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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - ST. LOUIS

THECURRENTONLINE.COM

## New grant will fund counseling for patients, families

The program offers free services to those with neuromuscular diseases

BY EUGENE CLARK  
Staff Writer

UM-St. Louis received a grant of \$285,000 to assist people affected with neuromuscular diseases. The grant will go toward counseling of patients and their families.

The counseling program is called "Counseling Services for Individuals Affected with Neuromuscular Diseases." The coordinator of the program, and also a professor in the College of Education, is Rocco Cottone.

Neuromuscular diseases affect the muscles in different ways. ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, and spinal muscular atrophy are motor neuron diseases. With ALS, the patient has trouble speaking and swallowing. They may experience muscle stiffness or twitching as ongoing symptoms.

During the course of the illness, the muscles atrophy so much that the patient needs to be confined to a wheelchair. Some patients experience loss of mobility in most of their body. The average life expectancy is three years, though much depends on the age of onset.

One of the things that make neuromuscular diseases so frightening is that doctors are puzzled by the cause and there is no cure, according to www.jcnmd.com.

There are many reasons why the new counseling program at UM-St. Louis is so necessary.

"Neuromuscular diseases are very underserved. People with neuromuscular diseases are normal people in extraordinary circumstances," Jennifer McAfee, graduate assistant in the College of Education and doctoral student, said.

Generally, when a patient is diagnosed with an illness such as depression, they can receive insurance to cover therapy and medication. The new program at the University understands this hardship and gives neuromuscular sufferers free counseling.

"It is hard for patients with ALS and their families to get insurance," McAfee said.

With the new program, students studying psychology can not only understand the symptoms and treatments of depression, but they can also learn firsthand what happens to people affected with ALS or spinal muscular dystrophy. McAfee states another reason why the counseling program on campus is so important.

"Neuromuscular diseases are topics that are rarely covered in psychological training," McAfee said.

The grant received by the University to help counsel individuals with neuromuscular diseases is alleviating much of the stress that goes along with having one of these diseases.

Thanks to program coordinator Rocco Cottone, many sufferers from ALS can save a lot of money on counseling. The program is also going to help psychology students gain experience in dealing with such devastating diseases.

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# SGA candidates debate, reveal platform issues

BY BECKY ROSNER  
News Editor

Student Government Association candidates for president and vice president participated in a debate on Thursday at 2 p.m. in the SGA chambers of the Millennium Student Center, which was hosted by *The Current*.

Moderator of the debate, Jason Granger, editor-in-chief of *The Current*, started the event out by stating the basic rules of the debate and introducing each of the candidates participating. Ground rules of the event included time limits that Granger supplied for each question and prohibiting the use of foul language.

The candidate for comptroller, Aaron Golchert, junior, business, was not able to attend the debate at the last minute, so the event started out with vice presidential candidates Erin Abraham, junior, sociology, and Melinda McNabb, senior, business management.

Vice president candidates began with their opening statements. Abraham and McNabb both started out by thanking the sponsor and naming some of their leadership



Casey Ulrich/ *The Current*

Student Government Association candidates for president Charles Stadlander, Kenyatta Thacker, and Scott Bopp, attend a pre-election debate on Thursday. Students were able to question the candidates about their plans for the SGA.

experiences from UM-St. Louis. Granger then asked the first question to start off the questioning.

McNabb emphasized her leadership experience as president of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and other organizations on and off campus when

asked why she is qualified for the position.

"I have attended a lot of leadership conferences and worked very hard at acquiring leadership skills and starting new programs," McNabb said.

Abraham also spoke about her

leadership experiences when answering the same question. She is a board member of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri and is involved with S.H.O.T.S. and Mosaics.

see SGA DEBATE, page 3

## Speaker says compromise is essential for peace in Middle East

BY WILL MELTON  
Staff Writer

Students, faculty, staff and members of the community were given an opportunity to attend a talk about the efforts to establish peace in the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. It is an issue that affects the entire world.

Most people in the States only hear about it on the daily news. However, the issue came to UM-St. Louis on Thursday as Julia Chaitin, assistant professor of conflict resolution and peace studies at Nova Southeastern University, delivered a talk entitled "Israel & Palestine: Grassroots Peace Efforts."

Chaitin brings a unique perspective to the topic, as she has been an Israeli citizen since moving there in 1972. Her youngest child just entered service in the Israeli army two weeks ago.

"So when I speak about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it's a topic that I study, but it's also my life," Chaitin said.

Yossi Beilin, Israeli, and Yasser-Abd-Rabbo, Palestinian, "Decided that enough was enough and started work on a peace plan," Chaitin said. That plan became the Geneva Accords.

Their main tenet holds that peace requires compromise. The main ideas of this compromise are that there needs to be a two-state status. In other words, Palestine deserves its own state, as both peoples have a right to statehood.

"Both peoples need peace security and stability," Chaitin said. "Relations are based on cooperation—learning together as good neighbors."

Members of the UM-St. Louis community agree that this is an important topic for the entire world and not just the region directly affected.

"I think that at this time in history the peace process between Palestine and Israel is of crucial importance," Kevin Born, campus minister with the Catholic Newman Center, said. "In a time when violence seems to be used as the remedy to every situation, this compromise approach seems to be held before the public eye as a trail run to see if peace can really work."

Associate professor of history Gerda Ray maintains that we have to take into account the historical context of current events.

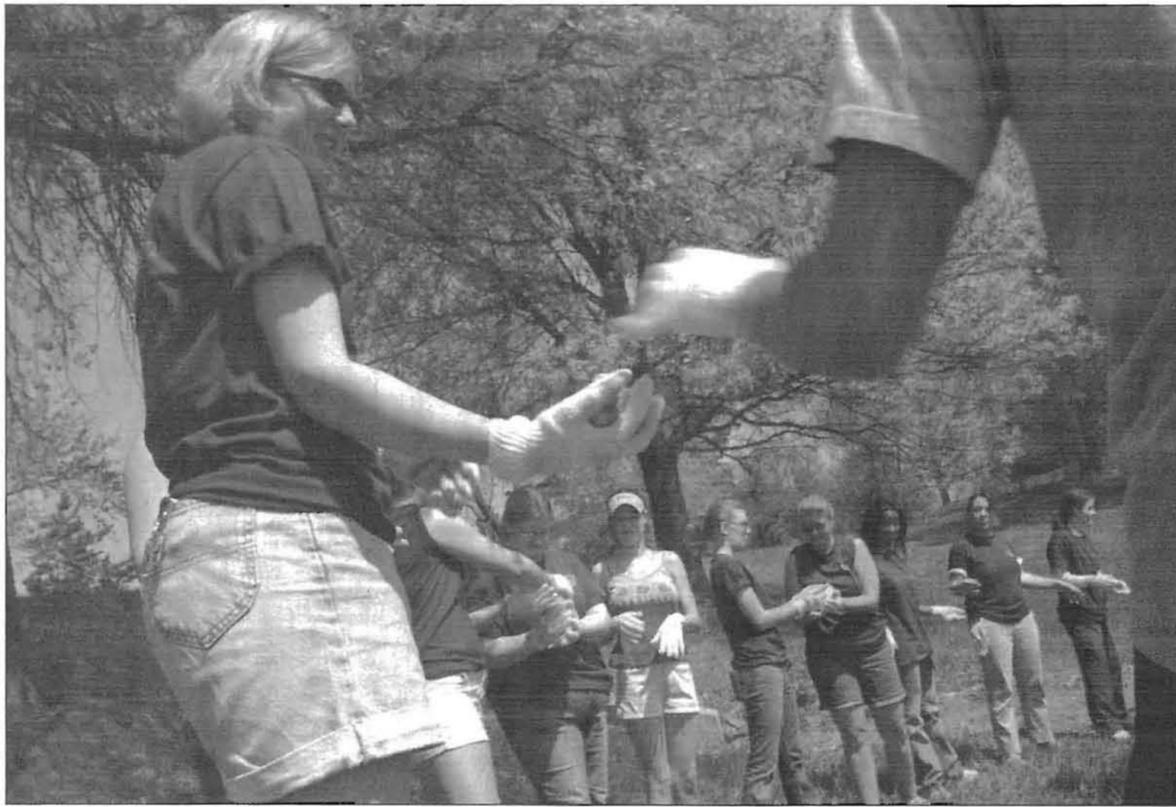
"The U.S. is at war in the Middle East. A central conflict in the Middle East is that between Israel and Palestine," Ray said. "Just recently in Falloujah, four U.S. military contractors were brutally murdered in retaliation for Israel's assassination of a Hamas leader. We need to understand the historical context of current events." With UM-St. Louis students serving in Iraq, and near Falloujah, it is an issue that strikes close to home.

The accords establish borders and call for an end to Israeli occupation of the territories in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Additionally, Jerusalem would be a shared capital.

"[It] basically sets out a plan of action; it deals with all the problems...In Israel it got a very lukewarm exposure in the media. I think that it got much more exposure in the U.S. and in Europe," Chaitin said. "After it got some exposure here it picked up some exposure there. But most people don't tend to see it as something serious."

However, there are currently many grass-roots organizations taking the initiative to help foster peace in the region. One such group is The Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, or PRIME, for which Chaitin works. This joint Palestinian and Israeli venture was established in 1999 and has undertaken three basic projects.

## HELPING HANDS



Mike Sherwin/ *The Current*

Jen Noel, junior, international business, is handed rocks by D'Andre Braddix (not shown) during "The Big Event" on Saturday morning at St. Vincent Park. Volunteers were unloading rocks from a bulldozer and lining them along a drainage ditch.

# "The Big Event" puts students to work

Over 30 volunteers from UM-SL worked Saturday at St. Vincent County Park

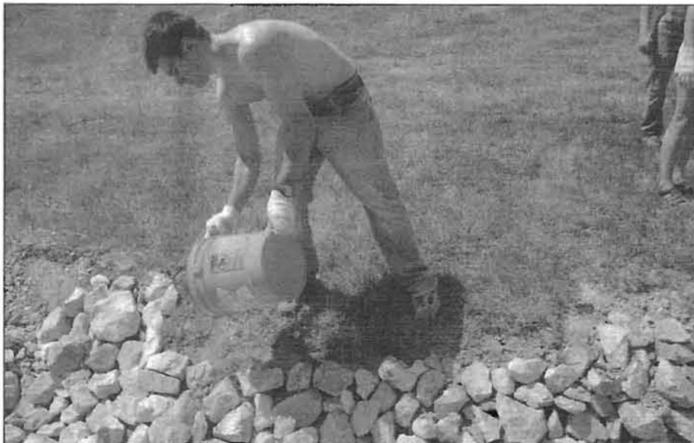
BY COURTNEY HABERER  
Staff Writer

"The Big Event" began at Texas A&M University in 1982. It is a one-day service project fully organized by students. Currently, over 45 colleges, universities and high schools participate every year.

This year, the UM-St. Louis Big Event took place on Saturday in St. Vincent County Park. The event was held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. All UM-St. Louis students, faculty, staff and community members were encouraged to attend.

All who wished to participate met at 10 a.m. for donuts and bagels in The Nosh. The Donut House donated the breakfast for this year's project. The donation was secured by Jessie Conner.

Also donated were a semester parking pass from UM-St. Louis' Department of Transportation and work gloves from Grainger industrial supply group. Committee members Scott Bopp and Mike



Matt Ruengert, junior, biology, lays out rocks along the top of a drainage runoff at St. Vincent Park at 7335 St. Charles Rock Road.

Rogan were successful in gaining these donations. Also in charge of getting donations was Martha DeBuhr.

The project took about one month's worth of planning by committee members Jenny Heinz, Martha DeBuhr, Kerri McKinney, Michelle Pierson, Jessie Conner, Mike Rogan, Jenny Noel, Jennifer Armisen, Kate Stein, Angie Buron, Kevin Born, Scott Bopp and Derek Pitch.

Fellow committee member Rogan, senior,

criminology, has a strong dedication to community service.

"I have always been involved in service," Rogan said. "I am in Alpha Phi Omega co-ed service fraternity and work with the Catholic Newman Center's Habitat for Humanity. It is very rewarding and I want others to be able to come out (to The Big Event)."

see THE BIG EVENT, page 3

see MIDDLE EAST, page 3

# Bullet In Board

**Put it on the Board:**  
 The Current Events Bulletin Board is a service provided free of charge to all student organizations, University departments and divisions. Deadline for submissions to The Current Events Bulletin Board is 5 p.m., every Thursday before publication. Space consideration is given to student organizations and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. We suggest all postings be submitted at least one week prior to the event. Send submissions via mail at 388 MSC, Natural Bridge Rd., St. Louis, MO 63121, fax at 516-6811 or email at [current@jinx.umsl.edu](mailto:current@jinx.umsl.edu)  
 All listings use 516 prefixes unless otherwise indicated.

**For April 29 Youth Violence Prevention Conference**  
 The 3rd Annual Youth Violence Prevention Conference will take place on April 29 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the J.C. Penney Bldg. The registration fee is \$35 and includes breakfast and a luncheon. For more info, call Deborah Doering at 6793 or e-mail [debbied@umsl.edu](mailto:debbied@umsl.edu) or visit <http://www.umsl.edu/~contas/>.

**Mon 19 Cultural portrayals by novelist discussion**  
 Ruth Ellen Kocher, assistant professor of English, will discuss "Why Not White? Economics and Cultures of Color in Dorothy West's Novels" at 12:30 p.m. in 331 SSB. The event is free and open to the public. Call 6495 for more information.

**19 Monday Noon Series: Youth Volunteers**  
 Margaret Sharraden, associate professor of social work, and Carlos Benitez, database and communications instructor at the Global Service Inst. at Wash. U., will discuss "Youth Volunteers in Canada, the United States, and Mexico: Building a North American Community?" at 12:15 p.m. in 229 J.C. Penney Bldg. Bring a lunch. Light refreshments will be served. The lecture is free and open to the public. Call 5699 or visit <http://www.umsl.edu/~cfh> for more info.

**Tues 20 Residential Life Open House**  
 The Office of Residential Life and Housing will hold an open house from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Museum Room at the Pierre Laclède Honors College. Members of the UMSL community will have an opportunity to meet members of the residential life staff and to learn more about campus living. Call 6877 for more information.

**20 Tabla player performs at Villa**  
 Sandip Burman, an accomplished tabla player from Durgapur, India, will perform North Indian classical music at 10 a.m. in 150 Villa Residence Hall. Joining Burman will be percussionist Nick Holmes and vocalist Shima Burman. The concert is free and open to the public. Call 7970 for more information.

**Wed 21 Carondelet Women's Chorus performs here**  
 The Carondelet Women's Chorus will perform at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel in the Villa Residence Hall on South Campus. Tickets are \$15, \$10 for seniors and \$5 for UMSL students. For more information, contact Kedra Tolson at 5851 or e-mail [tolsonk@umsl.edu](mailto:tolsonk@umsl.edu).

**Wed 21 (cont.) Author discusses baseball, global relations**  
 Author Robert Whiting will read from and sign copies of his new book, "The Meaning of Ichiro" at 7:30 p.m. in the Student Government Association Chambers in the MSC. Whiting's book examines the new roles Japanese players are taking in American baseball, and how their presence has narrowed the gap between the United States and Japan. The event is free and open to the public. Reservations are required. Call 5754 for more information.

**21 Mirthday celebration**  
 Games, carnival rides, and a concert by Better Than Ezra at 1 p.m. will be part of the 20th annual Mirthday celebration, which will take place from noon to 6 p.m. on Lot E near the MSC. Food can be purchased throughout the event. The games and rides are free. Local band The 5th Element will perform after Better Than Ezra. Call 5291 for more info.

**Thurs 22 LITMAG's second open-mic night**  
 LITMAG's second Open Mic Night, "The Coffee House," will be held in the Pilot House from 7 to 9:30 p.m. All students, staff and faculty are welcome. Come share your poetry, prose or songs. All are welcome to attend.

**Fri 23 Physics & Astronomy Colloquium**  
 Michael Charles Ogilvie, professor of physics at Wash. U., will discuss "The Quark-Gluon Plasma: A New Phase of Matter" at 3 p.m. in 328 Benton Hall. Coffee will be served at 2:30 p.m. in 516 Benton Hall. The event is free and open to the public. Call 5931 for more information.

**Sat 24 St. Louis World Tai Chi and Qigong Day**  
 Come see Tai Chi and Qigong performances today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Missouri Botanical Garden's Cohen Amphitheatre. For more info, call Sam Lin at 5024.

**Sun 25 UMSL participates in Earth Day festivities**  
 The International Center for Tropical Ecology will mark the 34th anniversary of Earth Day by hosting the St. Louis Earth Day Festival from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at The Muny in Forest Park. The center will display an interactive exhibit describing the ecological consequences of producing tropical crops. Call 5219 or visit <http://www.stlouisearthday.org> for more information about the St. Louis Earth Day Festival.

Put it on the board!  
 Have an upcoming event?  
 List it here and get results!  
 Call ext. 5174 for info!

**Put it on the Board!** Call 516-5174 for details or email [current@jinx.umsl.edu](mailto:current@jinx.umsl.edu)

## The Campus Crimeline

The following criminal incidents were reported to the University of Missouri-St. Louis Police Department between April 3, 2004 and April 17, 2004. If readers have information that could assist the police investigation, they are urged to call 516-5155. Campus police, as a public service to promote awareness, provides this information. Remember-crime prevention is a community effort!

**April 6-Stealing under \$500-Social Sciences Building**  
 A tool belt with tools was stolen from a maintenance room.

**April 6-Stealing under \$500-Unknown exact location**  
 Victim reported that sometime since the first of the year, someone stole her license plate tabs from her vehicle.

**April 7-Harassment-Benton Hall**  
 A teacher was receiving harassing e-mails from a former student.

**April 11-Stealing under \$500-451 Marillac Hall**  
 A wallet and cell phone was reported stolen from an insecure office between 3:00 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. The items with the exception of the cash and cell phone were later recovered in a bathroom.

**April 14-Warrant Arrest-8173 Normandy Trace**  
 A subject was arrested on an outstanding warrant from Moline Acres.

**April 14-Stolen Auto-Parking Garage N, first floor**  
 A vehicle was stolen from the bottom level of Garage N, St. Louis City Police later recovered this vehicle and a subject was arrested.

**April 15-Stolen Auto-Mark Twain Drive**  
 A vehicle was stolen while parked outside of the Mark Twain Building. This vehicle was later recovered abandoned in St. Louis City after being involved in a traffic crash.

**April 15-Stolen Over \$500-Mark**

**TwainDrive**  
 A vehicle was broken into and the stereo was stolen.

**\*\*NOTE\*\***  
 As a reminder, please keep your valuable secured, or in your possession at all times. Most of the thefts that occur on this campus are because the owners failed to properly safeguard their property. Please report all suspicious activity to the Police Department at 516-5155 or 911 if it is an emergency.

# !!WANTED!!

**A FEW GOOD MEN...AND WOMEN TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLL ON THEIR CAMPUS. COME WRITE FOR THE NEWSPAPER! CALL 516-5174 FOR INFO**

### Corrections

In issue 1117 of *The Current*, Tom Weber of KWMU was misidentified as news director. His real position is news producer. *The Current* regrets this typo.

For several issues after the annual parody/satire issue of *The Current* (named *The Stagnant*), the name *The Stagnant* continued to run in the mast head. *The Current* regrets any confusion this may have caused.



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If you have a good news tip, call 314-516-5174 and ask for Becky Rosner, the news editor. Do your part for UMSL!

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# “Coffee with Curt” offers students a chance to voice concerns, comments straight to the Vice Chancellor

BY ANNIINA VUORI  
Staff Writer

UM-St. Louis Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Curt Coonrod started “Coffee with Curt” meetings last semester. The meetings offer students an informal setting to come and talk about any issues they may have regarding the University.

“It is an opportunity to flush out a lot of issues that are in students’ minds and to talk about their concerns,” Coonrod said.

The meetings are once a month, and this semester they have been held in room 366 of the Millennium Student Center. However, Coonrod said that last semester there was one meeting in the University Meadows and that next semester he hopes to be able to work more on South Campus.

“I am willing to have ‘Coffee with Curt’ wherever there is a need, because it’s helpful for me to know what our students are thinking,” Coonrod said.

So far, there have been meetings both in the daytime and in the evening, and Coonrod aims at offering the meetings online as well. This would mean that a time would be announced for students to chat online with the vice chancellor about



Curt Coonrod, vice chancellor of student affairs

their concerns. Some issues that have come up in the “Coffee with Curt” meetings so far are parking, the University’s financial policy and race relations. One student suggested change in the policy.

“People had noticed that the continuing education parking lot is often empty,” Coonrod said. “Now we have a new policy: if there is no continuing education event, it is open parking.”

There has also been a lot of discussion on the financial policy and how students pay their fees.

“This is an ongoing thing,” Coonrod said. “At least the issue has been put on the table.”

Coonrod gives praise to the students who raise their concerns.

“A lot of good things are coming out, and students have a lot of good suggestions,” he said.

Sometimes people are frustrated when they come to the meetings

because of the concerns they have in regards to the campus. Coonrod encourages students to come out with their problems.

“We need to know about the issues students may have and see if there’s something we can do about it,” he said. “I would say that it’s better to express anger and frustration than to keep it in.”

Not all the people who come to the meetings are frustrated with problems.

“Some come just to observe and see what issues are raised and to join in the discussion,” Coonrod said. Given the fact that the end of the semester is approaching and students are busy with finals, Coonrod said that there probably would not be another “Coffee with Curt” event this semester.

Instead, he encouraged students with concerns or suggestions to e-mail him at [curt\\_coonrod@umsl.edu](mailto:curt_coonrod@umsl.edu), come by his office in 301 Woods Hall or even catch him in the MSC.

“Many people recognize me because I like to go to student events,” Coonrod said. Coonrod said he is glad about having “Coffee with Curt,” and that the meetings have been good.

“My goal is to give our students a voice,” he said. “The dialogue is important.”

## MIDDLE EAST, from page 1

Their first study researched environmental non-government organizations. The other two projects both concern history. In one project six Israeli and six Palestinian teachers met on a semi-regular basis and undertook the task of writing a high school history book that includes each side’s narrative.

The last project is an oral history of refugees from the 1948 war.

“This is the war that Israelis call the War of Independence and the Palestinians call the al Nakba, or the

catastrophe,” Chaitin said.

Having fled or been driven from their homes, many of these Palestinians became refugees, which they have remained since 1948. This project interviews those Palestinians who are still refugees in the Bethlehem area. Also, it interviews former Jewish refugees from the Holocaust.

They hope to bring the people together through their shared tales of pain and struggle. So far, they have managed, on one occasion, to bring together two Palestinian families and

two Israeli families, three generations each, for two days of dialogue and interaction.

“It was a wonderful encounter...people told their life stories,” Chaitin said.

He thinks that these issues are happening for a reason.

“Even though many of these initiatives are very small, I think that it’s very important that they are going on,” Chaitin said. “It’s better that small things happen than for nothing to happen.”



Mike Sherwin/The Current

Mike Rogan (left), Jan Meyer, and Kevin Born enjoy a light moment while working on a drainage ditch at St. Vincent Park on Saturday during “The Big Event.” Volunteers worked from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. lining the ditch with rocks.

## THE BIG EVENT, from page 1

This year’s sponsors of “The Big Event” were the Office of Student Life, Student Government Association, Alpha Phi Omega, Golden Key, ALGA, Zeta Tau Alpha, Student Social Work Association, Amnesty International, Catholic Newman Center, Biology Graduate Student Association, Student Nurses Association, Student Court, Pi Kappa Alpha and International Business Club.

The St. Louis County Parks Department does not have the resources to do all of the projects they would like. They compile a list of the projects that need to be done and rely heavily on volunteers to contact them and complete the projects. Rogan contacted the department for this year’s “Big Event.”

The volunteers placed decorative rocks around an eroding creek in St. Vincent County Park. The creek is eroding the surrounding field and the placement of these rocks will help to stop this process.

The committee chair this year is Jenny Heinz, who is the graphic designer for Student Life. She expected around 50 people of all ages. She said that everyone there would be able to help in some way. Some of the rocks are smaller, so that children can



Mike Sherwin/The Current

Mike Wenger, junior, finance, catches rocks thrown by another volunteer on Saturday morning at “The Big Event,” a one-day service project to help St. Vincent Park. Wenger is a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, one of the thirteen organizations sponsoring the event. Over thirty people from UM-St. Louis helped at the event.

carry them and take part in the project.

Heinz, junior, graphic design, said how important community service is to her. “I really think that community service is a good thing for college students to be involved in,” Heinz said. “They can see that they have an

impact without getting paid. I think that people who are more fortunate have almost an obligation to help the less fortunate.”

More information can be found by contacting Jenny Heinz at 516-5263 or by visiting <http://bigevent.tamu.edu>.

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OUR OPINION

# The Current endorses Bopp and Abraham

The Current has chosen to endorse Scott Bopp for Student Government Association president and Erin Abraham for vice president.

We feel that these two candidates are the best qualified for the positions. Bopp has been involved extensively with SGA in the past. He is the chief justice of the Student Court, serves as an officer with the International Business Club and is a member of the Big Event Committee and the debate club.

Bopp served as the SGA president at his former college, St. Louis Community College at Meramec, as well as holding other offices. His experience guarantees a thorough understanding of how SGA works, and what kind of commitment the job requires.

In addition to his campus experience, Bopp has lobbied in Washington, D.C. and Jefferson City for increased educational funding. This experience shows that he is willing to go out of his way for issues concerning students. His background as a sergeant in the United States Army implies strong leadership skills.

At the debate on Thursday, Bopp came well prepared and dressed to impress. He showed up wearing a full business suit, and displayed his professional attitude on all fronts.

One of things that Bopp said in the debate was that he would like to emphasize managing direction and that it is about "evolution, not revolution." This is a good analogy, stating that he wants SGA to evolve, but gradually and into something better, rather than something unrecognizable from what it is today.

Stability in an organization is critical. If too much change is implemented too rapidly, group cohesion, effectiveness and morale may be undermined. The outcome is less certain than with a steady shift to new goals and procedures.

Bopp also emphasized in the debate that he would like to expand office hours, hold town hall meetings regularly, become more active in the community and work with the administration to form infrastructure committees. These are all ways that would encourage greater student involvement.

The development of the Student Court this year can be counted among Bopp's accomplishments. After years of debate, the Student Court is now able to hear student traffic appeals. Bopp has played a significant role in getting this portion of SGA up and running again.

Abraham is also a skilled political

player. She is an elected board member of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, which means she would bring lobbying experience to her post.

Abraham's leadership experience includes serving as president of Mosaics and as vice president of S.H.O.T.S. As she has been involved in various SGA committees, Abraham understands how the organization works. She is always present at the monthly meetings.

One thing that she emphasized in the debate was the establishment of committees. She said that committees would help meetings progress more effectively. If committees were formed to discuss the issues at hand, this would cut down on meeting durations significantly. Currently, issues often span more than one SGA meeting before coming to any resolution.

For example, the Iraq resolution, which included former SGA Chairman David Dodd's name, was discussed for three meetings. A committee could have been formed to discuss the issue and bring the results back to the assembly, an obvious but overlooked option until now. Abraham thinks that this is a major part of what the vice president should do during his or her term.

Another thing that made Abraham stand out was her enthusiasm over a mentoring program that she began. She is working with the Normandy district to get students more involved and excited about school and college. How can we doubt her leadership abilities?

One concern over Abraham's candidacy was her heavy involvement in a variety of activities and organizations. How would she have time to serve as vice president of a large and important organization like SGA? In the debate, Abraham made clear her dedication to the position. She explained that she has notified all of her groups, and if she is chosen to be the next vice president, she will not serve on executive committees next semester.

This decision shows that she is willing to devote her time to one primary organization in which she would hold a significant role. And, in the unfortunate event that we end up short a president, like last year, Abraham would be able to step in and serve without delay.

All in all, we feel that Bopp and Abraham are the best-qualified candidates for the positions. Both are ambitious, proven leaders who understand not only how SGA works, but how it could work better.



ERREED '04

OPINIONS

## Editorial Board

- JASON GRANGER
- NICHOLE LECLAIR
- KATE DROLET
- BECKY ROSNER
- CASEY SHACHER
- GRETCHEN MOORE

ADENA JONES  
"Our opinion" reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board.

## LETTERS

MAIL  
The Current  
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St. Louis, Mo 63121

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E-MAIL  
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Letters to the editor should be brief, and those not exceeding 200 words will be given preference.

We edit letters for clarity and length, not for dialect, correctness, intent or grammar. All letters must be signed and must include a daytime phone number. Students must include their student ID numbers. Faculty and staff must include their title(s) and department(s). Editor-in-chief reserves the right to respond to letters. The Current reserves the right to deny letters.

# Under Current

by Michael Felikan  
Staff Photographer

Who would win in a fight, Jerry Seinfeld or Dave Chapelle?

## What's your opinion?

How do you feel about the topics we've written about?

- Current's SGA endorsement
- Points of contention
- The dream job

You can make *your* voice heard in a variety of ways!

- Submit a letter to the editor
- Write a guest commentary
- Visit the online forums at [TheCurrentOnline.com](http://TheCurrentOnline.com)



Lesley Nowlin  
Senior Business Admin.

I don't know him, but the other guy, Seinfeld looks a little weak.



Maurice Clark  
Senior Optometry

Chapelle.



Melantha Nephew  
Senior Optometry

I don't know...Chapelle. But Seinfeld is bigger.



Karen Scoles  
Senior Accounting

Jerry looks like a marshmallow; he just doesn't look tough.

## Points of contention

Let the games begin. What does this mean? Simply, it means The Current is having to go 'round with the Student Activities Budget Committee once again, and it is getting tiring. The SABC has cut The Current by better than \$20,000, a death blow to the paper.

This is the second straight year the hardworking staffers of The Current have had to fight this battle and, put plainly, it is not fair. It is not fair to The Current to have to continually justify its existence. It is not fair that a well respected, award-winning, hard-hitting newspaper be put under the microscope by people who have absolutely no idea how newspapers work.

So now, several issues have to be addressed. First and foremost, what needs to be addressed are the legal ramifications. It must be noted that The Current's legal counsel, provided admirably by the Student Press Law Center, have agreed that if funding is not restored, then a lawsuit will be one of The Current's best options. What also needs to be understood is that it would not be the SABC that is sued, it would be the University. It is widely known that this University places a premium on public relations, and a court battle would reflect poorly on the University. Just a little something to consider.

Second, the SABC has effectively destroyed any faith, trust and confidence that the members of The

Current had left in the SABC, the Student Government Association and the University as a whole. Why should they trust in the system when the system has let them down two years running? At least for the next four years (freshmen carry hard feelings too, after all), the members of the newspaper are going to regard the members of SABC and SGA with wary eyes.

Finally, why, of all people, would they choose, two years in a row, to go after the media? Journalists are a pretty tight-knit group. A good amount of the professional journalists in this country paid their dues at college newspapers, and are still loyal to student journalists. If the members of The Current decided to break this story to media outlets, say, CNN, MSNBC, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Washington Post, the New York Times, etc, it would get media attention, and more so if this goes to court. This should not be construed as a threat. These are simply facts, facts that more than the SABC need to take into account. These are facts that Vice Chancellor Curt Coonrod, Chancellor Thomas Georger and even System President Elson Floyd should take into account.

The fact remains the same. The University of Missouri will not go down without a fight. The SABC has decided to bring the fight for a second straight year, and The Current will bring one hell of a fight.



JASON GRANGER  
Editor-in-Chief

## The dream job

My dream job, the one I have coveted from the start of my college career, has just come open. I meet all of the qualifications, I am near to graduation and I would be able to move closer to my family. I couldn't think of a worse thing to happen this week.

By this point in your life, you have surely held a few jobs. You know the drill: general application or resume, references, the dreaded interview process. It's not so very trying if you have a bit of information pulled together. However, if you haven't yet finished your degree, you may not have applied for a "professional" position before. The closest comparable thing must be a near-death experience, as most of your life, in intricate detail, will be flashing before your eyes.

My parents, my friends, my boyfriend—none of these have as extensive knowledge of my life as my potential employer. Even I had forgotten most of the details that were requested. Luckily, I have kept fairly detailed records of my educational and employment history, but it was still a messy process. It is certainly not a project you want to undertake at the last minute, or at the end of a semester when final projects and final exams are looming (i.e., this week). I had all of three days to complete my application package before deadline. The position was only posted for a week.

For those of you who haven't compiled much more than a basic resume, this is a call to action and organization. Opportunities can arise at the most awkward times, and if you're not prepared, well, you lose. Whether you are years, or weeks, from graduation, here are some things you should have prepared.

Employment record (paid and volunteer): Make a list of all previous employers, their addresses and contact numbers, dates of hire and separation, your supervisor's name, positions you held and your duties, whether you

worked full or part time and your starting and ending salary. Be prepared to explain lapses in employment and the reason you left each position (do try to keep this general; it's not an invitation to complain).

Additional skills: What software, office equipment, commercial or industrial equipment are you familiar with? Don't forget such details as typing speed and certifications.

References: This is a given, but make sure that your contact information is up to date, both phone numbers and addresses.

Educational background: Especially if you are a transfer student, or have attended multiple schools, have a copy of your transcripts. Know how long it takes to request official transcripts, the costs and the process. It can take ten days or more to receive transcripts from schools out of state, which may be longer than you have. Some employers may accept the unofficial copy for the initial application. Of greatest importance, make sure there aren't any holds on your records, financial or otherwise.

Letters of recommendation: Solicit willing parties in advance so that you know they will be available. If at all possible, arrange to get your letters before you need them. It is easier for your contacts to change dates and specifics later than to write a letter in its entirety at the last minute.

Cover letters: Though each should be tailored to the specific job you are applying for, you can begin composing the basic elements, such as: a brief summary of your background and experience and how they will make you a valuable employee.

Though not all of these details will be required for every job, it is easier to have them on hand. My recent application required everything mentioned here. You may not find too many stellar opportunities right away, but be prepared for the best.



NICHOLE LECLAIR  
Managing Editor

Film and the persistence of vision - part 2

Why do we see a series of still photos as moving pictures?



CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER Science Columnist

Two early names for movies, flickers and moving pictures, reveal more about the biology of visual perception than one might suspect.

A series of sequential still pictures is what we are really seeing when we watch film or TV.

As discussed in the last column, film histories and film scholars have cited "persistence of vision" for years as the phenomenon that allows us to see a series of still pictures as something moving.

Several elements of motion perception are at work when we watch film.

"Visual persistence", the phenomenon of seeing a streak left when you rapidly move an object like a pencil in front of your face, may play some part in seeing films move but it appears that the way the brain interprets input from the eye concerning motion has the larger role.

Last week, we talked about "flicker" and why we don't notice that brief moment of darkness between frames when each still image is replaced at a certain rate (frames per second).

Early film pioneers had already noted the flipbook effect, where fanning the pages of a book with a series of sequential still images creates the illusion of movement.

Real motion is defined as a change in position over time. "Apparent motion" is the name for the phenomenon by which our eye-brain apparatus sometimes sees motion where none really exists.

A part of the process of apparent motion is the "phi phenomenon," the visual phenomenon that allows our brains to see sequential blinking lights, like on a marquee, as moving.

Simpler animals see with their retinas; we humans see mostly with our brains. Physiologists studying vision have noticed that for lower animals, more vision is in the eye and, with growing visual complexity, more is in the brain.

ment, others are incapable of seeing moving objects, others will see both but favor one over the other. A frog, which sees only movement, will starve with a dead fly held motionless in front of its eyes because it can only see movement.

"Apparent motion" is when the brain interprets the series of slightly changed, still images as movement. Our eyes are not like film or video - we do not have frame rates or scan lines - but the eye is always moving around a visual field, in a process called saccadic eye movements.

A sense of time and displacement and relative position play a role in the perception of motion. One of the things that appears to be hardwired is the ability to sense human movement.

Our ability to see motion depends on it appearing continuous. In film, which is actually discontinuous still images, Critical Flicker Fusion (CFF), the rate of flicker at which we perceive no flicker, controls the speed at which the still images must appear for us to ignore the brief darkness and perceive the images as continuous.

There is also a distance change (displacement) threshold for perception of movement. Adults see 3-6 mm of movement per second at 1-meter distance.

see FILM, page 14

The best album that you've never heard

This week: The 10 best rock songs of all time

BY JASON GRANGER Editor-in-Chief

There are hundreds of great songs out there. Thousands even, maybe millions. But there has to be a cream of the crop.

There will be people you expect to be on the list, and maybe some you might not expect, so here goes.

10) Thunder Road- Bruce Springsteen

Bruce Springsteen was anointed the next great one in rock and roll in the 1970s and he did not disappoint those who gave him that title.

9) All Around the World-Oasis

No offense to Pearl Jam and Nirvana, but this is the best song of the 1990s. It is a stadium anthem of epic proportions.

8) Conquistador- Procol Harum

"Who?" Many of you may be asking this question. They are great band. And "Conquistador" is a great song.

7) Imagine- John Lennon

So who does not know this song? That is correct, everyone does. Widely acknowledged to be Lennon's

masterpiece, this song is the pinnacle of his peace and love phase. This is also one of what is called rock's "holy trinity" of songs, along with "Bridge Over Troubled Water" by Simon and Garfunkle and "Let it Be" by The Beatles.

6) Layla- Derek and the Dominoes

Eric Clapton is the finest guitarist alive. "Layla" is the best example of his mastery of that great instrument.

5) Hey Jude- The Beatles

The biggest hit of rock and roll's heyday, the 1960s, "Hey Jude" topped

ers could match his ability to write social commentary. This song is one of the first to lampoon neon lights, a popular target of rockers.

3) Gimme Shelter- The Rolling Stones

The Rolling Stones showed some reluctance at first to comment on the Vietnam War. Once they did, they really jumped head-on.

2) For What it's Worth- Buffalo Springfield

This is the best social commentary song of all time. Stephen Stills saw some stuff going on in the world that distinctly made him nervous, and he wrote about it.

1) A Day in the Life- The Beatles

The Beatles are the best group of all time. John Lennon and Paul McCartney are the best songwriters of all time.

There they are. My list of the ten best rock songs of all time. If you think I am a fool, then send a letter to the editor with your own list.



John Lennon's "Imagine" is one of the most legendary songs in rock and roll history.

Photo courtesy Google.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Best Album' off the mark

Wow! I'm not sure exactly who you were trying to put one over on when you included (Swallows hard in resentment) Noel Gallagher amongst the "creme de la creme" of songwriters.

superior songwriters who could have occupied that list. Pete Townshend, Freddy Mercury, Mick Jagger even.

It's bad drug poetry set to poor knock off Beatles riffs. And while I'm questioning your judgment, Supertramp?!?..... Take the Long Way Home?!? You'd get better imagery from a Cheap Trick song.

-James Dahm Current reader

GUEST COMMENTARY

Former editor proposes funding solution

Somehow, I can't believe I'm writing this-again, that is. But here goes...

After last year's fiasco of the Student Activities Budget Committee's embarrassing attempt to yank funding from The Current and The Current's successful plight to get it back, I mistakingly believed that such issues would not arise again.

Yes, I could and probably should be upset with the people involved with SABC and their lack of knowledge of college media law and their full prowess of unethical and malice of forethought.

Realizing that people can be petty, and noticing how recent history is repeating itself, I think I have discovered the real problem with The Current's funding: The SABC, as a general committee, has proven to be unstable and untrustworthy at its very core.

The solution to this complex problem is surprisingly simple: Do not let SABC control funding The Current receives. The now obvious animosity and history of the group-both this year's and last's, and, according to members of the 2001-2002 SABC, that year too-has proven the group to be biased against The Current (and likely other organizations with members SABC's members do not like).

So, how should The Current receive funding from the University?

Before that can be answered, we must take a look at what the money from student fees does for The Current. Those student fee monies are used by The Current to ensure that every student can have a free copy of The Current. Printing a newspaper is expen-

sive. The costs of printing are just barely covered by the funding that should be disbursed properly by SABC. If not for the student fees allocation each year, The Current would have to charge for subscriptions to stay even barely alive, without paying anyone a salary.

Now, back to that question of how The Current should be allocated fees to give students a free subscription.

I know that no student wants to hear about a new fee increase, but hear me out first. Instead of students paying a general student activities fee, The Current would simply be a line item on students' bills. No fee increase would be required. It is simply a matter of re-allocating funding on paper to ensure that all students can pick up a free copy of The Current.

Many universities already implement this idea. And it works well for them. It keeps everyone happy. Students know exactly how much of their student fees are going to the newspaper. Student groups do not have to deal with newspaper's funding at all. Finally, the newspaper can stay in print and can focus on becoming a better news source for the campus community instead of wasting time being forced to play juvenile game of "If you won't play by my rules that I make up as I go along, I'm taking my ball and going home, and my ball is you bigger than yours anyway; so there" with the group that controls part the publication's money.

Having said that, I would like to return to an earlier implied point. Perhaps SABC should be completely dissolved. The current policy in place for allocating student activities fees allows for biased, immature students to decide where the money goes and, in this case, doesn't. Procedure simply does not allow for valid controls of the members of SABC. In a sense, it really cannot.

The current application process to

"serve" or "disserve" on the committee allows for only the comptroller of the Student Government Association to handpick members. (OK, so they do have to apply first, but filling out a one-page form is not that hard, is it?) Instead of that, why not make SABC member selection a popular vote of the students. (After all, we do that for homecoming queen and king. Isn't the correct distribution of student activities fees more important than who gets to look pretty in a tiara just like they did in high school?) That way, students are much more in control of their money and no one person can select The Current-haters' club full of members who do not understand their own forms (this makes year two they have claimed that) but are at least semi-efficient in implementing, not pulling off, a plan of retaliation and revenge.

Don't believe that happens? Let's look at the facts.

The Current did not endorse the current SGA comptroller, Benny Suen, who selected the SABC members, for either of his current job's campaign or for his candidacy as homecoming king. It's no secret that Kristi Runde, the current SGA president, hated The Current and me last year, likely because she was exposed as the one who let it slip outside of committee that SABC was pulling all funding from The Current and was exposed for discussing SABC business concerning that action with those not in the group. Anyone else see a pattern here? No, all of that does not prove anything; but where there is smoke, there's usually fire.

Last year, The Current decided not to sue the University and SABC and hoped that the past was just that-past. This year's staff may be different. As the saying goes, "once bitten, twice shy."

Whip lashed by déjà vu,

Stanford A. Griffith Editor-in-Chief 2002-2003 The Current

What do the readers think: Results from the weekly web poll: Who are you going to vote for in November? John Kerry 39%(11 votes) George W. Bush 46% (13votes) Ralph Nader 11% (3 votes) No one 4% (1 vote)

The Current is now accepting applications for all positions accept editor-in-chief for next year. Come by 388 MSC for information. The Current is an EOE

# FEATURES

## EDITOR

**KATE DROLET**

Features Editor

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## Campus to celebrate the 20th annual 'Mirthday' on April 21

Rock band *Better Than Ezra* will perform at 1 p.m.

The 20th annual "Mirthday" celebration will take place from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday on Lot E near the Millennium Student Center. Hamburgers, hotdogs, funnel cakes, popcorn and other treats can be purchased throughout the event. The games and carnival rides are free. Better Than Ezra will perform at 1 p.m., followed by a performance by local rock band The 5th Element. Mirthday is sponsored by the Office of Student Life. Call 5291 for more information.

Parking Lot E, adjacent to the Millennium Student Center, will be closed April 20 and 21 for the annual Mirthday celebration. All levels of both garages on East Drive will be open for parking. Call 5155 for more information.



Mike Sherwin/The Current

Jhanah Haynes-Mark deals a round of blackjack during Casino Night, an annual event held by the Pierre LaClede Honors College Student Association. Visitors to Casino Night could try their hand at roulette, blackjack, or craps. With the five-dollar admission fee, gamblers received a few thousand dollars in "cash" to play at the tables. At the end of the night, a live auction was held for a number of items, including an X-Box, a DVD/CD player, and a television set.

## Student gamblers revel in 'Casino Night'; one takes \$80,000 at blackjack table

BY KATE DROLET

Features Editor

On Thursday, April 15, a crowd of bettors filled the Pilot House for a night of risky business. A \$5 admission fee gave students a few thousand dollars in "cash," a t-shirt, a raffle ticket, Mardi Gras beads, sodas, munchies and a chance at winning big.

The Pierre LaClede Honors College Student Association hosted Casino Night. Those feeling lucky could try their hand at blackjack, craps and roulette. Some students formed their own games of Texas Hold 'Em poker. Dealers included students Jhanah Haynes-Mark, Jeff Griesemer, Semilla Bland, Richard Gumbel, Elizabeth Lee, Carrie Bond, Daron Dierkes and Jeannie Patrick and Newman Center priest Father Bill Kempf.

Todd Taylor, admissions counselor for the Honors College, sat at the admissions table for the first part of the evening.

"I love money, so I love working the money table," he said. "This is my last time at Casino Night. There are some great people here, and I feel kind of useful."

Throughout the night, Kim Cowan, vice president of PLHCSA, drew raffle tickets and awarded t-shirts and other prizes to winners. A silent auction also ran from 7:30 p.m. until around 9:30 p.m. Students wrote bids on paper for items including a "Barmaster" drink database, an autographed picture of John Travolta, a book autographed by Florida State University head football coach Bobby Bowden, two passes to Raging Rivers, two tickets to the American



Mike Sherwin/The Current

Monica Durrwachter, senior, political science, raises her arms in triumph at a roulette table manned by Daron Dierkes, junior, history, at Casino Night on Thursday in the Pilot House.

Indian Dance Theatre performance at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center, two passes to the Sheldon, an autographed picture of Greg Norman, a gift certificate for four meals at the Casino Queen, a full-service oil change, an autographed picture of Marshall Faulk and an autographed picture of Mike Davis.

Students could also bid for a \$20 gift certificate to Talayna's, an autographed photo of Grant Wistrom, a \$20 gift certificate to Tony

Marino's, a miniature Rams helmet, a "return of Arcade" video game, an "Impossible Creature" video game, a \$10 gift certificate to Dave and Buster's, a \$20 gift certificate to Ted Drewes, a one-month membership to the New Lady Fitness center, a \$25 gift certificate to Condocci's, a \$20 gift certificate to Norton's Café, a \$20 gift certificate to Wal-Mart and a \$30 gift certificate to Kriegel's.

see CASINO, page 13

see WRITING, page 7

## Should professors check personal politics at the classroom door?

National group targets educators using the classroom as soapbox; others say limiting speech is dangerous, violates academic freedom

BY GARY SOHN

Staff Writer

Students for Academic Freedom is a national organization for students to turn to when they feel as if their academic rights have been violated. This not-for-profit organization is an academic watchdog that looks out for students who feel as though their education is being jeopardized by professors using the classroom as a personal political soapbox.

Maria Caputa, senior, communication, said that she had a professor who expressed biased comments about a certain political party and of one of its members.

"I know specifically of one professor who was very biased [in the classroom]. He didn't have a textbook and he used his own personal notes as a source," Caputa said.

Sara Dogan, National Campus Director of Students for Academic Freedom, said that professors should avoid trying to persuade students politically.

"They [professors] shouldn't make political statements about any political candidates," she said.

Dogan explained that she felt that professors should be allowed to express their opinions, but should make it clear that it is opinion and not fact.

"If students feel that speaking up in

class will lower their grade or mean flunking their class, then this is a violation of their academic freedom rights," she said.

The Students for Academic Freedom website states that the organization is "a national coalition of independent campus groups dedicated to restoring academic freedom and educational values to America's institutions of higher learning."

Some faculty members at UM-St. Louis feel that having limitations on what can be discussed cannot only be dangerous but also a violation of academic freedom.

David Kimball, assistant professor of political science, said that he does not think there should be limitations on what a professor can say in class.

"My view of academic freedom is that instructors are free to discuss what they want and students are free not to listen," he said.

Dogan ran an advertisement for the Students for Academic Freedom in the April 5, 2004 edition of *The Current*. The ad stated, "If you are not taking a course whose subject is the war in Iraq, your professor should not be making statements about the war in class. Or about George Bush, if the class is not on contemporary American presidents, presidential administrations or some similar subject."

Kimball does agree with Dogan that some courses may not be appro-

priate when talking about the war.

"If you're a chemistry professor, then it may not be a good thing to talk about the war in Iraq, if it's not a subject in chemistry," Kimball said. "But I think it is dangerous to tell instructors what they can and cannot say in class, as well as it is dangerous to tell students what they can and cannot say in class."

James Chickos, professor of chemistry, said that chemistry does sometimes involve discussing politics.

Chickos said that part of chemistry is generating waste and then knowing what to do with it, which can be a political issue.

"Environmental issues that can be considered political are often discussed in the class," he said. "For example, the Clean Air and Water Act is a political issue that relates to chemistry."

As far as talking about the war in Iraq, Chickos said, "Had chemical weapons been found, then there could be some relevance in talking about that in the classroom."

"I agree [that professors] should not be advocating a position about war or George W. Bush or John Kerry. A statement doesn't necessarily take a position. Statements should be objective and germane to the subject," said Michael Beatty, Department of Communication chair.

see ACADEMIC FREEDOM, page 13

## Workshops help writers to achieve their dreams

BY MELISSA MCCRARY

Features Associate

The Continuing Education and Outreach at UM-St. Louis provides for people interested in writing the opportunity to attend noncredit programs and workshops that could enhance their skills.

Continuing Education and Outreach department assistant Deborah Doering described when these sessions first began.

"The noncredit courses started last fall with the focus on fiction writing," said Doering. "The workshops offered in the fall lasted until December, and the eight-week sessions picked up in January with the emphasis on nonfiction writing."

Many people might have noticed these workshops titled "The Write Stuff" advertised on the online campus calendar, but may not have known exactly of what they consist.

The department offers two eight-week classes each semester, single workshops, and a series of sessions open to anyone who loves to write or who is interested in learning certain techniques of getting books published.

"These classes are open to the public, not just students. We send out information through mailing lists and post the information on the web," Doering said.

All classes and workshops are taught by recognized St. Louis writers and published authors.

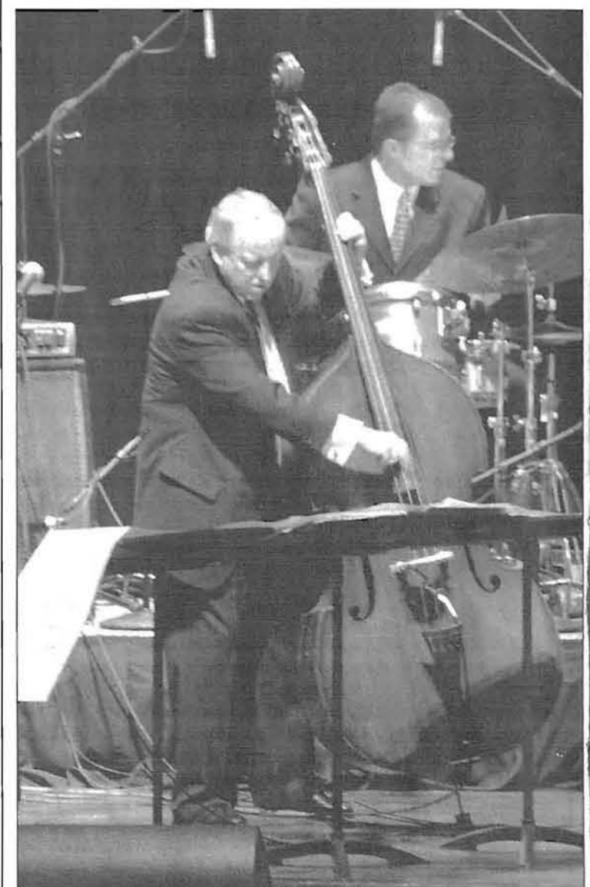
Connie Jeffries, program manager for the Continuing Education and Outreach department, explained that the program is tied to the MFA program, which is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

"A number of the MFA students have actually served as instructors in our workshops," said Jeffries. "They are graduate students who felt a yearning to teach but had not yet had the opportunity to do so. The Write Stuff workshops were able to give them that opportunity, with excellent results."

The core courses usually last about two hours and are held on Saturday mornings in the J.C. Penney Conference Center. The workshops are four-hour-long sessions, which take place on Saturday afternoons.

Although these courses are noncredit programs, a person who participates in at least 50 hours is eligible to receive a Chancellor's Certificate in Fiction or Nonfiction.

## Jazzfest '04



Michael Pelikan/The Current

Jim Widner, coordinator of jazz studies at UM-St. Louis, performs with the St. Louis Jazz Orchestra on Saturday night at the PAC. Their performance capped off a day of festivities for the 2004 Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival, which featured 21 bands from middle and high schools in Missouri, Kansas, and Illinois.

# Earth Day celebrations offer fun for all

BY MELISSA MCCRARY  
Features Associate

Recycling, energy conservation, wild-flower planting and learning about nature and habitats are a few things that many St. Louis organizations are teaching people throughout the month of April in honor of this year's Earth Day.

While the main event for St. Louis's Earth Day takes place on Sunday, April 25 from 10:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. in Forest Park, other organizations and groups have already begun Earth Day festivities and presentations.

On April 3 and April 17, The Butterfly House hosted an Earth Day grocery bag project event. At the event, children had the opportunity to learn about gardening and outdoor education while designing their own gardening craft.

On April 8 and April 10, the St. Louis Community Air Project and St. Louis Public Library held performances of "Detox Your Domicile." The St. Charles County Environmental Services also hosted an early Earth Day event at the historic courthouse on April 16.

Other St. Louis venues such as the City Museum, St. Louis Art Museum and the Missouri Botanical Garden have participated in the Earth Day festivities by sharing displays, demos and nature presentations.

From April 22 through April 25, The City Museum will celebrate Earth Day by offering hands-on activities for children that relate to their motto, "Trash into Treasure."

On April 24, the St. Louis Science Center will give presentations on landfill technolo-

gies, energy conservation, recycling and water management from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

St. Louis Earth Day Events manager Cheri Hutchings described how this year's main event compares to previous years.

"Earth Day will be bigger than previous years because it has had more publicity and there are many more organizations, like the Missouri Department of Conservation, the St. Louis County Department of Health and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, getting involved," she said.

Some other festival partners participating in Earth Day on April 25 include the Academy of Science of St. Louis, Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis, the Gateway Wildlands Project, Missouri River Communities and the St. Louis Teachers Recycle Center Inc.

The majority of festivities will begin at



10:30 a.m. on the Muny grounds in Forest Park and are open and free to the public.

Activities at the Earth Day Festival 2004 will include craft making, puppetry, art exhibits, face painting, portraits, snacks, tree planting, presentations and storytellers.

"There will be a new recycling program collecting electronics, clothing and tennis shoes," she said.

The Electronics Recycling Program, sponsored by Web Innovations and Technology Systems and Champions for Children, will be collecting old computers and electronics. Nike and Remains Inc. will have a booth set up where people can donate or recycle old tennis shoes.

The International Center for Tropical Ecology at UM-St. Louis will take part in the festivities by hosting an interactive display focusing on the production of tropical crops.

There will also be a run/walk event held to raise funds for local organizations working on clean water and healthy streams.

The St. Louis Zoo is expected to have family activities that will display species discov-

ered by Lewis and Clark. The St. Louis Art Museum will give visitors the opportunity to hear stories from Osage and other Native American traditions, view Indian artwork and learn how to finger weave. Native American customs and traditions will also be presented at the Missouri History Museum.

Live entertainment from the St. Louis Academy of Dance, the Kahok Dancers, The Muny Kids and the Missouri Fiddlers Association will promote North African and Tibetan dances, along with flute performances.

Other arts and entertainment will include Lewis and Clark traditional folk tales and music, writing contests, poetry seminars, storytelling guests and yoga lessons.

Every event will focus on this year's theme, "Explore the Earth's Treasures."

For the third year, the St. Louis Regional Bike Federation will hold a bicycle valet parking service.

Bob Foster, Chair of the St. Louis Regional Bike Federation, encourages people to ride their bikes rather than drive to promote cycling as a form of transportation and a simple way to help the environment.

"Last year we parked over 200 bikes. The main idea of this program is to prevent traffic congestion and to help eliminate automobile pollution," Foster said.

Earth Day at Forest Park is a way for people to get involved within the St. Louis community while recognizing the importance of ecology and nature.

For more information about all scheduled activities, descriptions, times and directions, visit [www.stlouisearthday.org](http://www.stlouisearthday.org).

## WRITING, from page 6

There will be two other certificate possibilities coming during the semesters of 2004 and 2005. These additional certificates include Children's Literature and Technical Writing.

The workshops range from a variety of topics, such as writing for magazines and newspapers, writing proposals, submitting to literary journals, living as a writer, freelancing, ghostwriting, working with an agent, column writing, the business of writing and landing a career in the writing industry.

These courses help people learn the basics of choosing good subjects, editing, keeping stories flowing, and teaching about advertising and public relations.

"I think these classes would be hugely beneficial to anyone who feels they have a book hiding inside them, crying to get out, and they don't know where or how to get started," said Jeffries.

Jeffries mentioned that these classes are also beneficial to someone who has written something and wants to get it published. Doering said that there are no prerequisites required for enrolling in these courses.

"Many different people take these workshops for their own hobby, to gain experience and knowledge," she said.

Those interested can find out more information about the workshops and writing courses at [www.umsl.edu/~contas/](http://www.umsl.edu/~contas/) or can call 516-6793 for registration details.

# E-Romance: Love is just a click away

BY STEFANIE TAYLOR  
Staff Writer

The computer mouse has become an icon of modern pop culture. UM-St. Louis students bank online, shop online, send greeting cards online, pay bills online, take classes online, search and apply for employment online and, in general, tether themselves to a computer mouse for all forms of life. As they point and click their way through student life and survival, students take on the new Internet-assisted task of online dating.

Traditional student daters have turned from the world of movie tickets and casual dining to the click of a mouse, an instant messenger service and a JPEG image. As the search for love in a java browser continues, UM-St. Louis students are jumping on the virtual bandwagon.

"I met my special someone through an online dating service," said Sarah Johnson, junior, communication. "We were both UM-St. Louis students but we didn't know each other." The Internet-savvy couple has been dating for over a year and was recently engaged.

The power and popularity of online dating cannot be denied. According to InfoTech, 40 million Americans spent \$425 million on web-based dating services in 2003. That rate is astounding, considering that most dating services are free and funded by advertising revenue. Match.com was the twenty-

fourth most visited web site, trumping New York Times, Monster.com, AltaVista, Weather.Com, and MSNBC.

The craved convenience of online dating is more powerful than a broadband server. Looking for that special someone has never been simpler for the net-friendly socialites. Gone are the days of "Hey, can I buy you a drink?" Virtual chat rooms and discussion boards have replaced bars and nightclubs. Hours spent in front of a mirror picking out the right skirt have been abandoned for house shoes, sweatshirts and cable modems.

For the typical online dater, meeting someone is more than a point-and-click process, but certainly easier than online dating's predecessors, such as the dreaded blind dates and not-so-friendly friend fix-ups. User-friendly web sites, such as

Match.com, allow hopeful daters to create a membership and a user profile. The new member can then access other user profiles and contact prospective significant others. Recently, online sites have extended their services to include personality profile assistance, which sug-

gests potential matches based on a personality inventory.

Because users demand more convenience, trendy entrepreneurs have created online dating sites that categorize their users into target audiences by

location, age, race, sexual orientation, religion and interests. A few examples are Harley-match.com, AnimalAttractions.com, ChristianCafe.com,

DeafSinglesConnection.com and Canadianpersonals.net.

As the sea of online daters grows more crowded, online dating is shedding its reputation of being a medium just for the lonely and desperate.

Acceptance to online dating is on the rise, as many people know some happy couple who claims to have met on the Internet.

Brian Joest, senior, criminal justice, said he does not think a person has to be socially inept to find love online.

"I know people who take it pretty seriously," Joest said. "Some people just don't like those social environments, but I've never dated online."

Not everyone is an avid fan of the cyber pillow-talk

trend. Skeptics claim that the need for convenience has ruled over the need for honesty. Fantasy profiling occurs when an online dater stretches the truth a little, or outright lies, about his or her person-

ality, appearance, wealth, age or other criteria that may determine attractiveness.

Mark Ledd, senior, political science, said he has not caught the online dating bug.

"I've seen my friends get into a lot of trouble with it," said Ledd. "I always warn against online dating. People can be really dishonest. Even in person, people try to make themselves out to be better than they really are."

To assist in the online hook-ups, Match.com provides a physical attraction test, which attempts to define which physical types of people a user finds most physically attractive. Not surprisingly, the most common categories are "dark and handsome" and "blond and beautiful." The physical attraction test, according to Match.com, is based on a fifteen-year, multi-million dollar study on what uniquely draws us to each other physically.

Regardless of internal trends or fads, this mode of romantic communication has the potential to assist in the search for love. In this cyber age, online dating provides the convenience, fantasy and pressure-free environment that was lacking from personal interaction.

CreativeHeat, a male St. Louis Lavalife.com member, wrote in his online dating profile: "My idea of romance includes: a weekend getaway, going to the theater, and dinner by candlelight." While creativity may not be CreativeHeat's strong point, he is on the bandwagon of one of America's biggest trends: online dating.

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# SPORTS

**GRETCHEN MOORE**

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Questions  
or  
Comments?

Send me an e-mail  
current@jinx.umsl.edu

## St. Louis hockey fans continue to sing the Blues

**BY CAMPBELL MCLAURIN**  
Staff Writer

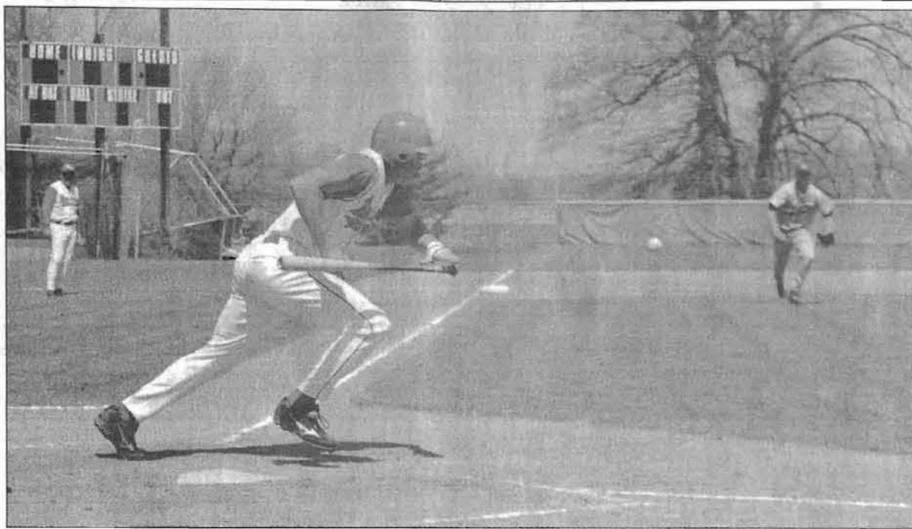
The St. Louis Blues played their usual blues playoff tune as they bowed out of the NHL playoffs in the first round. The Blues, a team that is noted as a perennial playoff participant, is a club that is also recognized for failing to win the big series.

This year an anemic offense seemed to be the problem for the Blues, who were unable to score the big goals needed to win tight games against the San Jose Sharks. The Blues had offensive troubles all season and were ranked last out of all the teams heading into the playoffs in the goals scored category, with only 191 goals on the year. During their playoff series, the Blues could only muster a meager nine goals in five games, a number that will not produce series wins in a high-tempo style of playoff hockey.

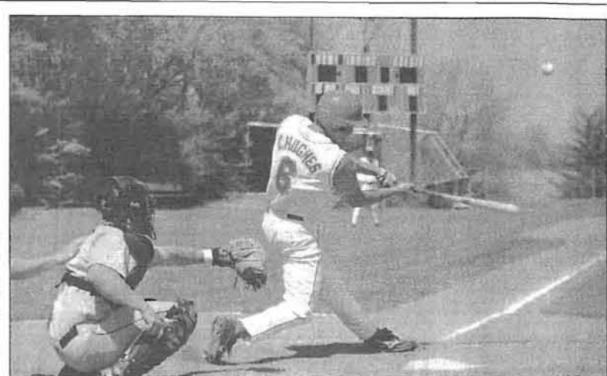
As the playoffs approached, the Blues playoff chances were uncertain as they lingered on the fringe of the playoff picture. The Blues were involved in a dogfight with the likes of Nashville and Los Angeles to see who would seize the last two playoff spots. During the last six weeks of the season, the Blues were able to dig in and pull out close wins, including several overtime victories, to grab the seventh playoff spot in the Western Conference.

This trip to the playoffs was a record-setting event for the Blues, as they qualified for post-season play for a consecutive 25 seasons, more consecutive years than any club in the history of the NHL did. However, in a season when valuable records were set, the club could not produce the post-season magic it would need to advance against the Sharks.

see **BLUES HOCKEY**, page 9



Jesse Gater/The Current



Jesse Gater/The Current

**ABOVE:** Colby Hughes, junior/pitcher and outfielder, shows his perfect swing in the Rivermen's doubleheader vs. Quincy last Wednesday. The Rivermen took both games.  
**LEFT:** Colby Hughes, junior/pitcher and outfielder, lays down a sacrifice bunt in the Rivermen's doubleheader victories vs. Quincy last Wednesday.

## Sanders, Mercer lead Rivermen baseball with excellent play

**BY DAVE SECKMAN**  
Staff Writer

For the last two weeks, the UM-St. Louis baseball team has had significant production from two of their seniors. Scott Sanders received the player of the week honors two weeks ago and was followed this past week by fellow senior teammate Jonathan Mercer.

Sanders was the first player to receive the player of the week honors this year for the Rivermen. The Rivermen's first baseman hit .423 on the week, going 11-for-26 with eight runs scored. During this span he hit six doubles and had six RBI's, which included a slugging percentage of .654 and an on-base percentage of .483.

During the week, Sanders also tied a school record when he hit three doubles in one game. So far this season,

Sanders leads the Rivermen in hitting with a .379 average. He is currently second on the team with 10 doubles, has 26 runs scored and has hit in 20 RBI's on the year.

Sanders commented on his success: "Everyone has been working hard and the team is finally starting to come together. It is hard to place credit on just one person's shoulders when everyone does something to win each game," Sanders said.

It was only one week later when the Rivermen baseball team had received a second player of the week honor. This time around, it was senior outfielder Mercer's time to shine.

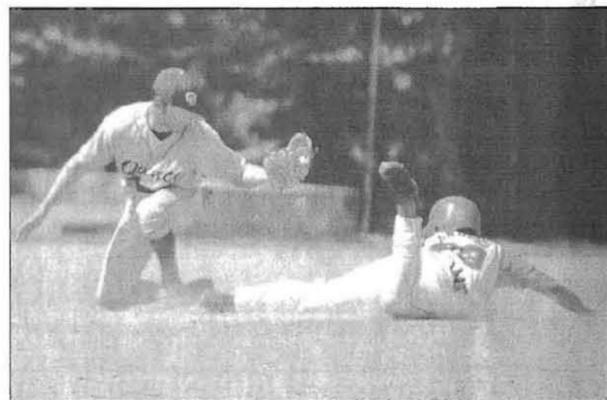
During the week, Mercer helped lead the Rivermen to a 5-1 record over a six-game span by hitting .440, going 11-for-25. Mercer also added eight runs scored and tallied 10 RBI's. Mercer also knocked in the game win-

ning run in the last inning of the first game versus conference foe Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, and he added 3 RBI's in the second game of the double-header going 4-for-5 for the game.

On the season, Mercer is near the top of the team with a batting average of .359 and has a team-best 51 hits for the year. Mercer leads the team with 37 runs scored and 13 doubles and is second on the team with 35 RBI's for the season.

When asked about his accomplishment, Mercer said, "It is nice to be recognized for hard work. We have been working hard all year and it is nice to see that it is finally paying off."

The two players helped lead the Rivermen to a 9-3 record in the past twelve games and look to continue the success for the rest of the regular season and throughout the playoffs.



Jesse Gater/The Current

**Scott Sanders, senior/first baseman, slides to bet the tag from the Quincy's infielder in the Rivermen's doubleheader victories last Wednesday afternoon.**

### In the swing of things

## Rivermen tennis rolls to four straight wins

**BY DAVE SECKMAN**  
Staff Writer

The UM-St. Louis men's tennis team has decisively won the last four matches of the season heading into the conference tournament. In the last week, the Rivermen have pulled out big wins against Vincennes College, Lewis University, St. Joseph University and Lindenwood.

The first match came against Vincennes College. The men won two of three doubles matches and took four of six singles matches to cruise to a 6-3 victory. Raj Saini won at four singles along with James Daugherty at six singles, Francis Lam in a three set thriller at three singles and Matt Valkhard at number one singles.

Valkhard commented on the match, saying it was "solid from start to finish." He later added, "We played well all match and everyone did what they needed to do to win out in the end."

The Rivermen's second match came against conference foe Lewis University. The men cruised to a 6-1 victory with two wins in doubles and four wins in singles. Valkhard, Lam, Saini and Stephen Pobst won all of



Amanda Schniedermeyer/The Current

**Francis Lam, freshman, leaps after the tennis ball to ensure himself a win against Lindenwood University Tuesday afternoon.**

their singles matches to pull the Rivermen through to victory. This moved the team to 8-7 overall and 3-

4 in the conference.

The third match of the week proved to be the easiest as the

Rivermen swatted the Pumas of St. Joseph's University 5-0. Valkhard, Saini, Lam and Max Bugner all

record singles victories as the Rivermen flew past the Pumas with ease.

The fourth and final match of the week provided the most fireworks for the team. Not only did they defeat Lindenwood 5-4 in a nailbiter but senior Valkhard set the all-time UM-St. Louis career singles win record at 51 wins for his career. UM-St. Louis hall of fame inductee Tom January had previously held the record at 50 wins, which held up for the last thirty years until Valkhard won number 51 for his career.

When asked about his accomplishment, Valkhard replied, "It is hard to know what to say about what I have just accomplished here. It really hasn't sunk in yet."

The Rivermen also had a great match on their hands as they pulled out a tough 5-4 victory. UM-St. Louis won two of three doubles matches and got singles wins from Daugherty, Saini and Pobst to go along with Valkhard's record-setting performance.

The Rivermen are now 10-7 overall and 4-4 in the conference. They hold the number 6 seed heading into the conference tournament, where they look to secure their third consecutive trip to the NCAA championships three weeks from now.

## Riverwomen start week off strong before slumping down the stretch

**BY JAMES DAUGHERTY**  
Staff Writer

The UM-St. Louis softball team started the week out strong but ended in a slump. In the first game against Quincy, UM-St. Louis went down 3-0 quickly as Quincy scored twice in the first inning. The Riverwomen countered with a strong fifth inning, scoring four runs to grab the lead.

Corie Jones started the scoring with a bases-loaded, two-run single for the first UM-St. Louis runs of the game and was then followed by an RBI single from Jen Schatz and another by Kristen Economon to take a 4-3 lead. Schatz scored again in the seventh to give the Riverwomen the 5-3 victory. The second game was much easier for the Riverwomen, ending in a 12-1 victory.

The Riverwomen started the onslaught with a run in the first, thanks to an RBI single by Economon. In the third inning, Schatz led off with a triple and scored on a passed ball to make the lead 3-0. The Riverwomen pounded in four more runs in the fifth and five more in the seventh to finish off Quincy. Coach Nicky Durnin commented on the wins:

"We knew we had to win both of

these games to do any damage in the conference. We were down three to nothing, but then the girls fought back and scored four runs in the fourth inning. That gave us a lot of confidence, and helped us pull off the sweep."

**"We knew we had to win both of these games to do any damage in the conference. We were down three to nothing, but then the girls fought back..."**

**- Nicky Durnin, softball coach**

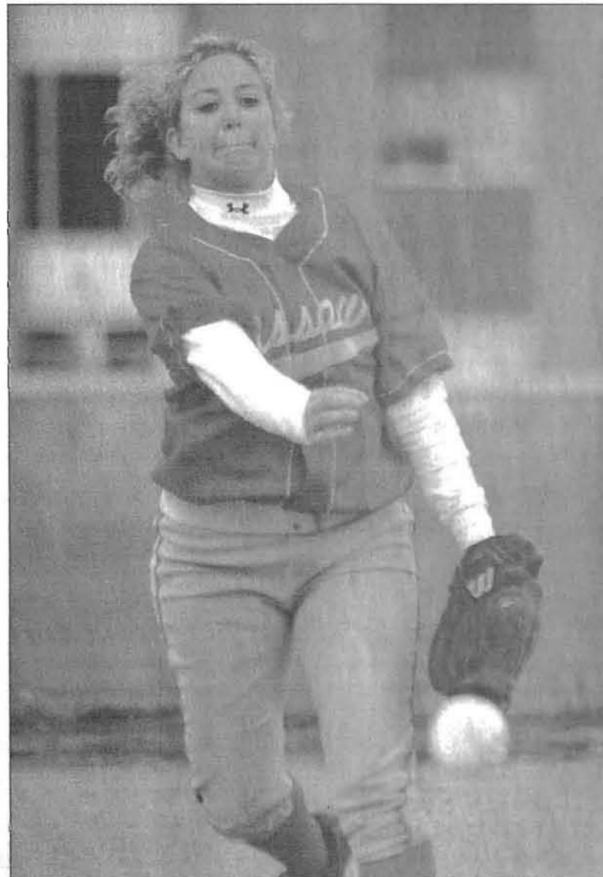
The next set of games came against ninth-ranked Alabama-Huntsville, and the Riverwomen almost rode their momentum to a first game upset. The Chargers started the game with two quick runs in the first inning, but UM-St. Louis got one of their own from Jones on a leadoff double. In the second inning, the Chargers went up 3-1, but

again, UM-St. Louis answered with runs of their own to go up 7-3.

The Chargers chipped away at the lead from that point on, and finally reclaimed the lead in the sixth inning with an RBI double, to finish the game 8-7. The Riverwomen had 12 hits in the game. The second game with the Chargers did not go nearly as well for the team, as it was blown away 12-1. The Chargers put together three runs in the first inning and then nine in the second, sealing the Riverwomen's fate. The back-to-back losses to Alabama-Huntsville were not as painful as the following losses to Truman State.

In the first game the Bulldogs managed to score in the first two innings to lead 2-0. Jones scored on a passed ball to cut the lead to one, but then the Bulldogs scored once more in the fourth, four more times in the fifth and finally twice in the second to widen the gap. The Riverwomen lost the first game 9-1. The second game was not much better. Truman state went up 3-0 after three innings, but UM-St. Louis managed to score with a ground out by Kim Kulaitis in the fourth, and then again with a home run by Kulaitis in the fifth.

see **SOFTBALL**, page 9



Mike Sherwin/The Current

**Riverwomen softball pitcher Casey Moran releases a pitch Monday evening during the first game of a doubleheader against the ninth-ranked Alabama-Huntsville Chargers.**

# Vaulkhard sets UMSL record for tennis

BY JAMES DAUGHERTY  
Staff Writer

The UM-St. Louis tennis record for most wins in a career stood for 30 years since being set by Tom January in 1974. On April 13, 2004, tennis team captain Matt Vaulkhard finally broke that record. Vaulkhard broke the record by notching his 51st career win over Neal Hopson of Lindenwood.

Breaking the record has not come easy for Vaulkhard, who has played the #1 position for UM-St. Louis for the vast majority of his college career. "It's been really tough to win so much at number one. If you do not play well one day, you can get beat really bad, and that can start a slump. You have to stay on top of your game the whole time because every player you play is really good." His freshman year he notched 15 wins and earned Freshman of the Year honors in the GLVC. He recorded 10 wins his sophomore year, another 14 last year, and to date has won 12 so far this season.

Despite being so close at the start of the season, it came down to the last regular season match to get win #51. "I didn't think that I was going to make it, but I pulled out an amazing match against Washington University and I rode the momentum the rest of the

way." This year was particularly difficult for Vaulkhard, who began it with a wrist injury and had trouble focusing early this spring.

Halfway through his final season his record was only 6-9, but he won the next six straight matches to improve to 12-9 and finally break the record.

"It's awesome that I could break the record. I didn't expect anyone to make a big deal out of it, but the coaches, athletic staff and players have all been very supportive. This has been a great four years for me, and I'm happy it's ending this way."

The season is not quite over for the UM-St. Louis tennis team, which is looking to Vaulkhard to lead it into the conference tournament on the 16th and 17th of this month. The team has the opportunity to advance to regionals, and Vaulkhard has an opportunity to further distance himself from former record holder January.

Commenting on Vaulkhard's success over the four years here at UM-St. Louis, Coach Gyllenborg said, "Coaching Matt has been a pleasure. He has grown over the years and this accomplishment has been great for Matt as well as for the entire men's tennis team." Who knows? Maybe Vaulkhard's new record will stand for another 30 years.



Matt Vaulkhard, senior, attacks the ball in his match against his Lindenwood University opponent Tuesday afternoon. Amanda Schmiedermeyer / The Current

# UMSL inline hockey plays for it all

BY WILL ROESTEL  
Staff Writer

On April 14-19, the UM-St. Louis inline hockey team will travel to Anaheim, California to play for the National Collegiate Roller Hockey Association Division II National Championship. This invitation tournament will bring the top sixteen Division II roller hockey clubs together to battle for the right to be called national champions.

Boasting a 20-1-1 record this season in the Great Plains Region of the National Collegiate Roller Hockey Association, the UM-St. Louis Rivermen expect a lot from themselves. A crushing loss to archrival St. Louis University in the regional semi-finals does nothing to deter the

belief that the team has a chance to win a Division II National Championship. Coach Tom Schneider insists that this team is one of the best in the league.

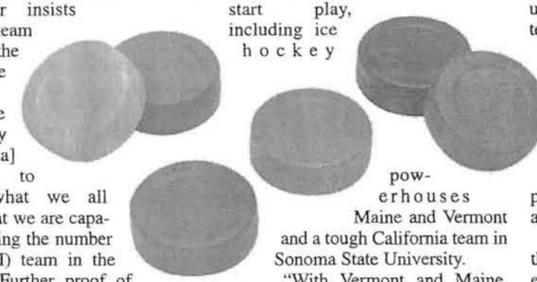
"We really have [a] chance to prove what we all know, that we are capable of being the number one (D-II) team in the nation." Further proof of the team's skill and prowess can be seen in the NCRHA's power rankings, in which the Rivermen have been in the top five, and as high as

#2, all season. The Rivermen drew a difficult round robin group to start play, including ice hockey

"And Sonoma, those Cali[ornia] teams play some of the best roller hockey out there. It's what they grow up on." Despite the challenge, the team still sees itself poised for success. Assistant Captain John Kellerman broke down the team's makeup simply.

"We have so many dimensions: skill, power up front, mobile defensemen and an excellent goaltender. No matter who we play, we'll give them a game. We always compete."

After three round robin games, the teams will be seeded in a single elimination playoff bracket, with the championship on Sunday, April 20. You can follow the Rivermen's drive to championship at [www.ncrha.com](http://www.ncrha.com) all week long.



## MANSION HILL, from page 1

The Bulldogs put the Riverwomen away in the sixth, though, scoring five runs to win 8-2.

The losses were difficult, but Coach Durkin saw the positive in the losses. "These two teams were both veteran ball clubs. We have to focus on how we played rather than on whether or not we win or lose. We should have played better defensively, but if we can get our offense and defense working at the same time, we will be playing very well." The Riverwomen are now 17-22 on the season, with upcoming games at Bellarmine and Northern Kentucky.

Junior infielder Shauna Wilson takes a swing during the Riverwomen's doubleheader against Alabama-Huntsville on Monday.



## BLUES HOCKEY, from page 8

The first game of the series in San Jose proved to be pivotal in the outlook of the series. A 1-0 overtime loss was a heartbreaker for the Blues, and it later ascertained their fate. If the Blues had pulled out the first game, the entire series outlook would have been different, as they had the opportunity to come back to St. Louis with the series tied at 1-1.

However, the Blues had to come back to St. Louis down 2-0, making a win in the series an uphill battle. They were able to pour on the offense in the third game of the series with a dominant 4-1 win, but two more consecutive losses put the nail in the coffin of the best-of-seven game series.

The loss in the playoffs means that

the Blues will have to do some soul-searching in the off-season. As the current crop of Blues players seem unable

“

If the Blues had pulled out the first game, the entire series outlook would have been different.

”

to get the job done in the postseason.

wholesale changes in the Blues organization are expected during the summer. The Blues' expensive payroll has not paid dividends for them in recent years, and it is predicted that management will look for new players who will.

Next season's squad will probably have a different look to it than some of the teams of previous years. The team will be under the direction of newly hired head coach Mike Kitchen, who will most likely implement a different style of play from previous coach Joel Quenneville, especially if there is a different lineup of players. Blues fans will be anxious to see what will transpire in the off-season for their team. However, who knows? Maybe next season is the one where they will win it all.

# jennifer garner



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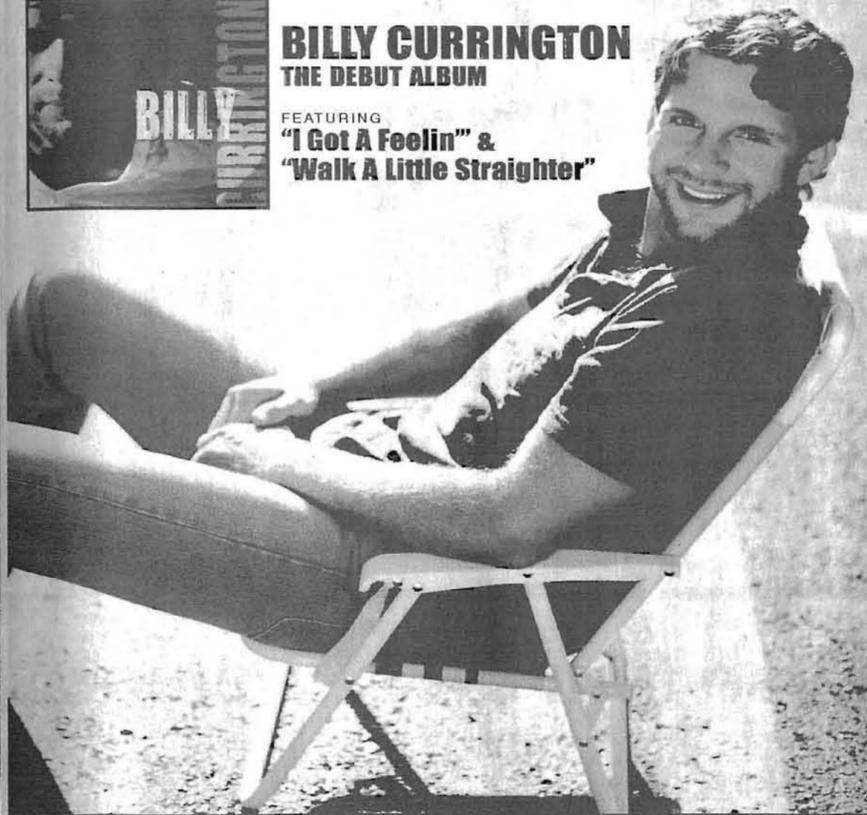
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# A&E

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## Movie Calendar

### Movies

\*Film openings are subject to change.

Week of  
April 19

Opening

**13 going on 30-** A 13-year-old girl makes a wish to be an adult. Her wish suddenly comes true and she suddenly finds herself to be a sexy 30-year-old woman. Her life feels empty, however, without her best friend, Matt, who is now also an adult and engaged to be married. Opens April 23.

**Man on Fire-** Denzel Washington stars as an ex-soldier serving as a bodyguard for an elite family's young daughter in Mexico City. When the girl is kidnapped, he will stop at nothing to get her back. Opens April 23.

Ongoing

**Connie and Carla-** After witnessing a mafia hit, two women disguise themselves as drag queens in L.A.

**Kill Bill Vol. 2-** Uma Thurman returns as the vengeful assassin, The Bride, ready to kill her former employer, Bill.

## MOVIE REVIEW

# 'The Alamo' is more inspiring than legends

BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-

HOMEYER

Film Critic

"The Alamo" is a good film that is getting some bad press.

An entertaining film and the most historic version of the siege of the Alamo so far, "The Alamo" is a much better film than the negative buzz would lead you to expect. Some top critics gave it thumbs up but even among critics who did not care for the film, Billy Bob Thornton's Davy Crockett is being singled out for praise. The film is worth seeing for his charismatic performance alone.

The problem for some audiences lies in it not being a John Wayne, Hollywood-legends version of the story. The conventional Hollywood take on this piece of history makes it a simplistic but invigorating entertain-

ment movie that presents the legend, not the facts. If you think highly of the 1960 John Wayne version, you probably will not care for this more historic take. However, director/co-writer (and Texan) John Lee Hancock set out to make a different film, one that got more of the history right while still retaining the inspiration, the kind of film that could be enjoyed by both the eight-year-old Texan boy that Hancock was when he first visited the Alamo or by adult history buffs and fans of good historic films. In this goal, Hancock succeeded.

"The Alamo" is not a documentary but it is both the most historic film version to date and an entertaining movie. Hancock decided to do more of a character study of real, flawed men who find themselves faced with a situation that calls for great courage, drawing on something within themselves. The

heroics are still there but the grounding is more human, and in a sense, more inspiring.

The basic events of the Alamo should be familiar to most—how a few rebel Texans held the Alamo mission-turned-fort against Mexican General Santa Anna's well-equipped and much larger army for a 2-week siege, a battle that became a rallying cry for Texas independence. The film opens with the aftermath of the battle, and flashes back to how this handful of people, including American legends Jim Bowie (Jason Patric) and Crockett (Billy Bob Thornton) ended up under siege in a crumbling mission surrounded by an army of thousands. Encouraged by the Mexican government to populate the empty spaces of Texas, Americans had been pouring into Texas looking for a new start at the prompting of American transplants

like Sam Houston. Now that the self-styled "Napoleon of the West," Santa Anna, has seized control of the Mexican government, the "Texians," as both the native-born Tejanos and the transplanted Americans called themselves, prepared to rebel and form their own country. At the forefront was Houston (Dennis Quaid), who was also organizing an army to defend the new nation. Houston dispatches a group of men headed by Lt. Col. William Barret Travis to hold the Alamo, an old mission converted into a makeshift fort, believing that winter weather has kept the Mexican army farther south. A band of rebel Texian-American and Tejano irregulars, led by Houston's drinking buddy Bowie and Juan Seguin (Spanish actor Jordi Molla), joins them and, later, so does Western legend and former Tennessee congressman Crockett. Despite expect-

tations, Santa Anna's troops march in to quell the rebellion and the Texians find themselves pinned down by a much larger force.

The legend of the Alamo has already been done several times in the past, most famously with that 1960 John Wayne epic. Wayne's over-the-top, heroic extravaganza might be classic Hollywood but it was not too factual. The attention to historic detail in Hancock's "The Alamo" boosts the film from the beginning. A full-sized replica of the fort was built and first-rate attention was given to detail in costumes and sets. Where the facts are unclear, Hancock picks a version that fits with the dramatics without tossing away the history. The rebels are called "Texians," the original term for Texans.

The battle scenes are stirring and beautifully photographed, with terrific but realistic action. The thrilling battle scenes and the historical sweep of action around the besieged fort are wonderfully cinematic. The focus remains on the personalities in the fort and their plight, rather than all the background of Texas independence.

Overall, much credit for the pure visual beauty of the film goes to cinematographer Dean Semler, whose credits include "Dances with Wolves" and "Road Warrior." Shooting a film about a siege is a challenge but the haunting photography and emphasis on the individuals create a deep and thoughtful tone that never bogs down. Wonderful low-light photography puts an emphasis on the darkness of the soul, as we discover the characters' stories.

However, the characters themselves are the focus. Most startling is, of course, Billy Bob Thornton's charming and charismatic Crockett, one of Thornton's best performances and certainly his most appealing.



Photo courtesy Touchstone Pictures

see ALAMO, page 11

## BOOK REVIEW

# 'Backpack' offers travel exploits, not guide

BY PAUL CRUTCHER

Staff Writer

For some, traveling abroad holds infinite intrigue. I admit to being fascinated with the greater world and anxious to get out of here (and the routine) during summer break. While my plans probably exclude Europe for now, when I received "Europe from a Backpack" from its publishers, a smile split my face and I started greedily into the contents. Some out there will know precisely my feeling. For those of you who do not understand that pull, let me first use a quote from "Backpack," from St. Augustine: "The world is a book, and those who do not travel, read only a page."

"Backpack" compiles narrative essays from young travelers and designates twelve chapters, based on country, for their experiences. Spain, Italy and France hold 27 of the 58 total stories, but that may have had more to do with submissions than with the quality of the backpacking in or the number of backpackers to these countries.

Diverse stories fill the pages, ranging from the mundane to near-death. Each runs between about 1,000 and 2,000 words, or roughly 5 pages, which turns out to be almost 400 pages for "Backpack." An acknowledgment of anti-Americanism runs through it, and while some stories have a certain timeless feel, others keep 2000-something as an integral and immediate part of their voice.

You may snatch up this cross-section of young (mostly American) travelers' exploits abroad for \$16 at bookstores or at europebackpack.com.

That said, the ten pages from 374 - 383, appropriately titled "Resources," may be worth the purchase price. It includes companies and websites for discounts and guides related to traveling in Europe, and you could easily save \$16 worth of heartache, frustration or actual expense with a little of the shopping and research offered by "Backpack."

Ironically, the heart of "Backpack," the stories, from page 15 - 371, are not likely worth your \$16. The editors chose young contributors to appeal, surely, to a young audience. However, age glares in some of the accounts, and people who are interested in travel for personal development, increased perspective or the visceral sensation of crunching along a rock pathway on the coast of Sicily or pounding the muddying slopes in a downpour in the hills of Spain, statements like the following are ridiculous and inane, however accurate:

"Ibiza is filled with girls that no one from home would believe exist, women that put our American models and actresses to shame." Too often the summation of "this" five pages or "that" is boozing, sex and intercultural ignorance causing fear and conflict. You sometimes feel like you are reading base stuff from unsophisticated people, but perhaps life for young travelers (not just spring-breakers) is primal in that eating-drinking-sex-partying sense.

The format works to contribute to my misgivings. It must be difficult to convey a complex and interesting experience abroad in 2,000 words or five pages.

Consequently, the essays feature a single event and typically a single, sparse scene. Retrospection, reflection, deeper implications and conclusions do not stray past cursory paragraphs. "Backpack" says nothing about travel, travelers or Europe in that sense. Rather, you read strings of blurbs that just happen to have taken place in the same country. I say "blurbs" intentionally, because, as the three-and-a-half page story about Rome exemplifies, it can be tough to explain a day with any excitement in 2,000 words.

Where "Backpack" stutters further is in its delivery of the powerful. When a Jewish contributor visits Dachau, a notorious concentration camp, she fails to transfer her outrage in a meaningful way to the reader. She moves from thinking, "This is not so bad," to "Wanting to scream, 'What monsters.'" This leap we might be capable of understanding despite not being provided through her narrative of touring the camp.

When another contributor realizes the potential risk of running with the bulls in Pamplona, while standing on the street with fellow runners before the start, he tells readers that his "mouth is parched" and that he is terrified, but we never feel that terror. Even as a bull bears down on him, he does not relate the terror the bull creates or the malevolent intent the bull embodies.

Further, when a contributor who cannot speak German is accused of fraud aboard a train headed for Salzburg, Austria and threatened with arrest by four automatic-weapon-toting military police, I could not have cared less, because his portrayal of his circumstances were not laced with tension. The stuff that should be powerful in "Backpack" generally flops.

These flaws become more confounding when you see some of the

contributors' bios. While teaching English in a third-world country does not in any sense equate to writing talent, a contributor or two are published writers. Such is the nature of "Backpack." This one you will have to decide for yourself on. It is not Lonely Planet's Europe—not a guidebook. It is not a solid collection of narrative essays. However, in all of its Frankenstein-ness, it may warrant your \$16.

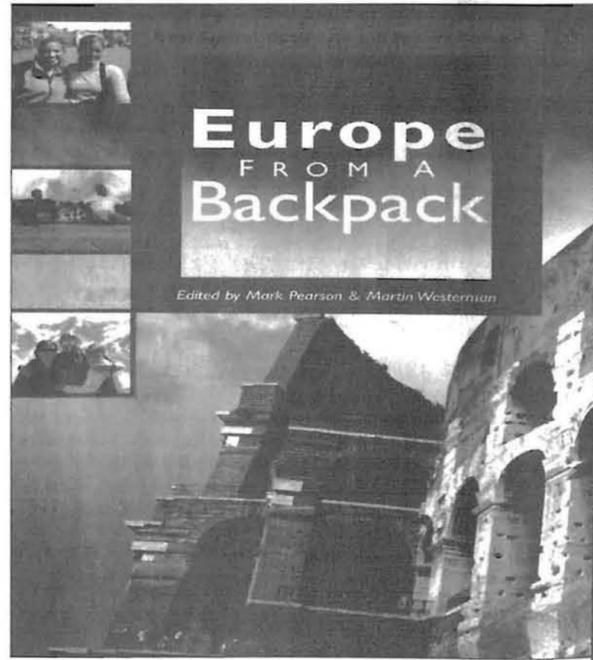


Photo courtesy Pearson Venture Group

## MOVIE REVIEW

### Bold and brilliant

# 'Dogville' is art house film pick of week

BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-

HOMEYER

Film Critic

Quick! If you are a fan of challenging, intriguing art house films, the kind that make you think, then run out and see "Dogville" before it is too late. Hauntingly beautiful, disturbing and thought-provoking, as well as brilliantly made and acted, the film is too far outside the mainstream to remain here for long.

"Dogville" may well be a masterpiece, though not a comforting film. However, sometimes it is good to have our comfort disturbed. St. Louis gets too few films for fans of serious cinema. While we are on the circuit for every violent or soft porn film on the art house circuit, intellectually-stimulating films like "Dogville" are

much rarer. This film stirred great attention at film festivals last year, and with a big-name cast that features Nicole Kidman, Paul Bettany and Lauren Bacall, this theatrically-inspired, surreal metaphor is something unique in any year.

On a minimalist theatrical set, a mysterious fugitive appears in the small, remote 1930s town of Dogville, on the run from gangsters. Led by young, aspiring writer Tom Edison (Bettany), the town agrees to shelter and hide nothing in return. At the urging of her guide Tom, Grace offers to work for the town's people in exchange for their support. At first, the town's self-sufficient inhabitants decline but soon embrace her and her offered exchange. However, what is at first given freely becomes a demand, and the town

starts to extract a price for their continued concealment of the fugitive.

A bold, long film, "Dogville" looks more a piece of theater than film at first glance, yet gifted filmmaker Lars von Trier turns the artificiality of theater conventions into an asset for this metaphor of human nature's dark side and society's flaws. The focus falls entirely on the actors and the story, narrated like a fairy tale by John Hurt.

Iconic characters from an idealized American past populate the town. The performances are indeed stunning, especially Kidman as the besieged Grace. Bacall is wonderful as the shopkeeper with carefully tended roses. Bettany, as the ambitious and young writer who acts as spokesman for the town, is likewise. There is the wealthy man too proud to admit his blindness, played well by

Ben Gazzara. Patricia Clarkson is marvelous as always as the devoted mother with a few too many children for her sullen husband to support. James Caan, as the lead gangster, also turns in a memorable performance. The characters evolve throughout the film, and stunning performances are present from all the cast as they travel from benign and sweet stereotypes into something sinister.

The film highlights fine acting but the story is powerful as well. "Dogville" as a story compels viewers as much as a Greek tragedy. Yet, with the homespun and traditional American imagery that the director uses to lead us down the story's chilling path, our expectations are morphed from Americana to savagery.

Von Trier shows us the dark side of the small town and the American

dream, the dream gone wrong against all our assumptions and converted to nightmare. One can focus on a narrow political interpretation or embrace the inescapable universality of this tale of human flaws. This simple and sleepy little town that we comes the fugitive stranger (Kidman) slowly turns to extracting a price from her, a metaphor for the faith throughout history of strangers in strange land, a story that really could be set in Egypt or Germany.

Sometimes people rise to bring out their best and sometimes they fall prey to their worst instincts. The same can be said of societies, a director von Trier's brilliant tale of intellectual awakening points out. Nothing else, the film will stimulate discussion and self-reflection, and a must-see for discerning fans of film cinema.

CD REVIEW

# Aveo scores big with emotion-filled 'Battery'

BY LAURA HEPBURN  
Music Critic

Aveo, a talented threesome of emotional rockers, will be touring this spring to promote their latest endeavor.

"Battery" is the new album featuring ten tracks of the sweet moodiness that reigns in independent rock. "Battery" was produced by Phil Ek (Built to Spill, Modest Mouse) and driven by the throaty crooning of guitarist/vocalist William Wilson, the fluid bass lines of Mike Hudson and the rolling beats of drummer Jeff MacIsaac. Wilson's guitar melodies are waves of sound that add further dimension to his vocal style and poetic lyrics.

There are many bands these days trying to cash in on the emotion-driven rock movement. Unfortunately,

most of them just do not pull it off. Aveo, however, has managed to do it and do it well. With image- and emotion-based lyrics that can be related to those of Modest Mouse or Neutral Milk Hotel and subtle music intended for the listener rather than rock-star egos, "Battery" delivers ten great songs for independent rock fans.

If you like catchy tunes, "dust that dreams of brooms" and "the idiot on the bike" have great hooks and faster tempos. "Dust that dreams of brooms" softly echoes the beats and vocal style of 1960s boy bands such as The Beatles or The Monkees, but has a rougher edge and updated attitude about love and life. "The idiot on the bike" is rhythm-based, opening with rolling drums and followed by thumping bass and guitar. The song is fast-

paced and induces harsher vocals from Wilson than elsewhere on the album. "The idiot on the bike" is the track most likely to get you bobbing your head, tapping your toe and singing along with the sarcastic lyrics such as "Look out! The devil's new house has a 3-car garage."

One of my favorite tracks on "Battery" is "Haley," the only song of its kind on the album. Hudson's bass is so smooth that it flows from one note to another and the guitar takes on a light airy sound while Wilson whispers the sad lyrics with subtle emotion. Three-fourths through the song, the music picks up with the drums coming in harder and the vocals louder and more forceful. However, "Haley" still ends on the same mysterious note with which it started.

"Hypochondria is spreading" is

another great track that combines the soft mood of "Haley" with the melody-driven talents of the rest of the album. It has the pace required to make it catchy but maintains the melodies and guitar lines to keep it musical and full of emotion.

Being a fan of independent rock means a couple things. You are open to lots of bands you have not heard of and you have to filter through a lot of bad music to find something worthwhile. Let me save you the trouble. If you are the sort who likes light rock with soft vocals, I recommend you try out Aveo's "Battery." I was pleasantly surprised by the artistic vision and interesting composition found in all ten tracks. If you want to hear it first, Aveo will be performing April 25 at the Creepy Crawl with Pedro the Lion. I doubt you will be disappointed.

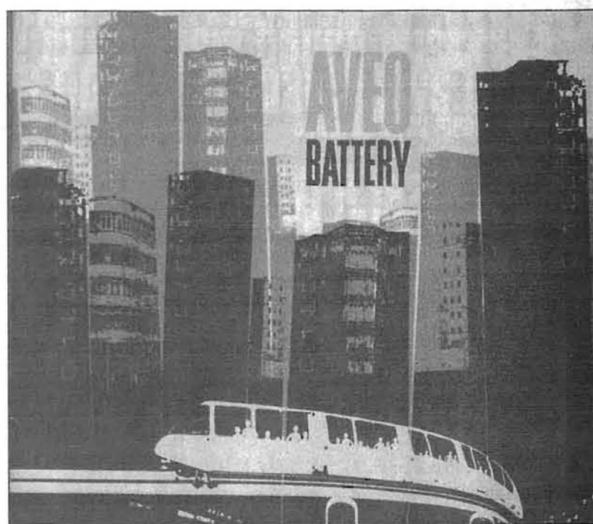


Photo courtesy Barsuk Records

ALAMO, from page 10

Thornton's entertaining and charismatic character has a great line, reminiscent of "Jaws," when he says, "We're going to need more men" when confronted with the size of Santa Anna's army, a sly touch of humor that the character adds throughout the film.

Crockett's legend has a life of its own and both the Texan and Mexican troops embrace his reputation to "leap rivers in a single bound or to kill bears with his bare hands." Both awe and affection give the story another larger and poignant aspect. Crockett makes no secret of the fact that he cannot live up to his legend, but accepts with grace and courage the obligation and expectations that the legend confers on him. If they look to him for bravery, he delivers. A former congressman who prefers to be called David, Crockett is a natural leader who lifts the spirits of the trapped Texans with his violin duet with the enemies' military band and proves himself a genuine crack shot as a sniper.

Bowie, played with seething intensity by Patric, is an angry, thugish man secretly dying of typhoid or worse. Bowie, while showing great leadership to the men in his command, challenges anyone in authority and stands off against the young and inexperienced Lt. Col. Travis, wonderfully played by Patrick Wilson, for

control of the fort. Travis is a former lawyer who comes across as snobbish and rigid but who eventually shows great courage, winning the support of both his troops and Bowie.

These characters are all fully rounded real people, with flaws,

“  
These characters are all fully rounded real people, with flaws, doubts and histories that made them who they are.”

doubts and histories that made them who they are. Each of these characters has a past he would like to leave behind to start a new beginning. Other characters are equally well drawn, with Molla's Seguin and Emilio Echeverria's Santa Anna being notably memorable.

Underlying themes of this film are about second chances and the gutsy underdog, both recurrent themes in

the American psyche. This team of mostly Texan filmmakers decided to look at real facts and real characters for their film and hit on the true heroes behind the legend. Unlike other versions of the Alamo story, both the rebel Tejanos and the Mexican, mostly Indian, conscripts are fleshed out as real people instead of cardboard figures. Despite their fancy uniforms, the very young Mexican soldiers are simple farmers underneath who worry about facing the mythic Crockett.

Of course, we know how the film ends, so the film starts with the aftermath of the battle. The appeal is more to history buffs than the usual teen mall crowd. Perhaps the film appeals to Texans, who might care more about the history of the Alamo than the rest of the nation. Still, it elevates its tale of flawed humans in a hopeless situation into real heroics. Legend and myth replaced by history and flawed, but real, people runs the risk of disturbing the grandeur of the epic tale. But I found the film all the more moving and their heroic sacrifice more inspiring because the characters were human. This is not the simplistic route but the more satisfying. This historic tale of human bravery is much more complex but, like the civil war film "Glory," it is more moving and inspiring.

MOVIE REVIEW

# 'Kill Bill' not likely to die

BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER  
Film Critic

"Kill Bill Vol. 2," the second half of Quentin Tarantino's homage to the bloody action film genre, concludes the tale of revenge in high style, with more plot, back-story and character development than the first round. Although the body count is lower, the film boasts more story and retains plenty of blood and mayhem in its cinematic and stylish conclusion.

"Kill Bill" was one film that was split into two parts for theatrical release, not two films, and this is apparent in both installments. You cannot see one without the other. Originally, the two parts were to be released in quick succession but instead audiences were forced to wait for months for the release of the second part.

Adapted from the comic/graphic novel, "The Bride," the first "Kill Bill" is the tale of the revenge of a woman left for dead on her wedding day by her ex-boss and his group of assassins. In this film, director Tarantino pays homage to Hong Kong and Asian action films, and really action films of all types. He saturates

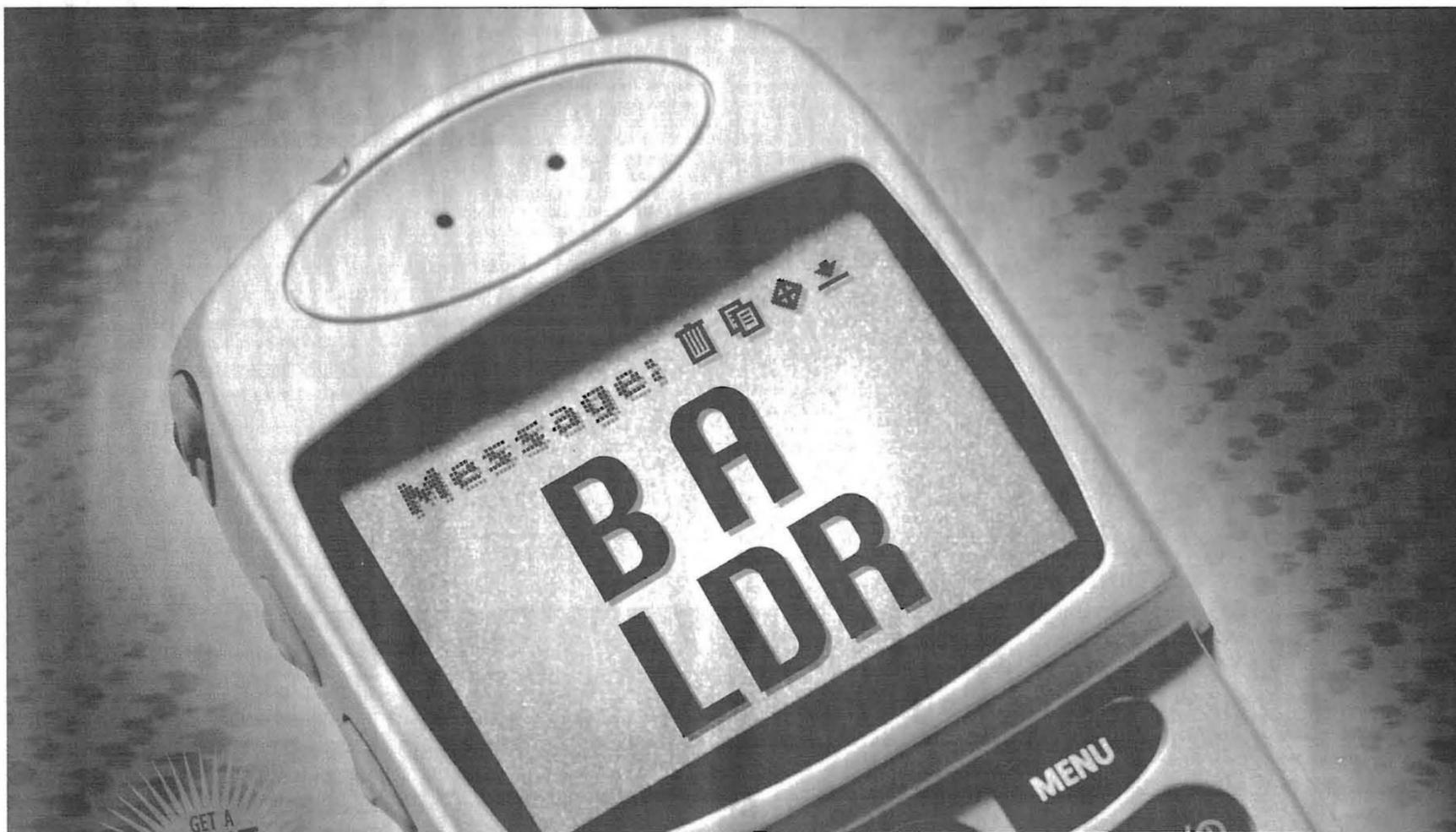
the film with visual references to action films and even TV and buckets-o-blood carnage, often in the cartoonish, low-budget style of early action films. "Kill Bill" is a brilliant exercise in cinematic art, with breathtaking visual techniques and artistic editing to warm the heart of any film student. Not surprisingly, it has an amazing body count.

In "Kill Bill Vol. 2," there is more focus on cinematic style and less on movie references and piling up bodies. Now the film's attention turns to explaining the mayhem and the back-story of all the characters. Like the first film, there are some visually breathtaking scenes, including a black and white sequence that opens the second half of the tale. More pure photographic beauty graces this half but references to Hong Kong wire-work and even Carradine's long-vanished martial arts TV show pop up occasionally. Whereas the first half of the film is almost a predictable checklist of death, everything becomes less predictable and more twists and surprises are introduced in the second. Readers should not think that the movie references or the killing disappears, only that the film changes

gears. There is still plenty of Tarantino violence. I thought this film was better than the first one but filmgoers more interested in blood than plot might prefer the first half.

Uma Thurman continues her powerhouse performance as the relentless bride, deadly, determined and beautiful. Michael Madsen as Budd is more fully developed and more cunning than we expect, while Daryl Hannah's deranged killer Elle Driver is even more vicious and sadistic than in the first film, another unexpected female performance. At last, we see David Carradine's Bill on screen, and he is smooth as we expect and everything the character should be.

Too much description will likely spoil the plot and the visual elements defy description anyway. If you liked the first film at all, you should see the end of the story. Tarantino does not cheat the audience and all questions raised are answered. The film entirely delivers on its promise as action entertainment, homage to a genre and stylish filmmaking. Now we need only wait for release of a restored full-length version, a possibility under discussion, to compare it with this split version.



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# The eternal sunshine of Charlie Kaufman

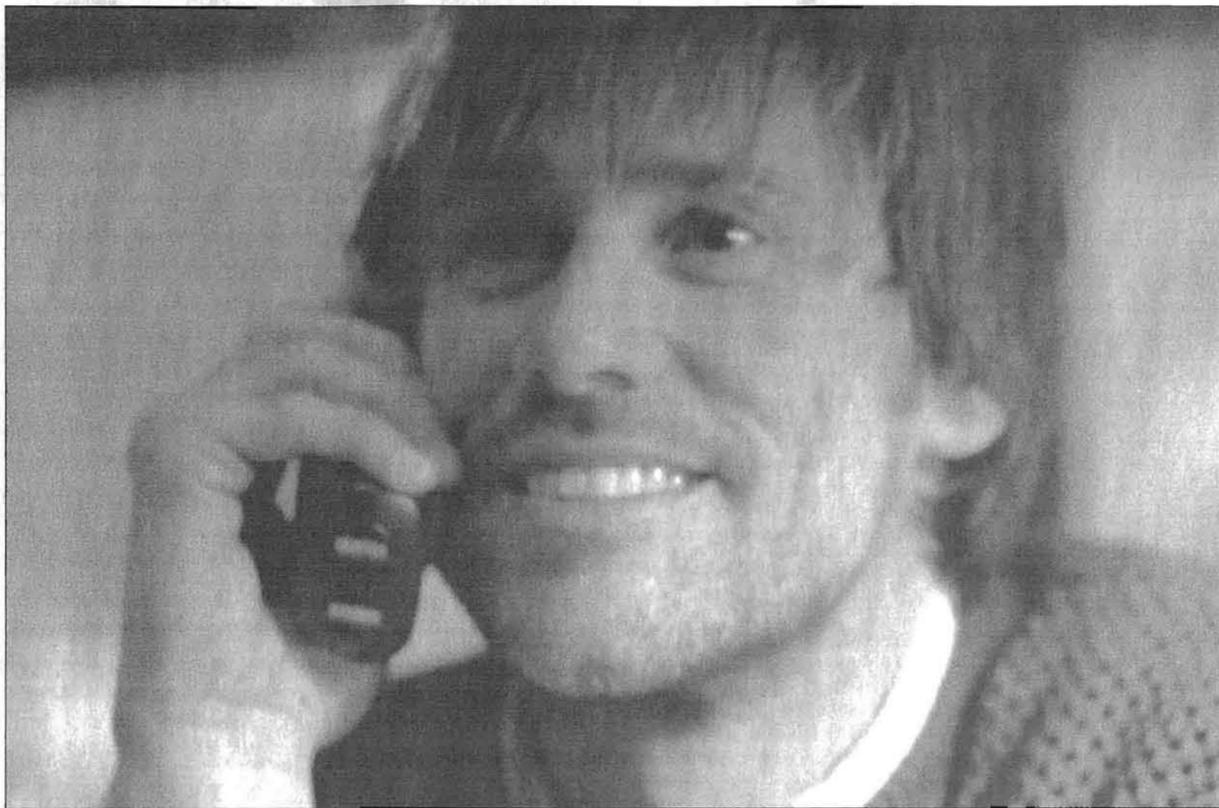
BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-  
HOMEYER  
Movie Critic

"The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "Can't get someone out of your head."

Getting someone out of your head is the underlying premise of the comedy "The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," a film written by Charlie Kaufman, the mind that brought us "Being John Malkovich" and "Adaptation." The film stars Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet, and is directed by Michel Gondry.

Actually, this is film about rediscovering forgotten love. Writer Charlie Kaufman has given us clever, intelligent, and bizarre stories before, bringing forth the best side of speculative fiction as a device to make people see something about themselves and real life by creating a fantasy situation. This new film is closer in this respect to "Being John Malkovich" than to "Adaptation." Unlike other Kaufman films which are strong on creativity and ironic in tone, this one touches the heart in a warm look at finding love, striking a chord of truth that the usual romantic tale misses.

Despite the fantasy premise, the film is really at heart a romantic comedy in the best sense. In this delightfully unusual story, a mismatched couple, Joel (Jim Carrey) and Clementine (Kate Winslet), have a fight which leads the impulsive Clementine to go to a little-known and unique service that erases selected memories and have Joel wiped from her mind. Joel discovers this procedure when the service sends him a card informing him that he has been erased from her memory and asking him not to contact her, after a puzzling encounter in which she already seems to have a new



Jim Carrey stars in Michel Gondry's ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, a Focus Features release.

Photo courtesy Ellen Kuras

boyfriend (Elijah Wood). Outraged, he responds by going to the same company for the same procedure. The office looks like any doctor's office and everything seems professional as they go through the steps for the procedure, which will be carried out as he sleeps. As his recent memories fade and his earlier feelings return, the sleeping Joel tries to find a way to hold on to those memories.

The half dreamland, half reality story leaves the film wide open to some terrific visual tricks as we

bounce back and forth between the world inside Joel's head and what else is going on. The dream world inside Joel's head gives us some of the most original and startling visual imagery in film, a pure delight for the eyes and the imagination. The story is very cleverly told in a non-linear fashion that is not really clear until well into the film, yet only the most impatient filmgoer is apt to lose interest in the film before the general outline becomes clear. And patience is well rewarded in this delightful comic

tale.

While the sleeping subject undergoes the procedure, reliving his life in reverse as the memories are wiped away, the misfit group of technicians provide their own layer of comedy with their less than professional behavior. Elijah Wood is especially funny in a role as a technician with the professional demeanor of an unscrupulous and sexually frustrated pizza delivery guy, hardly the kind of fellow you want mucking about in your brain. As far-fetched as the idea

of removing memories is, the idea of technicians behaving badly while a patient undergoes treatment is squirmingly funny. The whole situation is absurd yet real.

The film is endlessly funny and clever, visually spectacular, and movingly touching. It has the giddy feeling of falling in love itself, with all its irrational quirks and unexpected ups and downs. It is easy to see this film popping up on critics' Best of the Year lists for 2004. Carrey is very controlled in his performance as the

shy and conventional guy, so much so that at times one forgets it is Carrey on screen, while Kate Winslet as the freespirted Clementine, whose hair color changes with her moody impulses, is a dizzy delight. It is hard to imagine a more mismatched pair but the relationship is wholly believable.

Romantic comedy is one of the most formulaic of genres but in the past it gave audiences great films like "Philadelphia Story." "Eternal Sunshine" is a throwback to that era of freshness with a story that truly is filled with surprises and free of formula. The frenetic rude-comic Jim Carrey really seems like a stretch for his role as the shy and controlled romantic lead, yet shockingly, he dampens down his usual mannerisms so much that one sometimes forgets it is Jim Carrey on the screen. If you are generally put off by Carrey's schtick, you will find this performance refreshing. It is perhaps his best yet, aided by the delightfully appealing Kate Winslet as the crazier member of this pair. There is real, convincing romantic chemistry between them.

The film starts at the end of the story but really much of the story takes place in his head, as his memories are erased, starting with the most recent and receding in time. The story is backward in a sense because, as the procedure moves backward in time, we grasp how this mismatched pair fell in love. As he rediscovers his earlier feelings, he tries to stop the process by hiding in his memories.

"The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" is funny, inventive, and touching, with real visual treats and real heart. Interestingly, writer Kaufman and director Michel Gondry have collaborated before but less successfully on the little-seen, more cynical "Human Nature." This time out, the collaboration clicks in a big way to create a truly wonderful film that redeems romantic comedy and delights fans of Kaufman's work.

# Coen brothers' 'The Ladykillers' is killer comedy

BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-  
HOMEYER  
Movie Critic

"The Ladykillers," the new Coen Brothers film starring Tom Hanks, is a comedy caper film about a group of misfit criminals who meet their match in a little old lady. Tom Hanks may get top billing but the one you'll remember is church lady Irma P. Hall.

This is not to say Hanks is not good — he is very good in one of his best comic roles in years, playing a smiling, eccentric parody of a Southern gentleman, complete with white suit. But the church lady gets the good material in this film. This project brings the Coens' filmmaking team closer back to its old style. All in all, this is one funny movie.

"The Ladykillers" is actually a remake of a British film classic. Remaking a classic is always a chancy thing to do, yet the Coens make the story their own and infuse it with their own absurdist flavor. The tale is reset in the American South where Southern gentleman con man Professor Dorr (Tom Hanks) recruits a group of oddball losers as the criminals to help him rob a floating casino.

The gang's inside man for the heist is the loudmouthed Gawain MacSam (Marlon Wayans) who has secured a

job as a janitor on the boat, if only he can keep from getting fired before the heist takes place. The expert tunneler is the General (Tzi Ma), a presumably North Vietnamese thug who wordlessly dispatches threats and has a habit of concealing his ever-present cigarette in his mouth when needed. The explosives expert, Garth Pancake (J.K. Simmons), got fired from his last job as special-effects man on a dog food commercial for killing the dog, but it did not seem to nick his confidence. Failed football player Lump Hudson (Ryan Hurst), whose spectacularly painful and brief career is an early comic bit in the film, provides the brawn without the brains. That the poetry-quoting Professor would think that these candidates for his crime team had the right stuff says something about his own belief in his plan and his capacity for self-delusion.

This is absurd, dark comedy from start to finish. To gain access to the casino's vault, the Professor rents a room from an elderly widowed church lady, Marva Munson (Irma P. Hall). The gang proceeds to tunnel to the vault from her cellar, while the professor tells her that they are a group of musicians practicing medieval "church music." It is clear from the beginning that Mrs. Munson is a force to be reckoned with, even if she dotes on her cat Pickles and talks to the portrait of her late, beloved hus-

band.

A lot of the stuff in this film is straight out of the original, yet it feels like Coenesque all the same. The comedy is dark, sometimes subtle, ensemble work, with the smooth-talking but eccentrically twitchy Professor often hard pressed to distract the landlady or explain away the bumbling thieves' mishaps. The Coens are noted for putting together clockwork-type stories and although this is an adaptation and not an original, it suits their style. Every performer has his chance to show off his comic stuff, while the mishap-prone caper unfolds. Although it is an ensemble work in which every actor gets his turn, the pivotal role belongs to Irma P. Hall as the rotund, rolling-gaited and unstoppable Mrs. Munson.

The dark humor that predominates is the norm for the Coen Brothers but there is also a surprising amount of tasteless humor, like jokes about Irritable Bowel Syndrome, which doesn't seem up to their usual work. While "The Ladykillers" is a funny film, and better than their last effort, "Intolerable Cruelty," it is not as seamlessly polished as some of their other films.

This is the second Coen Brothers collaboration with big studio production, and the result is a much smoother, funnier film this time. Ethan and Joel Coen are the writing, producing and directing pair who has

given us such gems as "Fargo" and "Raising Arizona," and a host of other odd and wonderful films. Long the princes of indie film, the experiment of collaboration with Hollywood may be a nod to the costs of modern film production and distribution, or it may be an attempt to expand their audience and box office take.

Longtime fans are wary of where this experiment will lead. Unlike actors Mel Gibson and Tom Cruise, the Coens have more limited financial resources and might be subject to undue pressure from financiers and marketers. If they can maintain creative control, the brothers have certainly proven they have the vision and talent to turn out great films.

Like filmmakers of the silent era, the Coens work with the same team from film to film, something that gives their work a distinctive stamp. Chief among their collaborators is cinematographer Roger Deakins, who has an unerring eye for the breathtaking or riveting image. Joel and Ethan Coen work as a team in directing,



writing, editing and producing their films and sharing the credits, in what may be one of the most cohesive and talented teams in filmmaking.

For years, the Coens set the bar for unique, highly original and polished indie films. While this film is more like their usual stuff, it still lacks some of their intelligence and subtlety. Why these collaborations should be off base is both unclear and omi-

nous. The wider success of "O Brother Where Art Thou" may have raised their sites for bigger box office but it would be a shame if it really came at the price of losing that unique style.

Such fears may be groundless. "The Ladykillers" is more like the old tricks than their last film, but it still a nagging concern for long-time fans who crave their marvelous film

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**SGA DEBATE, from page 1**

She is also trying to start a mentoring program with students in the Normandy district.

"I am trying to start a mentorship program where we, the students, will have the chance to interact with students, and hopefully get them to set goals and better themselves," Abraham said. "If we can change one child's life, it is all worth it."

Another question that was asked was regarding what they would change about SGA if they were elected into office. Abraham emphasized that committees are an important aspect. She said that she does not think there are enough committees on SGA right now and they would save a lot of time at meetings.

McNabb said that she agrees with Abraham's view of committees, but thinks that committees outside of SGA should also be implemented into SGA in order to work together. She also said that they should listen to the students and hear what they have to say.

Time was another issue that the audience asked about. Someone asked how much time they would be able to devote, since both women are extensively involved in organizations. McNabb said that she would still serve as president of her sorority until December of this year.

"Next semester is the slow end of our semester and my term is up the very beginning of December," McNabb said. "We have nine amazing executive officers here and they are able to complete all of the work and my job is just to make sure it gets done."

Abraham said that she has informed all of her organizations that if she is elected vice president, she will not be serving on executive positions in the groups anymore. She would also not be able to sit on ASUM because of conflict of interest.

McNabb expressed that she would like to open parking. She said that currently, students are ticketed for parking in faculty and staff spots; however, faculty and staff are not ticketed if they park in students' spots, and this is something she would like to see change.

Both contestants agreed that a parking committee with students, as well as faculty and staff, would be a good idea.

"I do feel that there should be a committee where we have an open dialogue between faculty and students on this issue," Abraham said.

After a half hour of questioning, the candidates provided their closing



Melinda McNabb, SGA candidate for vice president, responds to a question from the audience on Thursday afternoon during a debate held in the SGA chambers. McNabb's opponent in the vice presidential race is Erin Abraham, at left. The SGA elections will take place April 20-21.

Mike Sherwin/The Current

remarks and then the presidential candidates stepped up to the microphones. Scott Bopp, junior, international business, Charles Stadlander, junior, public policy and Kenyatta Thacker, junior, communications, are the presidential candidates.

The presidential candidates also started out with opening remarks, and then moved right into audience questioning. Stadlander started out the president debate by stating the leadership activities that he has been involved in, which he feels makes him qualified for the position.

Thacker also stated the organizations that she is involved in. She is a member of the National Communications Association, president of African American Leadership Council, member of Associated Black Collegians, member of Greater St. Louis Associated Black Journalists and member of the chartering committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"I believe that the training that I've had will qualify me to be the best SGA president," Thacker said.

Bopp also spoke of his leadership experiences. He is the chief justice on the Student Court and worked on var-

ious committees. He said that he wants to continue change, as it has been changing for the positive throughout the years.

Stadlander was asked about his idea to provide covered walkways for students. He said that they would also provide more security for students when walking to classes. As for funding the walkways, Stadlander said that he does have ideas of how he would be able to do this.

"We need an SGA president who is going to lobby the legislature of the state; we need an SGA president who is going to lobby private donors in the community to donate to this school," Stadlander said.

Another issue that was brought up was how knowledgeable each of the candidates are on SGA and how it works. Bopp said that he knows how things work because he sits in on the meetings every month and Student Court is a part of SGA, which also makes him knowledgeable on the organization.

Thacker said that she was an SGA representative for African American Leadership Council, but was not this year. She said that she does understand SGA and how things work.

Stadlander said that he has not attended any SGA meetings at UM-St. Louis, but does understand how things work because he served in executive positions on SGA at his previous organization.

Communicating to the student body is an important issue to Thacker that she plans to work on more. Stadlander pledges to take a more proactive approach, rather than reactive. He said that he feels that the current SGA takes a more reactive approach and he would like to work on this if elected.

Bopp said that the role of the SGA president is to manage direction and decide which direction they would like to go in.

"It is about evolution, not revolution. We've got to continue to evolve in this organization," Bopp said.

The contenders answered many questions from the audience during the allotted half hour for the debate. They each provided closing remarks to end the event. Candidates will continue campaigning until elections. Students are encouraged to vote in the election on April 20 and 21. The voting will be online at <http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/osl/election2004.html>.

**ACADEMIC FREEDOM, from page 6**

Students for Academic Freedom state four exclusive goals that can be found, more in depth, on their website. These goals include promoting intellectual diversity on campus; defending the right of students to be treated with respect by faculty and administrators, regardless of their political or religious beliefs; promoting fairness, civility and inclusion in student affairs; and securing the adoption of the 'Academic bill of rights' as official University policy.

Dogan said that she hopes all schools will adopt their principles in the Academic Bill of Rights. So far, only a few universities across the country have adopted these principles into their bylaws.

Politics is not the only subject that can be biased or opinionated.

Beatty said that at least in politics, a person knows that more than one major political party exists. However, in a field like communication, Beatty said that an instructor could present only his or her preferred theory over other competing theories. Freshman, who might not have any communication theory experience, may not know that there are other theories in competition.

The purpose of the classroom is to shape your intellectual capabilities with any kind of topic or behavior," Beatty said.

Especially during controversial times, politics often seem to turn up in

innocent conversation.

"Politics is all invasive and covers everything," Chickos said.

Some students think that political conversation has a place in the classroom, so long as the discussion is balanced and represents both sides.

"I think they [professors] should be allowed to talk about politics in class. But I don't think they should force us to see things their way," said Paul Casolari, junior, math.

Caputa agreed with this idea. "I think it's healthy for a class to talk about topics, but the instructor should not be biased. We need to hear both sides of the story," she said. "The majority of professors here are liberal when they bring in their own views. It's unhealthy because it takes away from other educational benefits that we can learn from the class."

Kimball said that the concern of liberal professors indoctrinating University students is overblown. "We are all adults, and it implies that students are dumb and that they accept whatever a professor says," he said.

Academic Freedom in the classroom is something faculty and students have expressed concern about. Any student who feels that any view, political or other, has been "imposed" on him or her can contact Sara Dogan at Students for Academic Freedom at (202) 969-2467 or can visit the website at [www.studnetsforacademicfreedom.org](http://www.studnetsforacademicfreedom.org).

**CASINO NIGHT, from page 6**

"This is my first Casino Night, and I've enjoyed it thoroughly," Christi Mullis said, senior, criminal justice. "I'm willing to bet my whole bankroll on an oil change at the silent auction. There's some fierce competition."

According to Cowan, approximately 75% of the prizes were donations.

"We fund raise to buy the other prizes, and that money comes from our budget," she said.

Sky Bland, 14-year-old brother of dealer Semilla Bland, impressed the older gamblers with a combination of luck and skill. He won \$80,000 on one hand of blackjack and \$40,000 on one spin of roulette. This was his first time at Casino Night.

Sara Dill, junior, graphic design, was not so lucky with her money. She visited the admission's table a second time to pay \$5 in exchange for another bankroll after blackjack was hard on her hand. Dill decided to attend the event because she had never been to one before.

The night ended with a live auction hosted by Fr. Bill Kempf. Prizes included an Xbox, which went for \$502,000, a combination DVD player/CD player/VCR, a 3-CD changer and radio, a 13 inch color television, the "Need for Speed: Underground" video, the "Halo" video game, a Wayne's World video collection, Motorola walkie-talkies, the movies "Fight Club", "School of Rock", "Pirates of the Caribbean", "Old School", "Indiana Jones" four disk DVD set, and "Animal House," a limited edition CD-box set of the Rolling Stones album "Forty Licks," two Cardinals tickets for terrace seating, along with Hall of Fame passes, a \$50 gift certificate to Jake's Steaks, a \$10 gift certificate to Harvest, two tickets to the Bissell Mansion Restaurant and Theatre, a three-month membership to the New Lady Fitness Center, two tickets to the Repertory Theatre's "The Twelfth Night," and a \$50 gift certificate to Weekends Only.

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# Litmag returns...



**ABOVE:** Paul Higgins leafs through the 2004 Litmag at "The Coffeehouse," open mic night at Gallery 210 on Thursday. Higgins had three poems published in Litmag, which was released last week and will be included as an insert in most of The Current newspapers this week. The 2004 Litmag marks a return for the literary magazine, which had a three-year hiatus from 2000-2003. This year the magazine was put together by the English 4985 Editing Litmag class, led by instructor Mary Troy. Another Coffeehouse event will take place at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Apr. 22 at Gallery 210.

Mike Sherwin/The Current



Chris Leicht, sophomore, mass communications, performs "The Redneck Song" during "The Coffeehouse" on Thursday.

## FILM, from page 5

Both the frames per second and the relatively small changes in the sequential still pictures of a film, which are interpreted as spatial displacements, contribute to the illusion. If either the flicker rate were lower or the changes from frame to frame were greater, we would not see them as continuous.

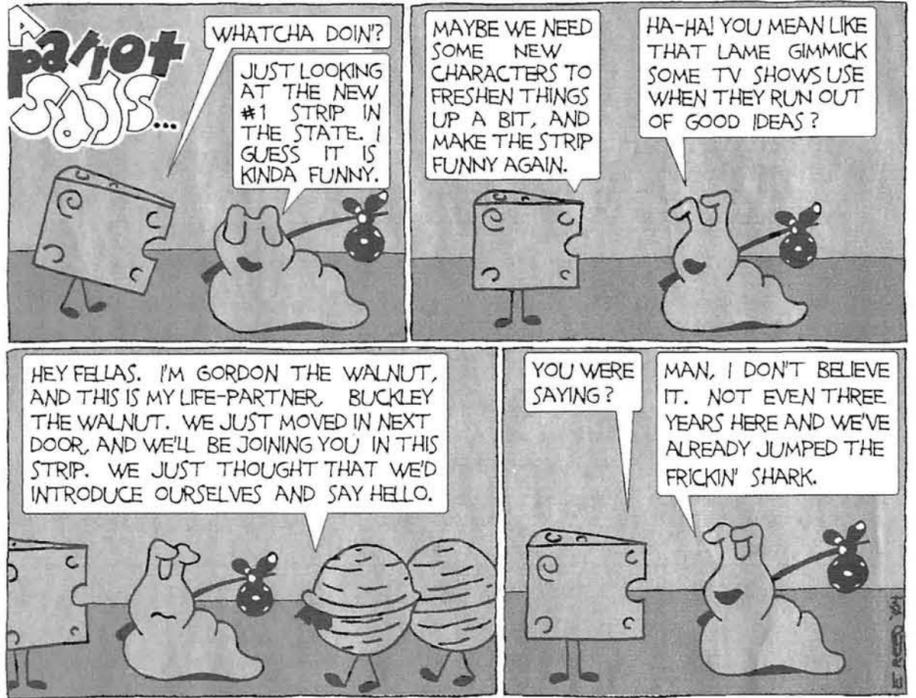
Not all motion perception is in the brain. The retina has oriented motion cells that react to motion changes. Directionally-selective neurons are found throughout most of the retina in the striate cortex. A directionally-selective receptor is a consecutive series of photoreceptors that, when stimulated together, send an impulse to the brain. The receptors have a "preferred" direction and fire maximally when a bar of light is moved through their field in the preferred direction, and fire less as the direc-

tion is changed from the preferred. If the horizontal receptors are all firing and the vertical ones are not, the perception is side-to-side, vertical, panning movement.

A lot of the portion of the brain devoted to vision is involved in motion perception. The medial temporal region (MT) integrates motion information from 90 percent of direction-selective cells, while the medial superior temporal (MST) helps with perceiving rotation and expansion or contraction of the visual field. However, theories of motion perception are difficult to formulate because it is not just the input from the eye that determines if we see something as moving. Changes of input from saccadic eye movement as the eye scans the visual field are not perceived as movement. When we track an object with our eyes, the image

may not change but we get a sense of movement. A lot of how we see has to do with expectations and past experience in the real world, where we learned to interpret visual information for speed, relative distance, and direction.

The interesting thing for this discussion is that the same mechanisms that allow us to detect real motion are at play when we watch movies. Small sequential changes from still image to still image that are close enough to our threshold to detect those changes. When coupled with a flicker rate that exceeds our Critical Flicker Fusion rate, and hence is imperceptible to us, it allows our brains to interpret the visual information of films by the same pathways as real-world movement. The movement in movies is more "real" to your brain than people used to believe.



The Current is accepting applications for next year. All positions except editor-in-chief are available. Come by MSC 388 to tour The Current's offices, meet with existing staff and ask any questions you may have. Give us a call at 314-516-5174 if you are interest or shoot us an e-mail at current@jinx.umsl.edu. Come on in and say "Howdy!"

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**Lunchtime in the Nosh**  
 We'll be auctioning off a few lunches to benefit *What's Up! Magazine*, a publication written by and for the homeless.

**Wednesday 4/21**  
**"Cardboard Shantytown Simulation"**  
**9 PM outside the MSC**  
 Spend the night outside with us, solidarity with the homeless. Meet us on the front lawn of the Millennium Center.

**Thursday 4/22**  
**"Speaker on Substandard Housing"**  
**7 PM in MSC 313**  
 Avis Laden-Hill from Habitat for Humanity will be speaking on the state of substandard housing and what Habitat does to help.

**Friday 4/23**  
**Habitat for Humanity**  
**8 AM-3:30 PM**  
 Meet at the Newman House across from UMSL. Spend the day building houses with Habitat for Humanity.

Check out our Information Booth on the MSC Bridge from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM and donate to our Collection Jars at registers in MSC.

Sponsored by the Catholic Newman Center, Residence Hall Association, Alpha Phi Omega, Delta Sigma Pi, and the Pierre Laclède Honors College Student Association

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Build extra income with a part-time e-commerce business. For more information call: 1-877-255-6690 (toll free). Please leave a message, all calls will be responded to.

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