together and have no business being married anyway.

Finally, the 30 days is harmful because it is essentially judgmental. It is Missouri's way of saying, "Are you sure you want that divorce? Are you really sure?" as if divorce is shameful rather than perfectly normal in our society. The reality is that divorce is normal, and we should get over that and stop acting like each one is some huge travesty. Society compels us to get married "for better or worse," as in you'd "better" get married because there's nothing "worse" than becoming an old maid. And in the case of your culture and us and is surprised when we want out of the situation it urged us into.

Some people just want out of that situation, and the sooner the better.

Waiting period ensures legitimacy of process

The mandatory 30-day wait between filing for a divorce and finalizing the legal documents is essential to the integrity of Missouri's family law proceedings. This delay is instrumental in establishing the legal intentions of both parties while giving each ample time to contest settlement terms. Removal of this requirement rejects the notion that marriage is a formal contract with conditions that must be met, allowing an individual to manipulate the law to an unfair and costly benefit.

"In sickness and in health" was what you said, right? Until death do you part?

In the U.S., roughly half of all marriages end in divorce, suggesting that people are unable to see tying the knot as a serious long-term legal procedure. Like any formal decision, marriage is not something to be entered on an emotional whim. It requires consideration, compromise and determination in the interests of another, train that aren't fully developed in many potential mates until later in adulthood.

Research strongly links marital success (a marriage of at least 20 years) to higher education and age, illustrating the benefits of delaying saying "I do."

Pledging eternity to another under the law hardly puts a person in a position to see a divorce as a serious long-term legal procedure. Like any formal decision, marriage is not something to be entered on an emotional whim. It requires consideration, compromise and determination in the interests of another, train that aren't fully developed in many potential mates until later in adulthood.

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UMSL baseball: UMSL feels it is the team to beat in GLVC

LEON DEVANCE  SPORTS EDITOR

For the University of Missouri-St. Louis men's baseball team, the goal for the 2013 season is simple: be the best team standing.

UMSL, led by head coach Jim Brady, returns 24 of their final 31 games to place third in the Great Lakes Valley Conference. UMSL lost to Northern Kentucky in an elimination game.

"I can't wait to begin the season. I like the pitching on the team. We added to the core, so there will be a push for jobs," Brady said.

Brady insisted that the UMSL lineup will be stacked and balanced to provide no easy outs for the opposition.

"Luke Matecki [senior, business] will lead off and be the table setter of the offense. Either Nolan Craig [senior, finance] or Drew Standefer [senior, nursing] will hit in the number two hole. Charlie Mohr [junior, business administration, a utility player who plays the corner infield positions, second base and designated hitter] is the best hitter on the team," Brady said.

Brady added that the pitching staff is multi-dimensional, which will confuse opponents from both sides of the dish with fastballs, sliders, curves and change-ups.

"Andy Flett [senior, criminal justice, a transfer from Louisville] played summer ball in the Cape Cod League, where the top prospects play in the summer. Nolan Clayton [junior, secondary education] is an outstanding pitching prospect. Jake Sinovich [junior, physical education, from Southern Illinois Community College] is the hardest thrower on the team, and he hits the radar gun in the low 90s. Brendyn Dabrowski [junior, information systems] ... who has added 20 pounds of muscle and throws hard with good changeup, can start or pitch in relief," Brady said.

The additions Brady alluded to are recruits Flett, Phil Landwehr, junior, undecided, a transfer from Jefferson Community College, and Michael Budia, junior, educational, a transfer from Black Hawk Community College in Illinois who batted .395 as a sophomore.

"I've got a very good baseball team. But it is going to take some time to figure out the roles ... This team is comparable to a top 30 team. [If] we put together the lineup and play, we are going to be an awesome team," Brady said.