



See page 3
The war in Iraq was the year's big story.

THECURRENTONLINE.COM

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - ST. LOUIS

Dodd rejected Stuck in a pay freeze

BY WILL MELTON
Staff Writer

"Basically, the litany of charges that were laid out against him were

just fraudulent at best," DeClue, senior, political science, said. Members complained that Dodd was too outspoken and abused the listserv, leaving their e-mail accounts congested. DeClue stated that the listserv exists to facilitate conversation between board



David Dodd

members about items concerning ASUM. The ASUM bylaws state, "All board members, staff, and interns...shall make a valiant effort to check their e-mail on a daily basis."

DeClue contends that this directive implicitly allows a board member to send e-mails on a daily basis. He does not understand the reasoning behind the complaint. "They don't like how David challenges their authority, how he raises questions about everything and I personally feel that this was a

vetting against him," Schwadron said.

Dodd was also working on a new internship program that would allow UM-St. Louis students the opportunity to work for a state legislator. The program was advertised on campus and requested applications be submitted to Terry Jones, professor of political science, by Nov. 7. Jones acknowledged knowing about the program and adds that Mary Anne McCollum, ASUM executive director, had phoned him after the deadline had passed and inquired about

the number of applicants. There were none.

Dodd was accused of attempting to facilitate this program without the board's knowledge. However, DeClue argues that he knew McCollum was helping with the program. He even has a copy of a letter sent out to board members, by McCollum, the day before the ASUM meeting that detailed the program.

see Dodd, page 3

Problems persist for members of ASUM

BY WILL MELTON
Staff Writer

Amidst allegations that there was an organized movement centered on removing David Dodd, former Student Government Association chairman, from the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, the organization has had to deal with further upheaval.

Assistant legislative director Elizabeth Grindstaff was dismissed. ASUM executive director Mary Anne McCollum explained via e-mail that once Grindstaff



Beth Grindstaff

became SGA vice-president in September, she became an ex-officio member of the ASUM board. McCollum implied that this created a conflict of interest, but there is no provision for such a situation in the organization's bylaws.

Grindstaff was not, however, terminated until December. "Since intern selection/training was already underway, the decision was made to have Beth continue until the end of the semester. Clint Collins, legislative director, had several conversations with Beth regarding this," McCollum

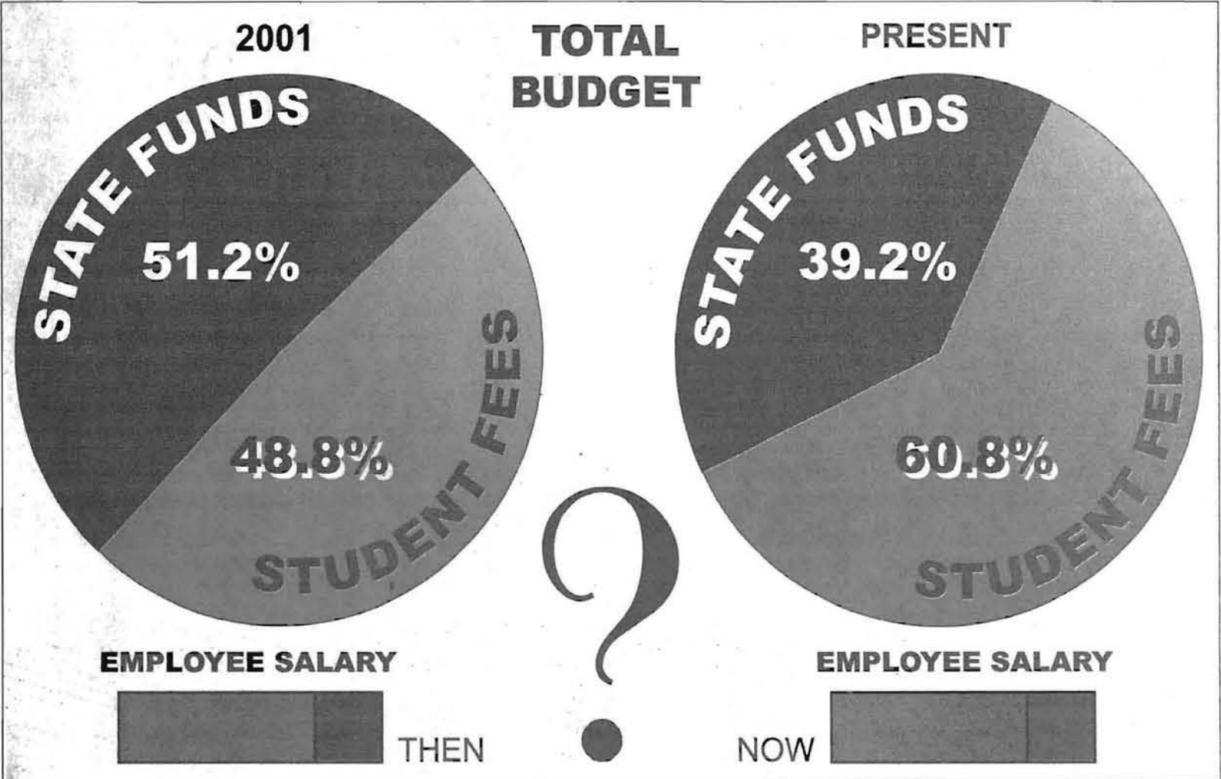
said. Collins was unavailable for comment. Grindstaff denies this, charging that, "We spoke about the possibility before I was elected, but there was no coordination for my dismissal."

"I think the lapse in time from Beth's election as VP to her dismissal as ALD is certainly questionable," former ASUM board member and graduate Adam Schwadron said. "And, if Ms. McCollum felt it wasn't the right time to dismiss Beth during the intern selection process, why would Beth be dismissed at any time? To me, they found Beth to be a valuable asset during that process, and all of a sudden she is no longer of use to

ASUM."

Schwadron denies ever hearing anything about the pending termination of Grindstaff during that period of time. "I also think that if plans were to release Beth from her position, common courtesy would have been placed in informing the members of the board so we could find a suitable replacement to continue the training and guidance of the interns," Schwadron said.

see ASUM, page 3



BY PATRICIA LEE
Staff Writer

As state funds for higher education have decreased, students are not the only people affected by increased student fees and tuition hikes. UM-St. Louis faculty and staff have had minimal increases in salary and a pay freeze in the last few years.

Since fiscal year 2001, state appropriations to the University have decreased and state funds now make up a smaller portion of UM-St. Louis' revenue than student fees. In 2001, the state appropriated \$53 million to UM-St. Louis, compared to the \$45 million the University is receiving in the current fiscal year. State funds previously made up 51.2 percent of the campus budget, in contrast to the 39.2 percent it presently represents.

Student fees then make up the remainder of the budget. As a result of reduced funding, various programs

and salaries have been affected. "This campus responded to funding cuts in various ways, such as eliminating positions or holding positions open until funds became available and delaying or canceling equipment purchases," Bob Samples, director of communications, said.

Approximately 74 percent of the campus budget goes toward salaries and benefits for faculty and staff, so salaries also took a hit with funding cuts. In fiscal year 2003, there was a salary freeze. While there was a 2 percent salary pool increase this year, many employees did not receive any salary increases.

Salary increases are subjective, so a salary pool increase does not mean automatic raises. Many University employees do not receive pay raises, even if the salary pool increases. "After receiving input from various people such as the chancellors and president, the Board of Curators makes the final decision whether the average

Approximately 74 percent of the campus budget goes toward salaries and benefits for faculty and staff, so salaries also took a hit with funding cuts.

salary pool will increase across the UM-System," Samples said. "Individual salary increases are determined by unit managers based on merit and market principles."

After an annual budget is announced in the late spring, each employee is assessed and his or her salary is changed or remains the same, depending on job performance. The

chair of each department then decides who deserves pay raises. They then try to balance pay inequity by using the salary pool to raise salaries for those who they feel are underpaid.

Salaries also do not factor in the cost of living and inflation. "They want us all to keep doing more for less or for the same amount, but if you're getting the same amount three years in a row, it is less," Joyce Mushaben, professor of political science and director of the Institute for Women and Gender Studies, said.

While the lack of salary increases may not lead to a retention problem, because of the tight job market, Mushaben believes that this could lead to a morale problem among University employees. "People have extraordinary costs and then if you keep asking them to do more and more, you can't go for so many years without giving people a sense that their hard work has paid off," Mushaben said.

Students look toward other classroom settings

BY MELISSA MCCRARY
Features Associate

Sitting in traffic, not being able to find a parking spot, being stuck in crammed hallways and being tardy to

lessons, assignments and exams. The video lessons can be viewed on St. Louis' Higher Education Channel, and the videotapes can be checked out at UM-St. Louis' libraries.

Anthropology, Biology,

own advantages and disadvantages.

"I have enjoyed taking online courses, because I think it is great to work from home and I feel that I get more things completed when I am able to schedule my own class times," said



Shannon Hoppel/The Current

class are a few things that students who take online or telecourses do not have to worry about.

Thanks to UM-St. Louis' MyGateway system and online applications, students are able to take courses and complete degree requirements in the comfort of their own homes.

The University of Missouri system began the Video Instructional Program (VIP) at UM-St. Louis in 1988. About 20 different VIP courses are offered throughout each year. Just like many regular on-campus classes, each VIP course counts toward three credit hours.

Most of these courses require video

Communication, History, Philosophy, Psychology, Social Work and Sociology are a few of the departments that offer video courses.

In the case of online courses, the instructor will usually post a syllabus, assignments and possibly a discussion board under MyGateway. Telecourses usually provide all materials, including a syllabus, a broadcast schedule, textbooks and study guides or outlines of notes in a telecourse packet, which can be purchased from the bookstore.

Approximately 20 online courses are being offered during the winter 2004 semester through various departments.

These types of classes hold their

Stacy Ptak, sophomore, psychology.

While some students may prefer the face-to-face communication that comes with taking courses in a traditional classroom setting, where they can meet other students and converse with professors, others enjoy being able to work at their own pace.

Al Akerson, senior lecturer in the Department of Communications, teaches an online public relations course. Akerson feels that there are many advantages and tremendous flexibility associated with web-based courses.

see VIDEO CLASSROOM, page 3

Student cold-fighting techniques

BY MELISSA MCCRARY
Features Associate

As the winter season blusters on and temperatures continue to drop, more students may experience coughs and sniffles. With a new semester beginning at UM-St. Louis, students should be aware of possible illnesses they could encounter.

According to www.adolescenthealth.com, "Many college students who live in dorms or commute to campuses have a high risk of catching colds or the flu because they are exposed to more people and germs in the air."

UM-St. Louis Health Services Nurse Practitioner Dana Merris believes that students have several options to prevent cold and flu illnesses from occurring and can fight the virus once symptoms are noticed.

Students can fight off bacteria that cause common illnesses by maintaining good lifestyle practices and making responsible health decisions. Proper handwashing techniques can also help prevent bacteria from spreading.

To avoid catching an unwanted cold, students should avoid eating or drinking with the same utensils as other people. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of nutrients is essential to healthy living.

see SICKNESS, page 3

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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. All listings use 516 prefixes unless otherwise indicated.

Thru March Woodcock Museum

"Image and Imagination: Art of the American West" virtual exhibit is open online at <http://woodcockmuseum.umsl.edu>. Featured is paintings and sculptures from the permanent collections of the Woodcock Museum and the Mercantile Library at UM-St. Louis.

Mon 12 Welcome back

The first day of classes is here again and it's time for students to put on their thinking caps. For any campus information call 314-516-5000. This is also where you call for weather info.

12 Free aerobics

Enjoy a few weeks of aerobic training. Included are classes on spinning and water exercise. Check the schedule for dates and times. For information call Larry Coffin at 314-516-5124.

12 Media exhibition

Photographic imagery will be on display as part of the Emulsion Media Exhibition. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays at Gallery FAB.

Tues 13 Art of Auditioning

Discover the art of auditioning during a short workshop at 5 p.m. in 119 Benton Hall. Topics will include what directors look for during auditions; selecting a monologue and song to perform and approaching a cold reading audition. The workshop is open to UMSL faculty, staff and students, and it's sponsored by the Department of Theatre, Dance and Media Arts. It is being held in advance of "Cabaret" auditions. Call 314-516-4572 for information.

Tues 13 Aerobics continue

The free aerobics classes continue on Tuesday with individual classes on spinning and total body toning. Meeting will be held at the Mark Twain Pool in the Mark Twain recreating center.

Thurs 15- Fri 16

"Cabaret"

Auditions for the musical "Cabaret" will be held. The Theatre, Dance and Media Arts department in conjunction with the Music department would like to invite you to audition for the spring musical production of "Cabaret." Auditions will be held at 5 p.m. on the above dates in the Lee Theater of the Touhill PAC. Call back will be January 20 at 5 p.m. For further detail, call 314-516-4572.

Fri 16 Research workshop

The center for Teaching and Learning and Office of Research Administration will hold the workshop "Preparing a Successful Research Board Proposal: Guidelines and Advice" from 10 a.m. to noon at the Regional Center for Education and Work on North Campus. UMSL faculty members who have served on the UM System Research Board will discuss application guidelines. They will cover how to ensure proposals to the Board are complete and effective. Feb. 16 is the next proposal submission deadline. Life refreshments will be served. Attendees should park in the lot of the Closed QuikTrip on Florissant Road. Call 4508 or visit <http://www.umsl.edu/services/ctl/Proposal.htm> to register or for more information.

PUT IT ON THE BOARD!
Got an event, and activity? Put it on the bulletin board!

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A few good writers to take on challenging roles at the student newspaper. Call 516-6810 for information.

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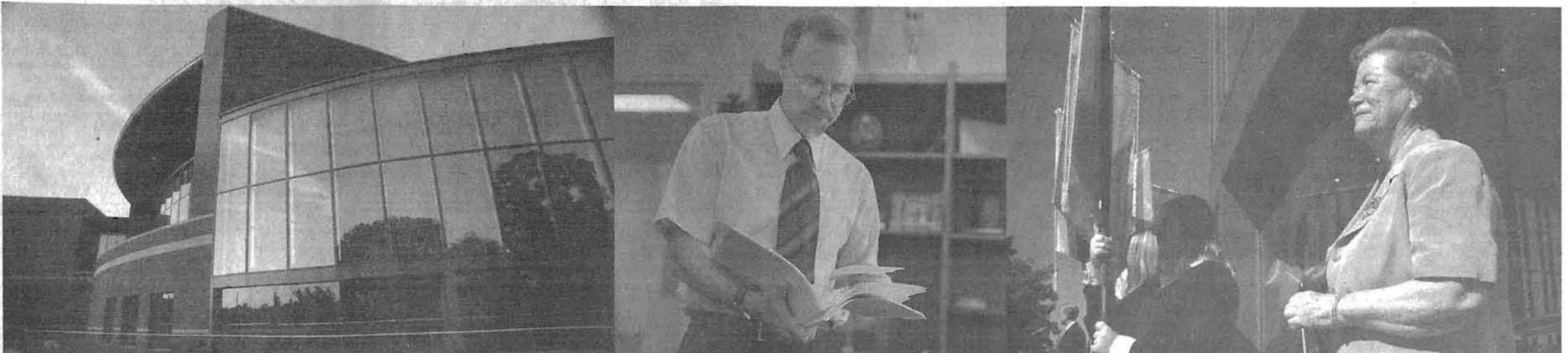
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2003 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

BY ANGELA ASHLEY
Staff Writer

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Thomas George, Jessica Lynch, George Bush and Blanche Touhill were only a few of the faces that marked 2003. While many people may be looking forward to the new year at hand, some are still reflecting on the events of last year, which was full of both turmoil and triumph.

The year began with January suicide bombings in Tel Aviv, France's government announcing that they would not support the war in Iraq, and an Illinois governor staying 167 executions. In the sports world, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers won the Superbowl, and here at UM-St. Louis, committees were formed to search for resident assistants, fans for basketball games and a new chancellor.

In February, a new Osama Bin Laden tape was broadcast around the world, warning of future attacks on America. France, Germany and Belgium denied the United States' request to begin the placement of weapons in Turkey in case of war with Iraq. Weapons inspectors ordered the country of Iraq to destroy missiles, and President Bush demanded that in addition to Iraq disarming, Saddam Hussein must go into exile to prevent war. People all over the world relived the 1986 Challenger tragedy when the space shuttle Columbia crashed upon reentry to Earth's atmosphere, killing all seven crewmembers. At UM-St. Louis, Jonas Zakour and Candice Williams were elected as Homecoming king and queen, David Mann was elected Big Man on Campus, a twelve percent hike in student fees was announced and there was an arson incident in LeGras Hall.

On March 20, the United States

launched Operation Iraqi Freedom with a pre-dawn air strike on Baghdad. Only the day before, students at UM-St. Louis held a peace rally.

In April, Pfc. Jessica Lynch was rescued. She and other members of the 507th Ordnance Maintenance Company had been captured on March 23 by Iraqi troops. The SARS genome was also decoded in April, calming the worldwide panic associated with the disease. "Chicago" took home the Oscar for Best Picture. At UM-St. Louis, students helped "residents" of Greenwood Cemetery, the honor code was revisited, and SGA elections were held. Adam Beumeler was elected President, Kristy Runde was elected Vice President and Benny Suen was elected comptroller. Beumeler's presidency was questioned after it was announced that he broke some campaign rules.

In May, President Bush declared that the combat in Iraq was over and the United States had been victorious in its mission. Terrorists struck in Saudi Arabia, the House passed a plan to globally fight the AIDS disease, the first presidential debate was held among the nine Democratic candidates, and the Mad Cow disease was discovered in Canada. At UM-St. Louis, students were still not sure who their SGA president was, and would not know



Chris Pilz, named head coach of Rivermen Basketball in August.

until the next semester. The Alumni Association tried to recruit students, the 2003 winter semester came to a close and summer sessions began.

In June, Bush traveled to France for a Summit to discuss with eight other countries the nuclear weapons of North Korea and Iraq. Suicide bombers attacked Kabul, Bush offered aid to Pakistan, Martha Stewart was indicted and the latest Harry Potter book was a popular hit. At UM-St. Louis, nine people were inducted into the UM-St. Louis Sports Hall of Fame, including six former players, two former coaches and one former executive committee member.

In July, the United States offered a bounty for Saddam Hussein. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced that the estimated cost of war had increased, and the Bush administration announced that Iraq weapons intelligence was flawed. Pfc. Jessica Lynch returned home, and the unemployment rate in the United States skyrocketed to the highest in history. UM-St. Louis student and basketball forward Jonathan Griffin was awarded the Arthur Ashe Junior Sports Scholar Award.

In August, a car bomb exploded in Baghdad, killing 11 and wounding 70. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced his plan to run for governor of California. A massive blackout



Kristy Runde was named president of SGA after a contested election between Adam Schwadron and Adam Beumeler.

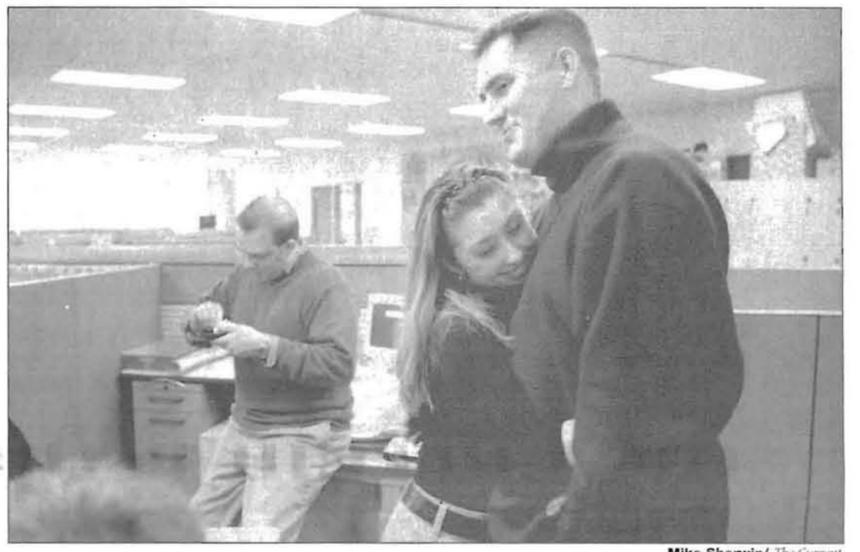
The year 2003 at UMSL saw the completion of the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center (far left), the inauguration of a new chancellor, Thomas George (center), who stepped into the shoes left by the retirement of Blanche Touhill (right) in December 2002.

of Liberia, had stolen an estimated \$100 million dollars of aid money from his country. Bush asked Congress for \$87 billion to aid reconstruction efforts in Iraq. The United States Army announced that Army Reserve and National Guard troops would remain in Iraq and Kuwait for as long as one year. Kristy Runde took the position of SGA president. Her promotion left the vice president spot open. Elections produced Beth Grindstaff as the winner. David Dodd was elected SGA chair, and Adam Schwadron was elected vice-chair. The multi-million dollar Blanche Touhill Performing Arts Center held its grand opening as well.

In October, Israel attacked Syria for the first time in 30 years. Baghdad was bombarded with missiles, killing 40 people and wounding hundreds more. Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected governor of California, and Congress approved Bush's request for billions of dollars to aid in the reconstruction of Iraq. Bush declared California wildfires a national disaster, and the Pope beatified Mother Theresa.

see YEAR IN REVIEW, page 12

Saying farewell...



Beth Grindstaff, senior, political science, hugs her boyfriend David Dodd at a farewell party for Dodd and Chris Telker-Harris held by the Office of Student Life. Dodd, a Staff Sergeant in the 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, has been called to active duty in Iraq. Dodd said his biggest regret in leaving unexpectedly would be "having to leave so many things undone." Dodd is chairman of the SGA, president of the UM-St. Louis Debate Club, and a former ASUM officer.

ASUM, from page 1

"While we had planned on removing the pay from the ALD position, so as to remove any possible conflict of interest between Beth being VP and ALD, it was never our intention to remove Beth from the ALD position," Ben DeClue, ASUM board member, said. "We had intended on her continuing in her position throughout the remainder of the school year."

The matter was further complicated and suspicions increased when ASUM members came into the office one day in December to discover their keys no longer worked. The locks on the door had been changed and no one knew about it.

"I came to the office one day and a friend of mine said, 'Ben, I think you have problems. I just saw a work crew leaving your office.' I went to check it out and when I put my key in,

"I spoke to Orinthia Montague and she informed me that Sarah Jackson, ASUM board chair, ordered the change."

- Ben DeClue, ASUM Board Member

sure enough it didn't work," DeClue said.

"I spoke to Orinthia Montague and she informed me that Sarah Jackson, ASUM board chair, ordered the

change." Erin Abraham, junior, sociology, and ASUM ambassador, said, "Jackson e-mailed SGA president Kristy Runde, asking her to collect Beth and David's keys, but she did not have the authority to do so and could not be of help."

UM-St. Louis board members are still in the dark as to why the decision was made to change the locks. "I fully intend on investigating under what authority our locks were changed and why they were changed the top priority at our next board meeting," DeClue said. "Never before has an ASUM board chair taken such radical measures against a member campus."

The next ASUM meeting will take place on Jan. 31 at UM-St. Louis. Students are encouraged to attend the meeting that is open to all.

SICKNESS, from page 1

Avoiding an excessive amount of caffeine will decrease the chances of getting sick, and taking a daily multivitamin will help prevent illness. Regular exercise improves overall health, and getting enough sleep helps a person's body fight off germs. Finding time to relax and eliminate stress can also help students stay healthy.

"I recommend that students take Vitamin C or zinc supplements if they begin to feel sick or start experiencing signs of a cold," Merris said.

Students can stop by the University Health Services office, located at 131 MSC, for free evaluations, cough syrup, suppressants, decongestants and headache medicines.

One-dose medications are available in some cases, though students may be required to make an appointment within a couple of days for a check-up exam.

"There are no visit fees or co-pays needed since the services are provided by student registration fees," Merris said. "However, some written prescriptions might cost \$10, and there are minimal charges for strep-tests or urinalysis if they are necessary." Office Supervisor Deborah Carey recommends other services such as screening exams, immunizations and flu shots in the clinic. The University Health Services has office assistants, a registered staff nurse and a nurse practitioner available to assist students Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Illustration by Elliott Reed/The Current

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IN THEATERS FRIDAY, JANUARY 16TH

VIDEO CLASSROOM, from page 1

"It is much easier to fit an online class into a hectic schedule," Akerson said. "Most of all the students in my classes work part- or full-time jobs, or else they are running a household or managing children."

Akerson went on to say that one of the biggest advantages is that stu-

dents can "go to class" in their pajamas.

For those who are shy or intimidated about asking questions in class, correspondence through e-mails provides a comfortable option.

"I would speculate that a student who applies her- or himself in an online course will end up learning as

much as in a traditional classroom setting," Akerson said.

Students who are looking to take an extra class and earn more credits, but are unsure how to manage their busy life schedules, should consider the options of VIP and online courses. Those interested can check the winter course booklet for options.

Dodd, from page 1

DeClue contends that nothing McCollum is involved in takes place on the Columbia campus that she works from without every board member knowing it; to suggest otherwise is "laughable, but they came out like they had just been stabbed in the back."

Schwadron suggests that this incident was no accident. "I wouldn't be surprised if Mary Anne did do that for the express purposes of trying to get rid of David Dodd or any other dis-

senting member of the ASUM board," Schwadron said.

UM-St. Louis was told that they would have to elect a new board member for approval. Initially, they planned on nominating Dodd at the next SGA meeting and pushing for his re-election. The organization wanted to fulfill their pledge to represent the student voice. "I do think that there was an organized effort to remove David Dodd from the board," DeClue said.

However, Dodd's position as Staff Sergeant in the Marine Corps has rendered the plan impossible. He has been called to active duty for one year. Dodd left for California during winter break and will soon be sent to Iraq for a period of six to seven months. Consequently, SGA will have to elect a new chairperson of the assembly, another position that Dodd held. Elections for that position will take place at the first SGA meeting of the semester on Jan. 16.

OPINIONS

OUR OPINION

Double dipping President Floyd needs to pick a job and stick with it

Rumors have been floating around that UM System President Elson Floyd has been considering taking over the position as the UM-Columbia chancellor after the current chancellor retires.

UM-Columbia chancellor Richard Wallace announced that he would be retiring after this year. His retirement will go into effect on Aug. 31. After he is gone, who will take over as the chancellor? Could Floyd be next?

In an announcement from the UM-Columbia website, Floyd says that his main concern is consolidation. Bringing together the chancellor and president positions seems like a pretty big decision. In the announcement it is stated, "Floyd announced that he would use the transitional year to explore consolidation of administrative positions and functions between the UM System and MU, including combining the positions of UM president and MU chancellor when Wallace retires next year."

Being UM System president seems like it would be a big enough job in the first place. Seeing over all of the chancellors of the 4 universities, as well as making important decisions for the system, is a lot to begin with.

One large decision in discussion is the consideration of adding another university to the system. How would one person be able to handle all of this responsibility?

around \$250,000 a year. Floyd makes around \$350,000 a year and, in addition, \$50,000 is placed into a deferred compensation account to be paid upon completion of 5 years of employment.

Floyd recently granted the chancellors at St. Louis, Kansas City and Rolla pay raises. Kansas City's chancellor received a 36 percent increase. The system budget and some private donors, who have yet to be released, have paid for these increases.

So, would Floyd be making more than \$600,000 per year? The consolidation seems like it would be a bigger burden on the person than it needs to be. There are reasons that the two positions are separate in the first place. If one person could handle it all, then why do we even have chancellors?

Floyd does a lot of traveling to the campuses, which would lead him away from his duties to the Columbia campus all of the time. Managing all of this just seems ridiculous for one person to do.

Already having to ask private donors for money to fund the raises that the chancellors received seems like there is already a problem knocking on his door. Many issues will come up that need immediate attention and with all that the president would be taking on seems uncanny.

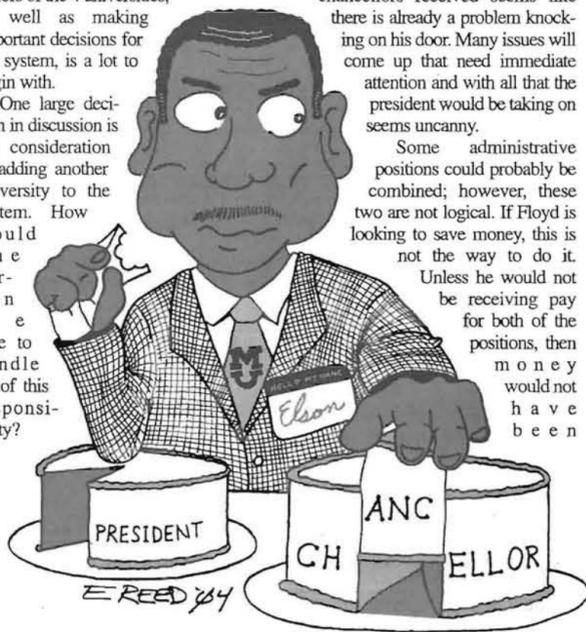
Some administrative positions could probably be combined; however, these two are not logical. If Floyd is looking to save money, this is not the way to do it.

Unless he would not be receiving pay for both of the positions, then money would not have been conserved at all.

They need to start looking for a new chancellor for the campus, instead of trying to consolidate two huge positions into one. When searching for a replacement for Blanche Touhill, no rumors escalated about Floyd wanting to take on the position as the chancellor. Consolidation was not an issue when choosing that chancellor.

All in all, we feel that the idea of Floyd taking on the position of chancellor and president is absurd. All of the work that would be involved would be tremendous and it would be too much for one person to handle.

UM-Columbia is the largest university in the system and would be hard to manage on top of other huge obligations.



Consolidation may be a big issue to the system at this time, but these are two of the largest positions that exist between the universities. UM-Columbia is the largest of the 4 universities and one of the most recognizable in the nation. It seems that if Floyd were going to be the chancellor of one of the campuses, Columbia would not be the most logical choice.

Another issue that may be addressed with the issue is pay. Would Floyd get paid the salaries of both the chancellor position and the president position? Large bonuses are given at the end of the year to both positions, so would he be getting paid for both of these as well? Both of these positions provide a large salary.

Chancellor Thomas George makes

The issue
According to rumors circulating throughout the UM System, President Elson Floyd may be thinking about taking over as chancellor of UM-Columbia in addition to his duties as system president.

We suggest
DO NOT DO IT!
President Floyd has enough on his plate without worrying about double dipping. We understand that Floyd is a very intelligent, capable man, but everyone has his breaking point.

So what do you think?
Tell us what you think! Drop us a line at the office, 388 MSC, or online at our Web site www.thecurrentonline.com.

ASUM follies and big-time mistakes

I'll be the first to admit it, I have had my share of run-ins with some of the members of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, or ASUM for those of you not in the know. I am sure they would admit it as well.

But when I see something that upsets or outrages me, well I have to talk about it. And recently, the home office has given UM-St. Louis' branch of ASUM the shaft. How so? Well first of all, David Dodd, who has just received orders to ship out to Iraq, was dismissed from his position as ASUM board member. The reasons cited were his use of the ASUM listserv, absences and involvement in a new internship program. So, now we shall address each of these concerns.

First of all, what a whiny, annoying complaint to say he uses the listserv too much. Boo-hoo. Get over it. That complaint makes the ASUM board sound like a bunch of spoiled brats...not quite the persona they should push across.

Second, they complained about his absences. Well, he was absent because he was a Marine reserve. Unless I am greatly mistaken, you cannot fire someone who misses work because he or she is a reserve. So, we have debunked that complaint.

Third, his involvement in a new internship was not directly related to ASUM so they had no right to complain about a college student's internship. Things to ponder, eh?

Now, Elizabeth Grindstaff. Again, we have had a somewhat tempestuous past, but when I see injustice, I have to speak on it. Grindstaff was just dismissed from her position as assistant legislative director because, as Mary Anne McCollum said via e-mail, Grindstaff being SGA vice-president created a conflict of interest. Yeah,

okay, then why wasn't she dismissed when she first won the position, instead of in December? That is either poor organizational planning, or a very poor conspiracy. Either way, McCollum needs to start covering her tracks better, because her moves are glaringly obvious at this point.

Now, perhaps, we have the topper to the situation. ASUM members showed up to their office in December to find the locks had been changed on the door. They could not get in. If there has ever been a pettier move, I have yet to hear it. This order came down from ASUM board chair Sarah Jackson. This is equivalent of a being a sick little child with a magnifying glass eyeing an ant hill. It's ridiculous. Evidently, according to ASUM member Erin Abraham, Jackson tried to talk Student Government Association President Kristy Runde into confiscating the keys. Runde demurred, saying she had no authority to do so. As well she should. But this illustrates yet another point: the ASUM folks perpetrating these petty acts have no conviction. If they are going to make these decisions, at least enforce them instead of having lackeys do it for you. If you are going to make a choice, have the stones to back it up. If you don't, then you have no right to make such a decision.

Now, perhaps before the higher ups at ASUM set their sights on individuals, they'll at least have learned to do so in a more discreet manner.

As a side note, even though David Dodd and I have not always seen eye to eye on matters, he is headed to Iraq, still hostile territory, and I wanted to let him know that, even though there have been times where we have been at odds with each other, I wish him all the best and hope he has a safe and uneventful sojourn in Iraq. Keep safe, David.



JASON GRANGER
Editor-in-Chief

An ode to vacation leisure and simplicity

So I didn't get to go dog sledding this break. Nor did I get to visit everyone I wanted or do everything I had planned during my trip to Vermont. But, really, I'm okay with that.

For once, I learned that a vacation is supposed to encompass a little down time. Strange that such a thing is a revelation for me, but I have always been of the squeeze-in-every-little-thing-imaginable-during-my-vacation mindset. This is probably why I come home more tired than when I leave.

I cannot take all of the credit for turning around my thought processes, frightful weather and the lure of uninterrupted time with my long-distance and seldom-seen boyfriend had a large part. Still, I have seen the light and encourage other hyper-planners to give it a go as well. If you need a little assistance in this area, a visit to New England in January is invaluable for keeping you from straying too far from the comfy confines of the indoors and hot beverages. And the 20-minute car warm-up needed for traveling further than half a mile just adds a little extra incentive.

Though sledding, winter treks, elaborate outings with friends and numerous other details were scratched

from my plans, I did have plenty of leisurely evenings at home with family, pleasantly domestic afternoons in flannel pajamas watching movies with my boyfriend (in lieu of frigid treks to clubs, the slopes and such) and the chance to enjoy a few select outings rather than juggling the logistics of too many activities in too short a time. Not "doing it all" was the best thing I could have done.

Of course, I was still packing an hour before I had to leave for the airport, but I suppose it's good to finally know for sure that I am simply an unrepentant procrastinator, rather than blaming my traditional frenzy on the situation and not having enough time until then. Guess I have another resolution to add to the list.

So many revelations just in these first weeks of the New Year.

I hope you too had a happy mix of excitement and leisure this past break, and that you are refreshed from another semester. I enjoyed the campus response we received last semester, both the kudos and criticisms and I hope you will continue to let us know how we are meeting your needs as a campus paper. Congratulations on surviving last term, and best of luck on the next.



NICHOLE LECLAIR
Managing Editor

What's your opinion?

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

- Food pantry donations
- Hockey season
- Holiday thanks and giving

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



Ryan Brown
Junior
Chemistry

A's in all my classes.



Veronica Henry
Sophomore
History

I don't make resolutions. I just don't have the willpower to keep them.



Daryl Perkins
Senior
Criminology

To graduate, basically - and get a better job.



Emily Feinberg
Graduate
Biology

I would like to find a guy who is actually worth my time.

Under Current

by **Mike Sherwin**
Photography Director

Do you have any resolutions for '04?

Social science exists



BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER
Science Columnist

was that it was in the industry's best interest to comply, but that attitude leaves the door open to individual greed, when someone thinks that the few dollars saved on this kind of feed is worth the risk because "it cannot happen here." This attitude has been wiped away by this scare but there is no guarantee it will not return in time. This is a classic case where regulation to protect the public health is actually good for industry profits because of the confidence in the products it confers.

Other things were disturbing about the BSE scare. Although the downer cow was tested, it went into the food chain before test results were known. Much of the response to the identification of the affected cow was the kind that would be effective for a conventional infection. There was a focus on the offspring of the cow in question, and on its herd mates. But BSE, caused by a malformed protein called a prion and not by normal infectious agents like bacteria or viruses, is not spread by contact. This bizarre, fatal disease is caused by consuming tissue, especially neural tissue, from affected animals.

The disease is most often linked to consuming tissues from the same species but it can cross species barriers. Ingesting prions causes them to move through the nervous system, causing normal proteins the prions encounter to refold into the misfolded shape of the prion. Since protein function is generally dependant on the folded shape of the protein, this destroys function, hence the loss of neurological function. The disease progresses slowly but destroys the brain, leaving sponge-like holes in brain tissue. Unlike normal infectious agents, prions cannot be destroyed by cooking.

To isolate cattle at risk for BSE, you need to look at feeding operations. Cattle that shared the same feed are the ones that pose a threat, not the ones in close physical contact. Feedlots are the place to look and where extensive recordkeeping is needed. Although consumers are safer eating cuts far from neural tissue and whole cuts like steaks than hamburger, sausage or other processed meats, the basic fact is the only safe beef is that where the feeding procedures are safe. Hence, many restaurants are switching to sources that do not use feedlots or feed animal products, like organic or grass-fed beef.

Although the industry reversal on regulation of beef likely resolves the BSE problem, it is not the only potential threat in our food system. The real point here is that citizens need to get informed and make up their own mind about these issues and then express their opinions before someone else makes all the decisions for everyone. Your concerns might not be my concerns, you might see the issues differently, you might reach different conclusions, but the point is to look into the issues instead of trusting that someone else will. Just like the beef industry, the tendency for all issues about biotech and food has been to avoid regulations that can prevent problems until a problem occurs. Right now,

there are concerns about the safety of genetically engineered foods and about inadequate enforcement of FDA regulations, which is still using outdated methods. Citizens are generally unaware that many FDA procedures date from the beginning of the twentieth century, like a "sniff" test for contaminated beef rather than a modern lab technique to test for infection. The agency does not have the manpower or funds to really do its job in a modern way.

Unless you are eating all organic, you are probably eating genetically modified foods because that industry took steps to guarantee that genetically modified products would not be labeled, something that could have hurt profits until the foods gained acceptance.

Producers of these foods may assert that genetically modified foods are "nutritionally identical" to natural foods or that "there is no proof that they pose a threat," but these statements have nothing to do with the potential problems. If there is a health threat, and there may not be, we will all find out because we are the guinea pigs in the experiment, unless you eat only more costly, certified organic foods. This is one reason why Europe, which has a more cautious approach with labeling and regulations, is suspicious of U.S. foods.

Recently, the introduction of a genetically modified fish for home aquariums raised a new question for modern biotech. Within an aquarium, the fish is not a problem but released in the wild, it becomes a potential problem just like any foreign, introduced species, even if this is a "species" we created. Introduced species have been responsible for a list of environmental woes - just ask anyone from the South who has had to cope with kudzu, an introduced Asian species. We have laws on the books to control introduced species, but genetically engineered organisms are not yet included. Should they be?

These are just a few of the new challenges that biotech will bring to our world. Biotech has the potential to do much good but like any powerful tool, it has to be handled correctly. Now is the time for citizens to think about these implications and not leave all decisions in the hands of either the industry to be regulated or to reactionaries who might try to ban the good with the bad.

Americans might want to ban cloning to produce a human baby, but therapeutic cloning that can heal disease and reverse spinal cord injuries might be a different case. Plus, something banned here might just go forward in another nation. Should the United Nations have a role?

Everyone needs to become better informed on the positives and negatives of biotech and new diseases. Making these decisions now, before a crisis, will be much better than waiting until problems arise. Some of the "genies" we let out of the bottle we will not be able to put back in. Like that lovely ornamental plant kudzu.

The best album that you've never heard

This week: Grammy nominees and who should really win an award

BY JASON GRANGER
Editor-in-Chief

This week, I thought I'd do something a little different with the column. As many of you music fanatics out there are surely aware, Grammy nominations have been released, so I thought I'd review some of the more

Below" by Outkast, "Justified" by Justin Timberlake and "Elephant" by the White Stripes. Again, I am not a huge fan of any of these, but I would have to go ahead and say the White Stripes because I admit that I do like "Seven Nation Army." That is a quality tune.

Up to bat now is song of the year. The nominees are "Beautiful" by

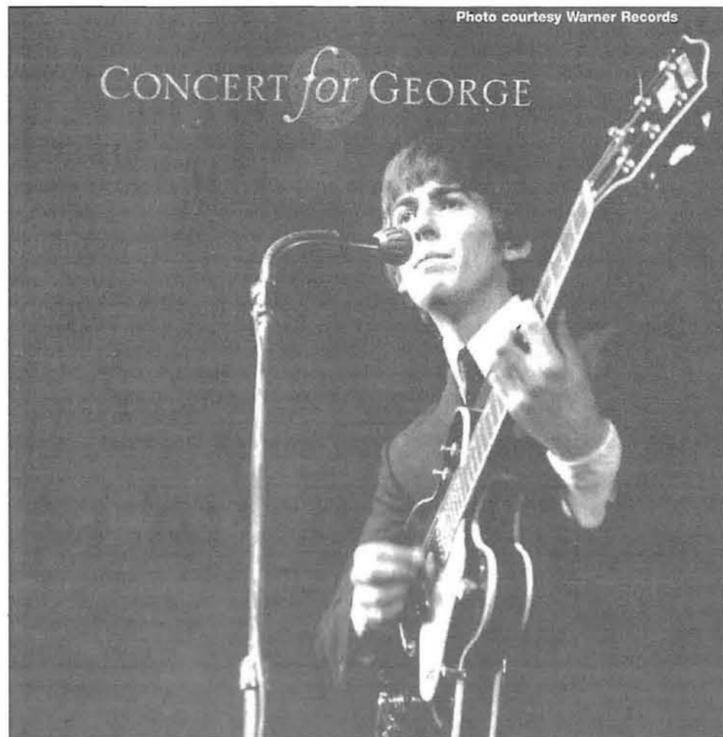
me in your Heart" by Warren Zevon. This is a tough category with the like of Zevon, Sting and Harrison, but I am going with George Harrison's "Any Road." He has three things going for him. First, he died last year of cancer. Second, he was a Beatle. Third, this is a great song.

The nominees for best pop vocal album are "Stripped" by Christina Aguilera, "Brainwashed" by George Harrison, "Bare" by Annie Lennox, "Motown" by Michael McDonald and "Justified" by Justin Timberlake. Again, I will have to go with Harrison on this one, primarily because I have "Brainwashed" and it is an incredible album that deserves Grammy recognition.

The five nominees of the best rock album category are "Audioslave" by Audioslave, "Fallen" by Evanescence, "One by One" by the Foo Fighters, "More than you think you Are" by Matchbox 20 and "The Long Road" by Nickleback. This is a tough category. The Foo Fighters, Matchbox 20 and Audioslave are three of my favorite groups, so it is hard to pick. But I guess I'd have to go with Matchbox 20. This album showed growth for the group, a newer

depth in their writing. Frankly, this album blew me away. In a conversation I had with 101.1 The River DJ, Vic Porcelli, he compared this album to the Rolling Stones' "Sticky Fingers" and the Beatles' "Rubber Soul." Both those albums were harbingers of great revolutions in rock. We may be seeing that with Matchbox 20 now. Let's hope so.

There were some albums that were left off, to my dismay. I would have loved to have seen Oasis' "Heaven Chemistry" in there, as well as "The Concert for George," the tribute to George Harrison featuring Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and others. But you can't always get what you want (classical reference) so I'll have to make do with the above nominees.



"The Concert for George" was one of the overlooked albums by the Grammy committee.

important categories and offer my picks.

The first category we'll look at is perhaps the most popular category: record of the year. This basically means most sales this year. The nominees are Beyonce-featuring Jay-Z for "Crazy in Love," "Where is the Love?" by the Black Eyed Peas, "Clocks" by Coldplay, "Lose Yourself" by Eminem and "Hey Ya" by Outkast. I am not a huge fan of any of these candidates, but I would have to go with Eminem's "Lose Yourself." It's really the only song by Eminem that I like and will listen to. The other songs just grated on my nerves.

Next up is album of the year. The candidates are "Under Construction" by Missy Elliott, "Fallen" by Evanescence, "Speakerboxxx/The Love

Christina Aguilera, "Dance with my Father" by Luther Vandross, "I'm with You" by Avril Lavigne, "Keep me in your Heart" by Warren Zevon and "Lose Yourself" by Eminem. I am going to go against the tide here and say that Warren Zevon should win. Not just because he died this year, but because he has long been an underappreciated songwriter. Too often people think of him as the guy who wrote "Werewolves of London," but he was much more than that. It's time for him to be recognized as such.

The next category we will examine is best male pop vocal performance. The nominees are "Any Road" by George Harrison, "Ain't no Mountain High Enough" by Michael McDonald, "Send your Love" by Sting, "Cry me a River" by Justin Timberlake and "Keep

ATTENTION!

The Current and its editor, Jason Granger, have opened the Editor-in Chief application period for this year. If you would like to apply, bring a resume, cover letter and 3 reference letters to The Current office and address it to Jason Granger. After that, all applicants will be notified of a staff interview and eventual publication selection. Thank you.

-Jason Granger

What do the readers think: Results from the weekly web poll:

Who should have been ranked number one in college football?

LSU	→	14% (1 vote)
Michigan State	→	11% (3 votes)
USC	→	29% (2 votes)
Mizzou	→	43% (3 votes)
Oklahoma	→	0% (0 votes)

Results via www.thecurrentonline.com

*www.thecurrentonline.com does not limit votes per person and the poll is not a scientific sampling.

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FEATURES

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KATE DROLET

Features Editor

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Advice for '04? Take a tip from Newton

BY CASEY SCHACHER
AGE Editor

One of the best pieces of advice that I have ever received was this: a body in motion stays in motion, a body at rest is food. This saying echoes in my mind as I look back over months of stagnation—a recently finished semester of bare minimum effort and labored underachievement.

If I attack this semester as I did the last, with all the apathy of a tired human mind, I will be devoured by the consequences of my inactivity. Having decided already that the only choice is to get moving and, more importantly, stay moving, I now struggle with the question of how to get in motion in the first place.

To harness the use of yet another saying, that being the simplest explanation is usually correct, I say to you that the answer is as basic as the oxygen needed to fuel energy. Get up and get moving, whether merely scanning the glossy pages of a textbook or flowing to the sensuality of music, just do something.

see MOTION, page 12

Holding true to New Year's Resolutions

BY KATE DROLET
Features Editor

The first day of each new year is often met with nostalgia, a hangover and for many, a resolution to improve their lives in the upcoming 365 days.

Actually holding true to a resolution can be a difficult task, especially if the goal is complex or large. Set short- and long-term resolution-specific goals rather than trying to keep up with a vague promise. Someone who hopes to lose 15 pounds should compose a schedule that includes exercise, diet stipulations and a time frame to lose the weight.

Be realistic when setting resolutions. Popular goals, such as losing weight, take determination and hard work. Trying to go from a size 14 to a size four is not only unhealthy, but is an unrealistic goal for a year's time frame. Avoid setting guidelines so stringent that every moment will be torturous.

Support is an important factor in achieving a New Year's resolution. Those trying to quit smoking can seek support through programs like the one offered through the University Health Services' Health and Wellness Center. Asking friends and family to assist with goals will also increase the chance of success. Students who resolved to improve their academics can form study groups with friends. This develops a feeling of accountability, as one person's goals affect those of another. Another way to find support is to make a reminder of each New Year's resolution. Create encouraging messages and reminders and place them

in visible places to make each goal tangible.

Sara Choate, junior, secondary education and English, has two resolutions set for 2004. "One is to learn to play the guitar, and the other is to get back into writing, which means writing three to four times a week," she said. Choate worries that she will have trouble sticking to her plan.

Keeping a New Year's resolution will inevitably result in moments of weakness for those who are trying to give up bad habits. Remember that falling off the wagon does not mean that the resolution has been a failure. For those trying to lose weight, one piece of chocolate cake does not make every other effort pointless. Do not let guilt rule. Learn from the obstacles and challenges and keep them in mind the next time temptation hits.

"Because of my faith, I don't make resolutions," said

Residential Life Assistant Director Amber Monroe. "Resolutions set people up for failure. I try to live each day to its fullest."

Avoiding temptation will make reaching a goal much easier. Those who plan to quit smoking should not frequent bars, sit in the smoking section of a restaurant or surround themselves with people who smoke. People aiming to eat healthier should stay away from buffets and the dessert section of the grocery store. Positive influences can assist with a change of lifestyle.

Whether the plan is to learn a new activity, maintain a healthier lifestyle or volunteer on a regular basis, resolutions are meant to improve life. Do not let goals become stressors. Instead, welcome 2004 with determination and a positive attitude.

“
In the last election, only 30% of 18-25 year olds voted. To many, the ballot is insignificant.

— www.votesmart.org



Mike Sherwin/The Current

Whether it is fatty foods, cigarettes or booze that you would like to excise for the new year, fulfilling your resolutions does not have to be a pipe dream. Don't set yourself up to fail by making unrealistic demands. Whether your goals are short- or long-term, make sure they are realistic and specific.

A tasty lesson in Peruvian culture

International student shares recipe for Papas a la Huancaína, a spicy dish with yellow chilis and potatoes

BY GARY SOHN
Staff Writer

For students who are interested in learning about others' cultures, food is a medium that appeals to many different palates. Cynthia Paz, business and finance, is an international student from Lima, Peru. "We carry our history through our food," she explained. Papas a la Huancaína is an example of this concept.

Papas a la Huancaína is a potato dish that has a deep history in Peruvian culture. Paz says that the history of this dish dates back to the time of the Incas who were living in the Andes Mountains during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Incas grew several different crops using their famous step technique, where crops were planted on steps that went down the mountain. This technique allowed rain to be carried down the steep mountains to every crop. One of their main crops was potatoes. According to Paz, potatoes are still one of Peru's most pro-

ductive crops today.

"We have around 200 different types of potatoes that range in color and form: pink, purple, red, brown, hard, soft," she said. "So as you can imagine, Papas a la Huancaína is just one of many potato dishes served in Peru."

Papas a la Huancaína is prepared with a great deal of thought to presentation and taste. This dish requires the following ingredients:

- 10 medium potatoes (white)
- 1 pound of fresh cheese
- 6 yellow peppers
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- vegetable oil
- 8 saltine crackers
- salt
- lettuce
- 3 hard cooked eggs
- black olives

The first step is to cut up the white potatoes into one-inch thick circles. This is done for serving and presentational purposes. Paz said that white potatoes are best for this dish because

they do not crush as easily as the yellow variety. After cutting up the potatoes, boil them for twenty minutes and allow them to cool. Next mix the cheese, milk, oil, salt and yellow peppers in a blender. The result should be a thick sauce. If the sauce is not thick, crackers can be added to the mixture. If the sauce is too thick, add more milk. After the sauce is finished, lay a bed of lettuce in a serving dish and place the potatoes on top. This dish can be served warm or cold. Cover the potatoes with the sauce, and cut the hard-boiled eggs in half and place on top. Garnish with a black olive.

Paz also stressed the importance of following the directions and adding all the ingredients, because not doing so would keep the meal from being a true Peruvian dish. According to Paz, the sauce must have yellow peppers because this gives the sauce its yellow color. Using green peppers will make an entirely different Peruvian dish called Ocopis. Paz said that using canned milk is also important because it thickens the sauce, as regular milk makes it too runny. The degree of

spiciness can be varied by increasing or decreasing the amount of salt and peppers in the dish. For those who do not want the sauce to be too hot, Paz suggests removing the seeds from the peppers.

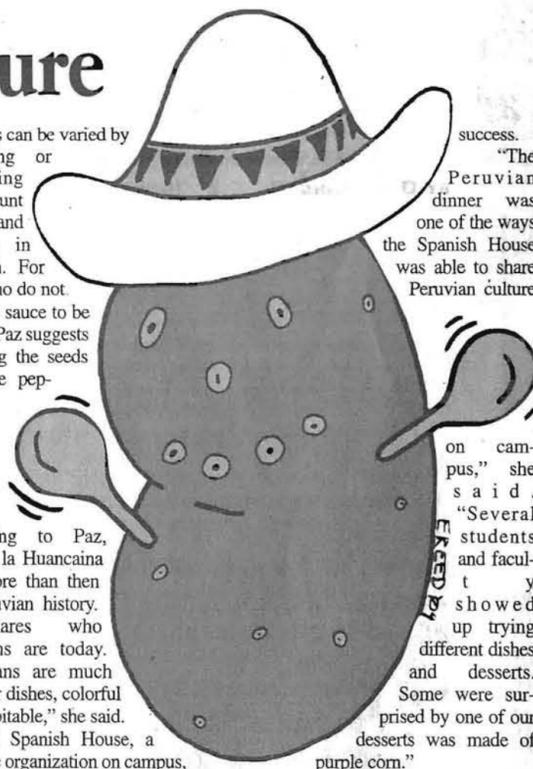
According to Paz, Papas a la Huancaína does more than then tell Peruvian history. It shares who Peruvians are today. "Peruvians are much like their dishes, colorful and hospitable," she said.

The Spanish House, a Hispanic organization on campus, uses food to introduce the UM-St. Louis community by holding banquets. Paz said that last semester the Spanish House organized a Peruvian dinner, which turned out to be quite a

success. "The Peruvian dinner was one of the ways the Spanish House was able to share Peruvian culture

on campus," she said. "Several students and faculty showed up trying different dishes and desserts. Some were surprised by one of our desserts that was made of purple corn."

Anyone interested in learning more about Hispanic culture and when their next banquet is can contact the Spanish House's coordinator Birgit Noll at nollb@msx.umsl.edu.



Getting back on track for the new semester

BY ANGELA ASHLEY
Staff Writer

Students will be returning to campus for a new semester this week. After a month of winter break, how will they get back into a school frame of mind?

"I am definitely not ready for this semester to begin," said Megan Stock, freshman, undecided. "I had a lot of fun over break, and coming back to school is definitely going to be tough."

Several students share the same apathy as Stock. Others, like Sean Gold, junior, special education, feel differently.

"I'm definitely ready. [School] will keep me from being bored," he said. "I'm not necessarily in a 'school frame of mind' until it gets close to finals, but I'm very education-oriented, and I'm not worried."

Either way, students can use several techniques to help themselves when coming back, either to get into a school frame of mind or to have a bet-

ter semester grade-wise.

Lori Tagger, a psychologist in the office of Counseling Services, has several suggestions. "First, try setting some goals for yourself. Think about what you want to happen this semester. Secondly, ask yourself how you can achieve those goals," she said. "One important thing to remember is that the same behavior gives the same results," said Tagger.

For example, if a student's goal was to strengthen time management skills, he or she could use timesheets to organize a schedule. Students needing to master study skills could search for five study skills they think apply to themselves and implement them. Whatever the goal, students should examine what steps they need to take to achieve it.

"I have some definite ideas about how to make this a better semester for myself, including studying more," said Stock.

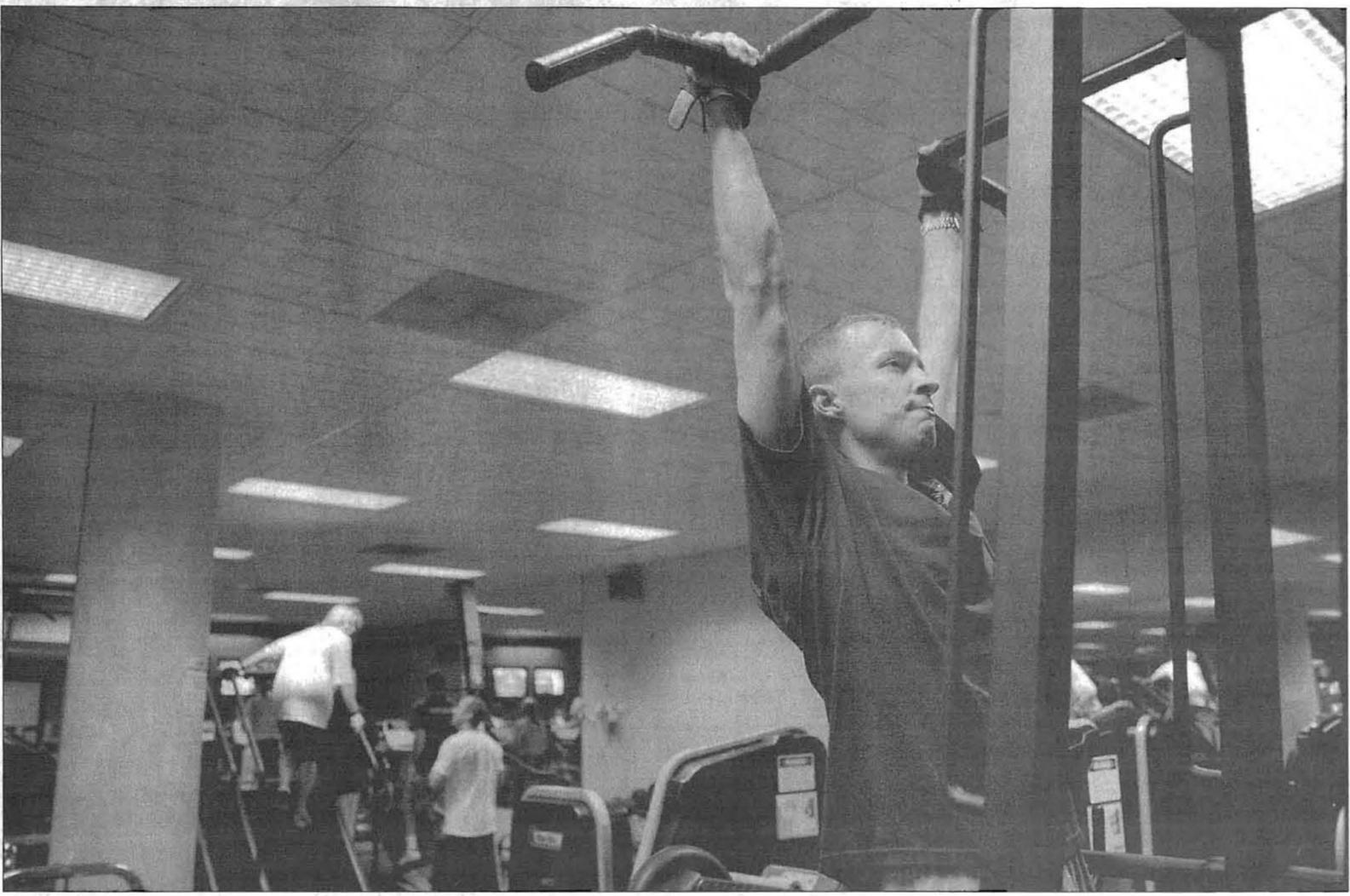
Students feeling the stress of returning to school can visit Counseling Services in 126 MSC or visit www.umsl.edu/services/counselor.

Twisting the game away



The UM-St. Louis Riverpup mascot entertains a young fan at the Rivermen basketball game Jan. 4 at the Mark Twain Athletic Building.

Mike Sherwin/The Current



Photos by Mike Sherwin/The Current

Noah Poeling, senior, education, exercises Friday at the Mark Twain Athletic Building's fitness center. Poeling said he works out three times a week at the center. He noted that after the holiday break he sees a larger than usual crowd of students, "who want to get in shape for spring break." According to Poeling, after the break the numbers decline and only pick up again at the beginning of the fall semester.

Work off those holiday pounds at the Mark Twain Athletic Building

Goodbye, contracts and expensive clubs: for students, the Mark Twain fitness areas are included in tuition fees

BY GARY SOHN
Staff Writer

With every new year people make the same old New Year's resolutions: study harder, be more organized, get in shape. For many, these promises seem to get broken because they either do not have the time or the will power to keep them.

For those who plan to get in shape in 2004, the Mark Twain facility, located on north campus near the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center, provides a cheap means to do so.

The Mark Twain facility has a wide range of fitness equipment for all exercise needs. The indoor gymnasium holds eight basketball areas, three volleyball courts, a one-tenth mile running path and six badminton courts. The balcony area has two basketball areas, one volleyball court and two badminton courts. The fitness center, located downstairs, has Nautilus equipment, Universal equipment, Lifecycles, a Life rower, Stairmasters, Treadmills, Elliptical machines and Fitness Cinema.

The fitness center also provides several televisions and CD players that are stationed in front of the cardiovascular equipment. Also located in the gym is a swimming pool and indoor running track. Going down another floor, visitors can utilize the weight room that houses various different types of free weights and four racquetball/handball courts. The outdoor grounds of Mark Twain hold six tennis courts, two four-wall racquetball/handball courts, a large multipurpose intramural field and a fit course.

Hannah Klaytke, junior, psychology, says that she finds the facility to be convenient and accessible for her. "I like the fitness area that has the television. It also has all the machines that you could want. I also like not having to stand in line to use a machine."

In addition to all the fitness equipment offered, the Mark Twain facility offers classes for those who need motivation. Patricia Dolan, director of athletics and campus recreation, said that the facility tries to promote a social environment to people who want to get in shape.

"We have personal coaches available for anyone who needs them. We also offer various fitness classes that start at certain times. We also have intramurals for those who want a competitive workout."

A wide variety of intramural sports are offered, including basketball, golf, volleyball, table tennis, tennis and indoor and outdoor soccer. Fitness classes also offer a wide range of training such as yoga, water aerobics, step aerobics and martial arts.

Dolan says that if there is a class that students are interested in taking that is not offered already, contact Larry Coffin, Manager of Campus Recreation, at 516-5124.

"We didn't offer martial arts until students on campus got interested in it. Now we offer a couple of different martial art classes," Dolan said.

The Mark Twain facility is convenient for anyone who lives on or off campus. Shuttle buses pick up and drop off visitors at the front door. Lockers are provided for anyone who wants to secure personal goods. Lockers can be used daily or rented for a semester. Towels are also available upon request with a UM-St. Louis ID card.

For students and faculty, the facility has no membership charges. Alumni can pay \$200 a year for membership. Kenneth Lee, a UM-St. Louis Alum who received his B.A. in Mass Communication in 2001, says he likes the Mark Twain Facility because it is affordable and close to home.

"It's cheaper than going to another gym. It's also close, accessible and has good hours."

The facility is open from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. on weekdays. The gym opens on Saturday at 9 a.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m. These hours may change depending on the month, and monthly calendars are distributed around campus.



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SPORTS

Pair of losses stymie R-women

BY JAMES DAUGHERTY
Staff Writer

The UM-St. Louis women's basketball team lost back-to-back games Jan. 2 and Jan. 4 by a total of only 5 points. The Jan. 2 home game was a tough loss to the SIU-Edwardsville Cougars who nudged out the Riverwomen, 51-48. UM-St. Louis played tough and even led most of the game. They started fast, 6-5, with a bucket by Crystal Lambert, and held the lead throughout the first half, entering halftime with a one-point lead, 24-23.

The Riverwomen extended their lead in the opening minutes of the second half to 10 points, 33-23, and extended it to an eleven-point lead until 6:20 remained in the game, 44-33. Then the Cougars started their comeback. They went on a 9-1 run to cut the lead to three points in the next two minutes, and UM-St. Louis responded with just one more bucket to go up by five, 47-42, with 4:22 left.

SIU-E continued the steady comeback and trailed by only four, 48-44, with 1:28 left. The Cougars took control when Jessica Robert hit two three-pointers in the final minute of the game and SIU-E went up 51-48. Coach Buchanan commented on the game: "We were up by ten points with five minutes to play. They only hit one three-pointer in the first 35 minutes of the game, then hit three in the last five minutes. They only had seven field goals in the second half, and three of them were threes. It's heartbreaking to be up by ten points with five minutes left and then lose."

Two days later the Riverwomen played another home game, against conference foe Lewis. UM-St. Louis had a tough first half, going back and forth with the Flyers in lead changes. The game was tied at 11 before the Riverwomen made their first run on the Flyers, scoring four uncontested points to take the lead.

Then UM-St. Louis extended the lead, to go up 21-14. The Flyers made a run of their own and tied the game at 24, then outscored the Riverwomen at the end of the period to take a two-point lead, 29-27, going into halftime.

The Flyers opened the second half where they left off, taking a six-point lead over UM-St. Louis and going up 35-29. The Riverwomen would not give in, and went on an 8-2 run to tie the game at 37, thanks to a three-pointer by Simone Verhulst. Verhulst bagged another three-pointer to give UM-St. Louis its first lead of the second half, 40-37. Spotty offense caused the Riverwomen to go scoreless over the next three minutes, and Lewis capitalized by scoring 12 straight points and going up 49-40.

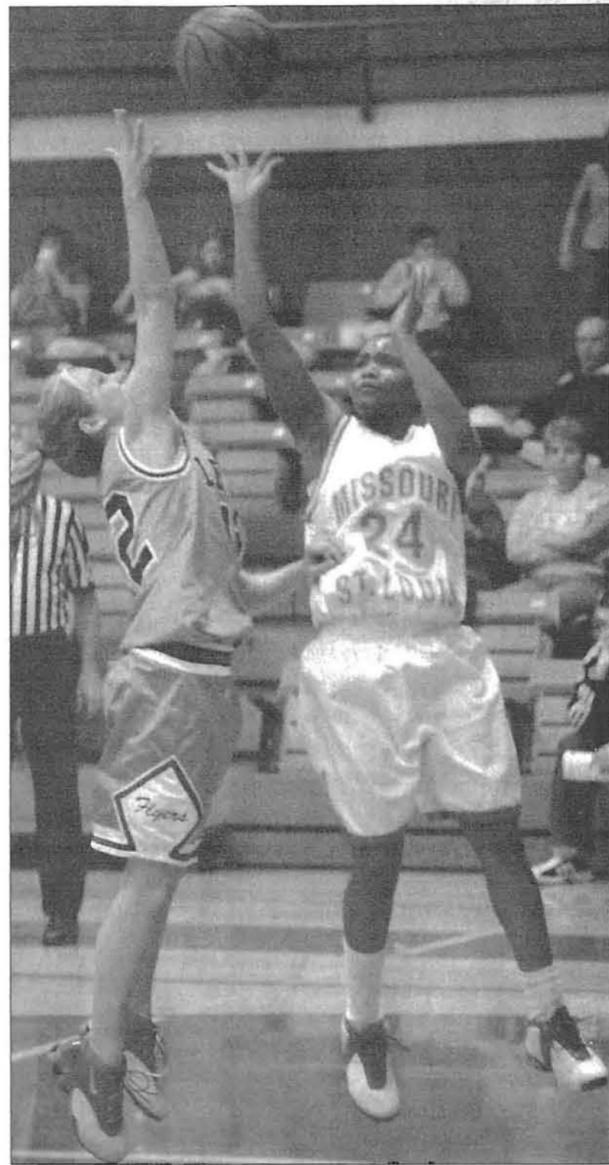
The Riverwomen steadily came back over the next eight minutes and finally tied the game once again with a three-pointer by Debi Dibella with under three minutes remaining. UM-St. Louis even gained the advantage at 55-54 on Crystal Lambert's free throws, but the Flyers knocked down some of their own free throws and went on top once again. The Flyers then held on to their lead for a 58-56 victory.

Coach Buchanan summed the game up: "I don't know. It was a reversal of the Friday night game: we were down nine with seven minutes to go, but then we hit three three-pointers. We even tied it with three minutes left, but then in the last 9 seconds we bobbed it out. We are 0-5 in the conference, with three of those losses coming by a total of 12 points. It's like that song, 'If I didn't have any bad luck, I wouldn't have any luck at all.' We'll try and get the ship righted this weekend though. Maybe if we had a few more fans it would help us out in the two upcoming home games, [Jan.] 15 and 17."

The Riverwomen are hoping to turn their bad luck around this weekend at St. Joseph's and Indianapolis.

RIGHT: Crystal Lambert, #24, goes up for a shot during the Jan. 4 game against Lewis University.

BELOW: Point guard Trista Kolder advances against a Lewis player during the Jan. 4 game.



Photos by Mike Sherwin/The Current

GRETCHEN MOORE

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Questions
or
Comments?

Send me an e-mail:
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WEB

Check out the R-men
and R-women sports at
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Acrobatic basketball squad to perform at halftime Jan. 17

BY JUD DIEFFENBACH
Staff Writer

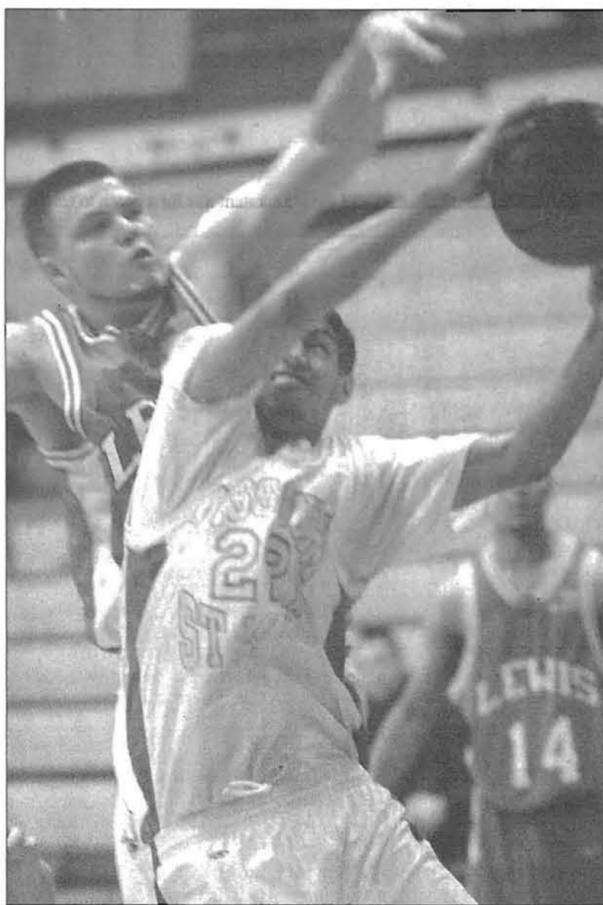
During halftime of the UM-St. Louis men's basketball game against Kentucky Wesleyan on Saturday Jan. 17, the nationally-acclaimed High "Impact" Squad will attempt to dazzle the crowd with their high-flying antics.

The High "Impact" Squad is based out of Houston, Texas and has been performing for many years. This team of athletes has performed an array of high-flying dunks at schools and other events around the country, including halftime performances at college and NBA basketball games.

But the High "Impact" Squad does not just perform basketball stunts. Another large component of many of their performances are motivational speeches, aimed at young children in elementary, middle, and high schools as well as adults in corporations and small businesses.

The mission of the High "Impact" Squad is to entertain as well as to spread their message of inspiration. The High "Impact" Squad wants to inspire others and make an impact in the world, particularly with children.

see IMPACT SQUAD, page 9



Mike Sherwin/The Current

Rivermen forward Josh Hardin attempts to maneuver around Lewis University's Austin Real on Jan. 4 at the Mark Twain Athletic Building. Lewis defeated UM-St. Louis 82-62.

Losses over holiday break tarnish Rivermen's record

BY JUD DIEFFENBACH
Staff Writer

Before the semester break, the UM-St. Louis men's basketball team had a record of 4-4 and was looking to win some games at home to improve to a winning record and move up in the conference standings.

Unfortunately, the team encountered some tough teams and had a rough stretch of home games over the winter holiday to fall below .500.

On December 20, the Rivermen lost a close battle to the Miners of Missouri-Rolla. The home team led most of the way, but the Miners came out on top, winning 77-72. The Rivermen were up by as many as 12 points with 16 minutes left in the game, but they could not overcome an amazing comeback by the Miners. The Miners took over the game for good after a 15-2 run gave them a 54-53 lead with 11 minutes left. UM-St. Louis ended up with four players in double figures, led by Ronnie Banks and Justin Foust, who each had 15 points.

The Rivermen began the break with a 4-4 record, but over the holiday fell to 4-7

On Jan. 2, the Rivermen hosted the Cougars of SIU-Edwardsville and fell short, 75-64. The Cougars dominated the first half and took a 52-29 lead with 11 minutes left in

the game 75-64. Jonathan Griffin and Kevin Nordmann led the Rivermen with 23 and 15 points, respectively.

On January 4, UM-St. Louis hosted the nationally-ranked Lewis Flyers. The Flyers entered the game ranked 25 in the nation, and defeated the Rivermen 82-62. Lewis dominated the game from start to finish as they built a lead of 21 points at halftime and continued to control the game in the second half. The Flyers were up by as many as 31 points with 15 minutes remaining and cruised the rest of the game. Jonathan Griffin led the Rivermen with 17 points, 10 rebounds, and 4 assists. Tim Blankenship came off the bench to score a career high 10 points.

UM-St. Louis fell to 4-7 on the season overall, and 1-4 in the Great Lakes Valley Conference. The Rivermen will go on the road next weekend, playing Saint Joseph's and Indianapolis in two crucial conference games. The team will look to improve their record and move up in the league standings.

“Lewis dominated the game from start to finish as they built a lead of 21 points at halftime and continued to control the game in the second half. The Flyers were up by as many as 31 points with 15 minutes remaining and cruised the rest of the game.”

the game. UM-St. Louis went on an 18-2 run to cut the lead down to as few as seven points. The Rivermen were down 54-47 with five minutes remaining, but SIU-E held on in the final minutes, making 15-of-18 free throws and winning

"I Thought Everyone in Indiana Played Basketball"



BY GRETCHEN MOORE
Staff Writer

"My practices aren't designed for your enjoyment," the great Coach Norman Dale said in "Hoosiers," the greatest movie ever, to his team complaining that his practices were boring and they never got to shoot.

I sat against the bleachers Wednesday morning waiting for the women's basketball practice to start. Eight players shooting, stretching and warming up at five different baskets.

A total of four players with taped ankles and no room for further injury or sickness.

Coach Buchanan opened the door to the gym after eating a piece of birthday cake Megan Alberts brought in for him. "How ya feeling, Debi?" he inquires about sick player Debi Dibella. "Ah...same," she replies.

"All right, let's get it on!" Coach Buchanan said. "Let's get it on," a couple players mimic as the eight girls rack the balls and jog to the center of the floor for Coach's usual talk.

Coach goes around to see how everyone is feeling and discusses their strategy for practice. Then they all hold hands and bow their heads as a prayer is said. "We were trying to get the Almighty to help us," Coach says with a smirk on his face.

"Okay, stretch 'em out." All eight girls walk around the circle in the middle of the court and put their hands in: "1, 2, 3, team!"

Like Coach Dale, Buchanan had to turn an eight-man (or woman, as it

was) hoop squad into "five men functioning as one single unit." Similarly, both Dale and Buchanan's suspicious training methods and unorthodox bench manner raised a lot of eyebrows. However, both coaches believe in two things: themselves and their teams.

The quote that sums up what these coaches are trying to do is one of my favorites from the movie. "Focus on the fundamentals that we've gone over time and time again, and most important, don't get caught up thinking about winning or losing this game. If you put your effort and concentration into playing to your potential, I don't care what the scoreboard says at the end of this game; in my book, we're gonna be winners!"

The girls went through their drills and game plans for the approaching teams and worked to stay on top with the large number of steals they had at the beginning of the season. The Riverwomen cheer along with Coach Buchanan to motivate their teammates

and work to keep practice positive in order to take what they learn to their game play. Coach Buchanan mirrors Coach Dale once again with his use of unforgettable wording and phrasing when describing something to his team. "When you take the ball out you have to think to yourself that you are the best 'takerouter' in the country."

Two hours later some qualities of Jimmy Chitwood are embodied as Kevin Nordmann enters the gym early to drill his three-point shooting prior to practice. Jimmy laid a board against the basketball goal to kick the ball back, while Kevin set up the ball retriever to pass to him.

Coach Pilz seems to have the same interest in movies and of course Indiana basketball as his strategy to get his team to move the ball around is to make them pass at least five times before they can shoot.

The Rivermen basketball team was a lot more vocal, motivating each other and joking around. The gym was hardly quiet as it was constantly filled

with "Good job," "Guard him, get your arms up," "He's hot, he's hot, you better guard him."

Like the Hickory team, the Rivermen hassle each other and keep the atmosphere fun and energetic. During a progressive drill up and down the court, Josh Hardin got hit in the eye during a play, "Uh oh, it's his eye, go get his glasses," Justin Faust said as fellow teammates laughed.

Both teams have great energy and enthusiasm and get the job done in practice. They keep each other motivated and have come to represent our school proudly: "I would hope you'd support who we are, not who we are not. These six individuals have made the choice to work, the choice to sacrifice, to put themselves on the line twenty three nights for the next four months, to represent you, this high school. That kind of commitment and effort deserves and demands your respect. This is your team," Gene Hackman said in the immortal "Hoosiers."

Riverwomen Birkey and Lambert named GLVC "Player of the Week"

BY GRETCHEN MOORE
Staff Writer

The UM-St. Louis women's basketball team may have fallen short in their past three games to lose by only a combined total of six points, but the valiant efforts of two Riverwomen did not go unnoticed by the GLVC.

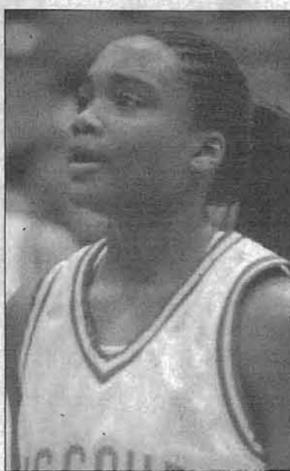
Kali Birkey of Morton, Ill. and Crystal Lambert of Rockford, Ill. took the title of GLVC Player of the Week back-to-back December 15 and 22 coming off a three-game winning streak.

Birkey, a junior forward who transferred from Illinois Central College where she helped lead her team to the national championship as well as setting the record for most points scored in a championship game, was named this week's GLVC player of the week. Birkey leads the Riverwomen with 96 rebounds and 168 points, averaging 14 points a game.

Birkey had a career performance in an overtime win against Pittsburgh State, in a game that gave the Riverwomen their first victory of the season. Birkey scored a career-high 28 points in the win, shooting 13-of-20 from the field. She scored four of UM-St. Louis's final five points in



Kali Birkey



Crystal Lambert

regulation to help force overtime in that game. Birkey also pulled down a career best 13 rebounds in the win as well, and recorded two assists, one block and one steal.

In the second game, Birkey helped UM-St. Louis hold off Harris Stowe, winning 72-59 on the road. Birkey recorded her second double double in as many games with 15 points and 12 rebounds on the day. She hit 5-of-11 from the field and was 5-of-6 from the

line. Of her 12 rebounds, five came on the offensive end. Birkey added two assists and four steals in that game, scoring 11 of her 15 points in the second half when the Riverwomen pulled away for the win.

Birkey averaged 21.5 points per game for the week and pulled down 12.5 rebounds per game. She shot 58.1% (18-of-31) from the field and had five steals and four assists.

"I was happy and surprised when I

got named. It was a very nice honor," Birkey said of her Player of the Week recognition. When asked to describe her team in one word she replied, "Effort." Effort on behalf of sophomore Crystal Lambert helped bring UM-St. Louis back to back Player of the Week recognition by leading UM-St. Louis to a 73-44 victory over UM-Rolla.

Lambert scored a career-high 19 points on 7-9 shooting, to extend the Riverwomen winning streak to three games. Her 19 points were also tied for the team high points of the game. Lambert started the Riverwomen off on the road to victory scoring the first points of the game when she beat her defender and drove down the lane for a lay-up.

Lambert also hit 3-3 from the arc and 2-2 free throws, including the last points of the game for UM-St. Louis when she swished a three-pointer to put the Riverwomen ahead by 33 points. As point guard, Lambert was also key in UM-St. Louis handling the UM-Rolla full-court press the entire game as she played 38 minutes. The 5-6 guard also collected five assists and two steals.

"The best part about our team is that we've been through the trials and tribulations and we are still holding on," Lambert said. "Our biggest goals are to win and never give up."

Midseason Q&A with coaches Pilz, Buchanan



Coach Lee Buchanan

BY GRETCHEN MOORE
Staff Writer

Riverwomen Coach Lee Buchanan

Q: Coach Buchanan, what has been your team's biggest improvement since the beginning of the season?

A: The girls have really bought into what we have been teaching. Earlier in the season they hadn't really caught on to the concept. Our defense has been greatly improved as well. Earlier, we had trouble scoring, but lately we've been keeping it close to have a chance in the games.

Q: What have you been focusing on in practice?

A: We've focused on two things that have been costing us games: turnovers and making free throws.

Q: How have your players been meshing as a team?

A: The girls are really close. It's always hard to know how the girls will react to each other when you take over a team. They have been working really hard and listening well.

Q: What is your big goal for the rest of the season?

A: Well we really want to make it to the conference tournament. Only eight out of 11 teams make it so we need to try to get eight to nine wins throughout the rest of the season. There are still enough games left to be able to make it to the tournament.

Q: What has this team taught you as a coach?

A: They've showed me how important it is for a coach to teach the

little aspects of basketball not just the game in itself. I love the teaching aspect of my job which has made me appreciate the game a lot more. In 14 years of coaching I haven't had a losing season and I have learned that working hard is only half of the battle.

Rivermen Coach Chris Pilz

Q: Coach Pilz, what has been your team's biggest improvement since the beginning of the season?

A: We are learning how to compete, which has allowed us to stay in the game. Now we just need to take the next step and learn to win and take what we work on in practice into the game.

Q: What have you been focusing on in practice?

A: We have been working on two things: taking care of the basketball to keep the number of turnovers low and improving our shot selection.

Q: How have your players been meshing as a team?

A: They have been getting along pretty well. A championship team is together all the time.

Q: What is your big goal for the rest of the season?

A: We want to keep working every day and every game. We're not focused on winning or losing, just getting better every day.

Q: What has this team taught you as a coach?

A: If you have passion and work hard you can play at this level. There are a couple of guys that are not the most talented but are very passionate about the game and that is a huge thing to know.

IMPACT SQUAD, from page 8

The High "Impact" Squad wants people to realize that they can do anything and that everyone should try to fulfill his or her dreams.

Of course, the most eye-catching aspect of the High "Impact" Squad is their acrobatic dunks. The members of the squad are all experienced athletes with training in gymnastics or other sports.

Doug Boyer, business manager for UM-St. Louis athletic department, is very excited for fans to see the High "Impact" Squad in action. "I think it's going to be a highly entertaining half-time show, the music and dunks should be a fun time," he said. Along with providing halftime entertainment for the fans, Boyer has other goals as well. "We feel this event can increase

attendance and we are doing our part by promoting the event to television and radio stations in the area as well as to the students and staff on campus," he said.

Boyer discovered the High "Impact" Squad when he was looking through a promotional resource book the NCAA had sent him. "We saw that the High 'Impact' Squad had garnered high regards from other schools so we decided to pursue the event. We started back in October and everyone here is very excited to land the show," he said.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the High "Impact" Squad or would like additional information can visit the High "Impact" Squad website, www.highimpact-squad.com or can call (713) 640-0604. The mailing address for the High "Impact" Squad is 5757 Westheimer, #3-352 Houston, TX 77057. In addition, during the next week Boyer will be on campus promoting the event in the Millennium Student Center.

The High "Impact" Squad will perform Jan. 17 during half-time of the Rivermen's game at Mark Twain Athletic Building, which begins at 3:15 p.m.

Photo Courtesy the High "Impact" Squad



RIGHT:

The High "Impact" Squad will perform Jan. 17 during half-time of the Rivermen's game at Mark Twain Athletic Building, which begins at 3:15 p.m.

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A&E

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A&E Calendar

Movies

*Film openings are subject to change.

Ongoing

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King- The third installment in the intense epic tale of Frodo's journey to the heart of evil. Accompanied by Sam and the insane Gollum, Frodo must battle his own will in order to save the world.

Jan. 16

Along Came Polly- Jennifer Aniston plays Polly, a wild and carefree woman aimed at spicing up the ultra safe life of her childhood friend, Reuben (Ben Stiller), whose recent breakup with his fiancée makes him the perfect target for Polly's liberating interference.

Teacher's Pet- Disney film version of the TV show, this film tells of a dog whose fascination with the human world has led him on an unbelievable educational adventure.

Torque- Motorcycle gangs feud in this tale of racing bikes, running from the law and seeking revenge.

GAME REVIEW

Less racing than color-by-number

BY PAUL CRUTCHER
Staff Writer

The "Fast and the Furious" movie franchise basically introduced mainstream America to import street racing. Originating in its current guise in Japan, racers personalize their go-fast, compact cars and run the highways to find competitors. Combining these potent cars with typically youthful pilots and with public traffic increases the adrenaline for racers and the degree of danger and consequence for everyone.

Until very recently, import racing was strictly illegal, but now venues like Gateway International Raceway provide closed track time to allow redline racing while keeping the nearby streets a little safer.

That said, "NFS Underground" is nothing particularly new. "Tokyo Extreme Racer Zero" started capturing this racing phenomenon years ago. Then came "Midnight Club Street Racing," which brought slammed Civics to places like Los Angeles and New York. "Midnight Club II" and "Auto Modelista" arrived this year, and the "Fast and the Furious" adaptation should be hitting game consoles soon enough.

To the glee of import racer fans, "Underground" allows for a myriad of visual configurations for the available cars. Gamers can unlock twenty different cars to run the streets in, from a Neon to a GTI to a Skyline GT-R. Actual manufacturers offered up parts, meaning that you may be able to slap the same body kit, spoiler,

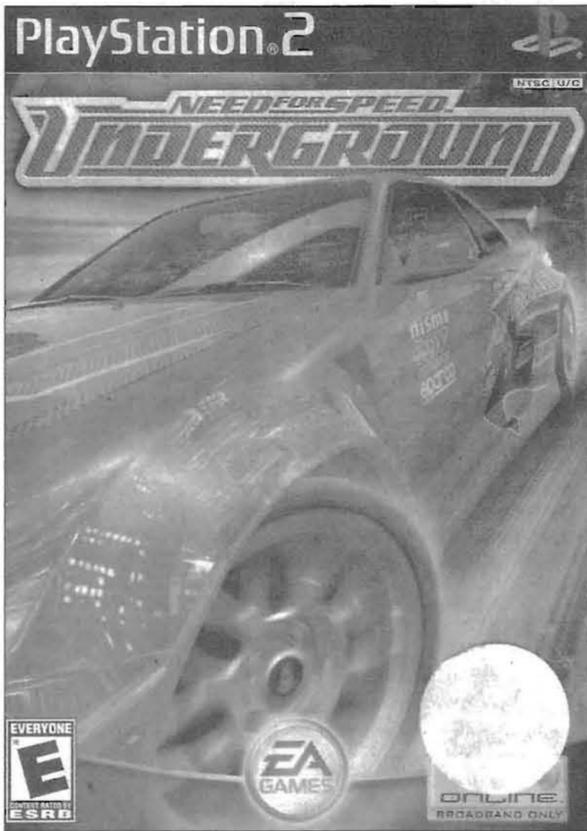


Photo courtesy EA Games
Need for Speed: Underground can be purchased for about \$50 at your nearest retailer.

er, reflective window tint, or rims on your in-game Civic Si that you have on the Si that sits in your garage. And the cars look good while playing

dress-up.

The problem comes in when, after about 20 hours of game-play, my brother and I had beaten the game. Default difficulty settings fail to put up much of a real fight, and most racing gamers will have beaten it in similar time. Once you do beat "Underground," precious little remains outside of what we likened to sitting around and sticking Barbies in different ensembles. It's sad, but switching pearecent paints and body vinyls stands as the most compelling part of the game.

Most of the game-play frustration comes from the game's night setting. Tracks provide graphically flashy backgrounds, your car and all that speeds by reflects in the always-wet street and designers did a good job duplicating the sensation of speed. But because of all the graphical shine, seeing the next turn in the track is hit-or-miss. For racing gamers, that problem is overcome by memorizing the track, but "Underground" kills that potential remedy by designing all of the tracks out of a greater city landscape. Consequently, the lack of diversity in the tracks and the graphical issues stomp on any fun factor.

As any racing gamer knows, racing games need replays. "Underground," in a glaring fault, did not include any replay feature. The racers do not have to worry about doing 98 mph in traffic on the freeway, because law enforcement is also absent. Moreover, the heart of the game, the "Underground" mode, operates on an exclusionary tree for advancement. Once you beat a cer-

tain race, you are only allowed to try the following two, and so on, until you beat the game. And you had better get it right the first time through, because after you beat that mode, you are not allowed to re-enter. Want to play more to get that secret wing option? Tough. Start a new driver profile and agonize through it again.

"Underground" offers three distinct racing modes: Circuit-type, drift and drag. The first is the heart of every racing game ever produced. Drift is a racing phenomenon popular in Japan where drivers work to keep their cars in optimal, tire-squealing, smoke-shooting over-steer or four-wheel drift around flat, open courses.

Drifting is remarkably easy even on the hardest difficulty, and after the tenth time doing it in "Underground" you will have had your fill. Drag, on the other hand, is hard on even the easiest difficulty. But it is also infinitely rewarding. If there is one great aspect of "Underground" it is getting a drag racing mode almost perfect. In drag, your goal is perfect shifting; later, using nitros properly; and even later, negotiating traffic and construction obstacles. Any of these modes can be had in online play or in split-screen format.

In the end, only passionate import racing fans will accept this game's flaws. "Underground" isn't the latest fun racer from the Need for Speed franchise. And, if you are anything like me, you will be looking to trade "Underground" in after only a week of playing dress-up. If you still do not believe me, just make sure you rent it before dropping \$50 at Best Buy.

MERCHANT REVIEW

Cheap CDs for rock fans

BY LAURA HEPBURN
Staff Writer

One of the great things about living in a city like St. Louis is that there are so many opportunities to expand your horizons and experience new things. While almost everyone is familiar with Best Buy or Sam Goody for making music purchases, there are alternatives to paying \$18 for one CD.

Most people are familiar with Vintage Vinyl or Streetside Records, where you might find a great CD for \$12. Back when I first started my music collection, Vintage Vinyl was a great place to find CDs at a great price. Unfortunately, either because my taste has become more expensive or Vintage Vinyl has, I find that most of the CDs I desire cost a lot more than I am willing to part with on a college student budget.

Enter NOW HEAR THIS, a tiny store that fits my tiny fortune. While you may not find everything you are looking for, it is definitely worth checking out.

Focusing on the rock genre, NOW HEAR THIS has lots of classic rock from KISS to Crosby, Stills & Nash (available both new and used) as well as the more modern rock music of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Bare Naked Ladies. Basically, if you are a fan of rock, old or new, you can find something to love at NOW HEAR THIS.

The store also offers the widest selection of recorded concerts I have ever seen available, from a variety of bands. At risk of sound-



Shoppers peruse the shelves hoping to find the next great deal on a variety of music at NOW HEAR THIS, 219 S. Kirkwood Rd.

ing like an infomercial host, I will say, "That's not all!" because NOW HEAR THIS also has posters, records and music DVDs. The best part, however, is that many of the CDs are priced from \$5-\$10. Regrettably, there is a downside.

If your music tastes do not fall in the rock category you will not be able to enjoy what NOW HEAR THIS has to offer. There was some pop music from past decades, but no Britney Spears and only one lonely NSYNC CD. Also, there

were extremely limited sections for country, blues, jazz and new age music. If these are what you want, I would not count on finding them at NOW HEAR THIS.

Although limited, this is a little music store rock fans on a tight

budget should definitely check out. Located at 219 S. Kirkwood Rd. in Kirkwood, NOW HEAR THIS is open seven days a week. Monday through Saturday they open at 10 a.m. and close at 9 p.m. Sunday they are open noon to 4 p.m.

BOOK REVIEW

Grisham's million dollar question

BY PAUL CRUTCHER
Staff Writer

Someone has asked you the lottery question over the years. You know it as well as I do: What would you do if you won that \$23 million Powerball jackpot last night? And we have all answered with a load about exotic sports cars, luxurious spas, massive mansions, first-rate travel and, perhaps, charity and churches. Money and the greedy child in each of us in varying sizes drive capitalism, and we are all taught from the time we are munchkins that we should dream large, be super individualists and conquer the world.

If all that makes sense to you, then you will understand the basic premise of "The Summons," by John Grisham. He believes in the greedy child theory and weaves us through a tale of the battle between greed and ethics (both of the "business" and "family" flavors). We follow Ray Altee, a law professor at a prestigious Virginia university; his brother Forrest, a lawyer chasing every addiction imaginable; and their father Reuben Altee, a distin-

guished, hard-nosed judge from a small community in Mississippi.

Things get interesting when the honorable senior Altee loses his battle with cancer and the boys are called back to their hometown to handle funeral and probate matters, grieve and reminisce on the front porch of a decrepit old house. Ray, a handsome bachelor who spends his free time staving off advances from lusty students and flying rented Cessnas, discovers more than three million dollars in innocent-looking stationary boxes kept on the bookshelves of his father's den. Grisham poses the question to all of us: What do you do when you find three million dollars in your recently-deceased father's den?

Ray manages to be both intelligent and naive in the action that follows. As you might imagine, judges do not make that sort of money in rural Mississippi, and it does not take Ray long to figure out that the money is tainted in some way. Other people, some seedy, also know about the money stashed in Judge Altee's den. These other people become the ghosts that haunt Ray as he runs around trying to figure out what to do with black

garbage bags full of unmarked cash. With the chase on, Ray darts back and forth in oft-uncontrolled paranoia of ghosts that are many and crafty. But, like most of us would under the same circumstances, Ray wants desperately to keep the money. After all, there are beautiful planes to buy.

Grisham throws in enough colorful characters to keep readers running with Ray, and each of them works easily as a potential ghost. However, while I refuse to spoil the plot, "The Summons" will not captivate anyone with mystery. Action drives the story with an endless supply of new break-ins, bricks through windows in the dead of night, private detectives, billionaire yachtsmen, casino pit bosses, druggies, racing Audis, questionable motels and suspicious looks. When the end slides, Grisham seems to get tired of the story, but this does not detract from the chase building up to it.

That said, if you are interested in another take on the lottery question, like to hear about law and planes and do not mind your action heroes a bit on the timid side, Grisham has a book for you here.

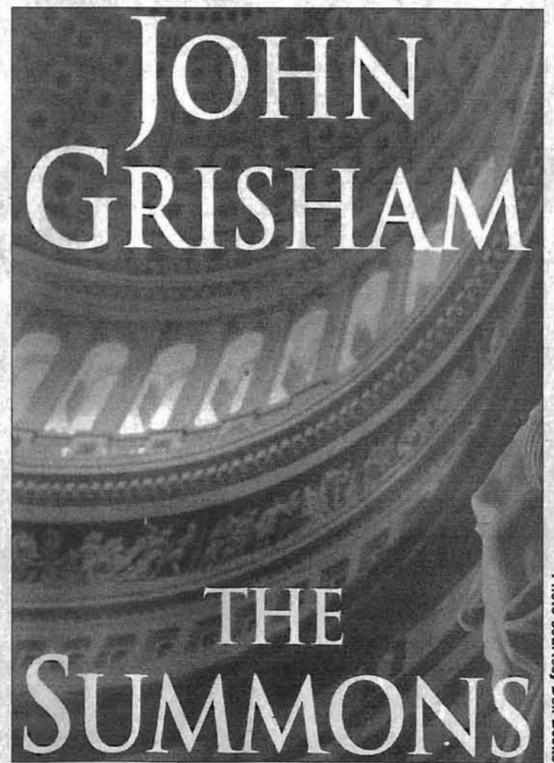


Photo courtesy Dell Books

MOVIES REVIEW

The reel year review: the top movies of 2003

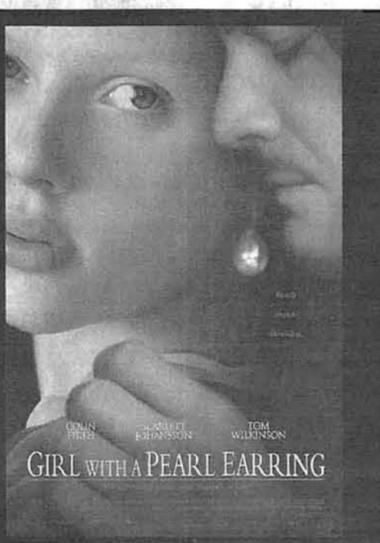
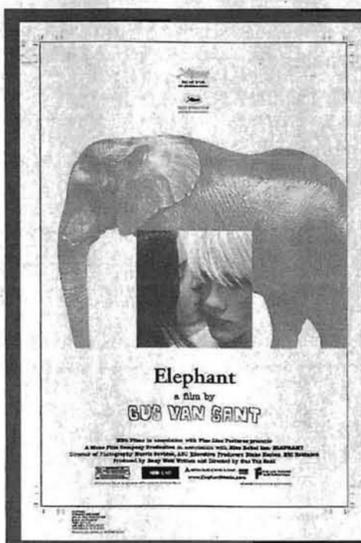
BY CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER
Movie Critic

A tradition of the beginning of a new year is a Top Ten list of films for the past year. The biggest and best films appear on screens at the end of the year, sometimes at the very end, so it is impossible to compile this list before New Year's Day.

Since St. Louis plays catch-up on 2003 releases into January and even February, some of the films that opened elsewhere in 2003 have not yet arrived here. However, if a film played in St. Louis at all, even if only at the fall St. Louis International Film Festival, it was considered for the Top Ten list.

After starting out as a dismal year of unimaginative remakes and unnecessary or disappointing sequels, 2003 became the year of the epic film. Hollywood cranked out several big-budget epic and historical tales late in the year, with grand visual scope and loads of historical detail. But it was mostly the acting that shone in these movies, with riveting performances from Sean Penn and most of the cast of "Mystic River," newcomer Wentworth Miller and Nicole Kidman in "The Human Stain," and Cate Blanchette and Tommy Lee Jones in "The Missing." Often the scripts had shortcomings that diminished the films, but the performances were flawless and worth the ticket. Apart from the superb acting, it was not really a great year for mainstream film. However, great indie films, including "Lord of the Rings," redeemed the year.

To make a Top Ten list, you have to make some rules. This year had a lot of great documentaries but they will be listed separately rather than filling this list. There is no reasonable way to compare them anyway. Some films released elsewhere in 2003 will play here in 2004, but if the film is likely to be considered for the Oscars and played here at all, it can appear on this list. To make the Top Ten list, the film had to be artistically worthy - innovative, original, visually stunning and masterful in its filmmaking technique - and also effective as a piece of film - able to entertain, to emotionally touch or move or to communicate with the audience. Pure art films that are



original but obscure to most filmgoers might not appear on the list, just like technically polished but shallow entertainment films might not. The list should seek out the perfect combination of artistic merit and audience response.

There is something inherently arbitrary about a list like this. The order of the list might be affected by how I felt at the time; on another day they might be listed slightly differently. The last couple of titles might be near-misses on another day, since some of these are very near-misses. It is hard to narrow this kind of list to only ten films so, beyond the list itself, we will look at the near-misses, including some films we will not see until later in 2004, and the list of Top Docs.

"American Splendor" - This film is just about the perfect combination of entertainment, enlightenment and originality. Based on the autobiographical underground comics of Harvey Pekar, whose narrative originates from his own mundane life as a file clerk, the comic and the film are both about how real life is much more complicated and interesting than people assume. The film uses animation of the comic and live actors to tell the tale of the curmudgeonly, quirky sad sack Pekar, and turns his biting wit and unique world-view in a hilarious, sometimes moving film. After lulling us into a biopic mode, the directors throw open the filmmaking process to

bring in the real Harvey Pekar and the people in his life to observe the actors portraying them. It is very funny, very original and thought-provoking - a completely delightful film about an improbable subject.

"Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" - Since we knew from the beginning that all three films were shot together, it is no surprise that the two other LOTR films were on a par with the first. While the second one was the weakest of the three, many filmgoers have asserted that this one is the best of the trilogy. It is hard to imagine anyone else handling the battles scenes so well or being able to move as smoothly from the grand scale to the personal and close-up as Peter Jackson has done. The special effects are designed to draw you into this imaginary world rather than draw attention to themselves and are breathtaking nonetheless. While the film is in the land of myth, it is also palpably real, due to the fine character development. Purists have some quibble about deviations from the book, but as epic film, it is superb.

"Station Agent" - This surprising comedy about a man with dwarfism (Peter Dinklage) who inherits a train station and sets out to live a life of solitude, only to have his plan thwarted by an overly friendly snack vendor (Bobby Cannavale) and a distracted middle aged artist (Patricia Clarkson), is one of the best films of any year.

Both the unusual tale and the acting are superb. Peter Dinklage is a revelation in this tale about life on the other side of things, a tale of sharp humor and real humanity, that makes its point about three people battered by the world without a single false note or fake sentiment. It is really laugh-out-loud funny too.

"Triplets of Belleville" - This animated film from France is nearly wordless but just about the most creative combination of animation techniques ever seen, with everything from classic cell animation, to anime, to CG. The story is a quirky, almost surreal tale about a grandmother trying to rescue her kidnapped, bike-racing grandson from gangsters in the fantastical city of Belleville, with the help of three weird, elderly 1920s jazz singers. Do not try to figure that out, just go see it and laugh your head off. "Finding Nemo" was wonderful, but this one has it beat for pure originality.

"House of Sand and Fog" - A gripping drama, like last year's "In The Bedroom," pits a depressed, recovering alcoholic (Jennifer Connelly), who through inaction allows her house to be seized by the state for taxes she does not owe, against a strong-willed, traditional Iranian immigrant (Ben Kingsley), a former officer in the Shah's regime who is trying to pull his family back from the brink of poverty.



Kate Blanchett as Galadriel in "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King."

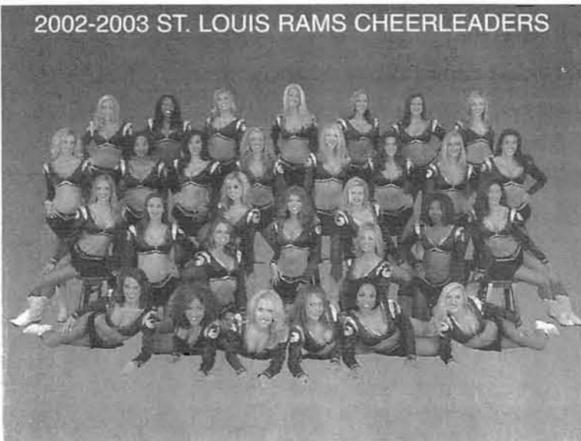
THIS Saturday, Jan. 17th, be ready to experience the high flying acrobatic slam-dunks that these guys will be bringing to "our house!"

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Women's game at 1:00 PM
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They will be available for pictures and autographs beginning at 7:00 PM

Women start at 5:30 PM
Men at 7:45 PM

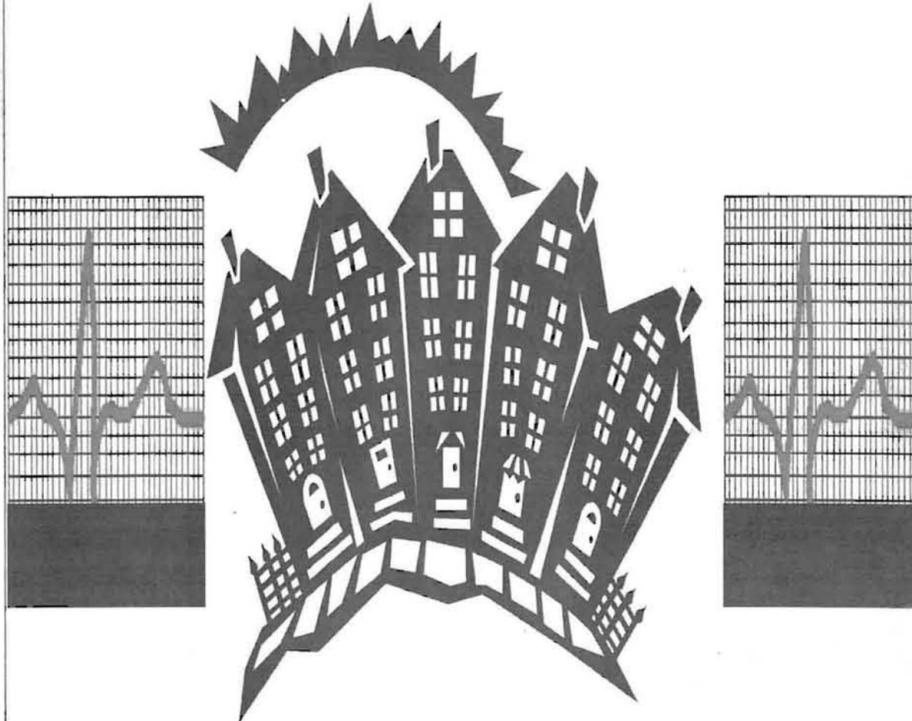
Saturday, February 7th...be here are some local mascots will be in attendance entertaining the crowd!

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Photos by Mike Sherwin/ The Current

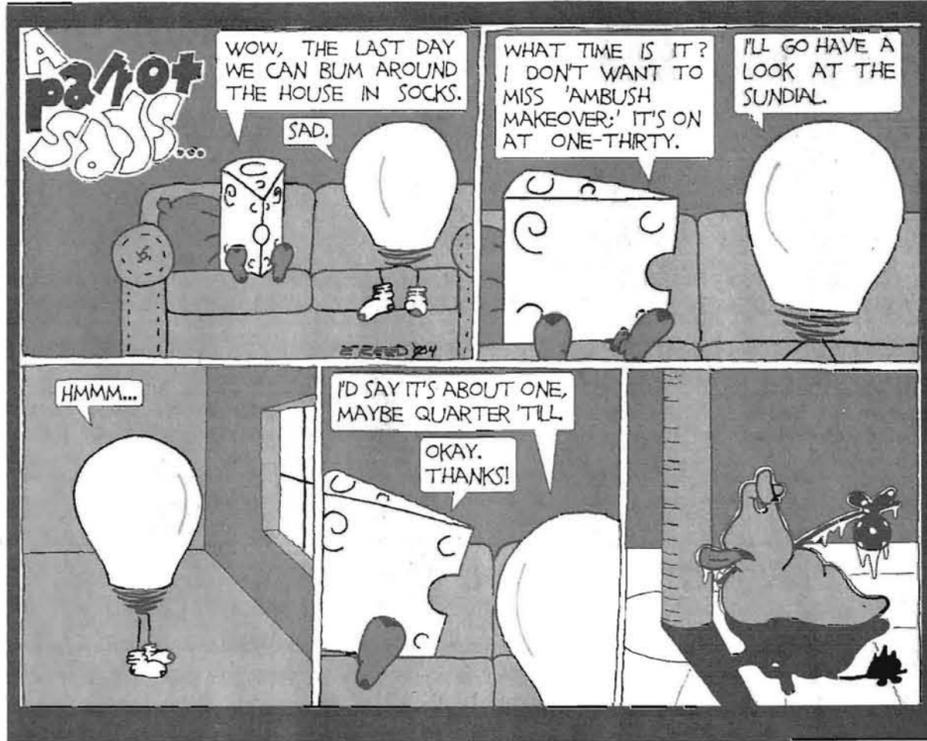
Getting Oriented

TOP:

Melissa Clauser and her son Matthew stop to read through a brochure at the winter orientation held Friday. UM-St.Louis' academic departments and student organizations provided information to new students and transfers. Matthew Clauser, who previously attended UM-Kansas City, is seeking his bachelor's degree in Biology.

RIGHT:

Attendees of the orientation on Friday jam the third floor of the Millennium Student Center, leaving only light traffic on the floor below.



MOTION, from page 8

Sick of studying? Do not turn on the television or sleep for half the day, causing your mind and body to become bored. Instead, head toward the Landing, go bowling or vacuum out your car. Most importantly, keep your faith and remember that accord-

ing to a slightly-out-of-text interpretation of Newton's First Law, we will stay in motion once we begin our journey toward being active bodies.

But let us not forget that last bit of discouragement included in Newton's wisdom. No matter how enthusiastic

we enter this new year, we may be stopped dead in our tracks by an outward force. This is likely considering how busy our little world is. Carry on is all we can do. Hopefully, I will be trudging along the road next to you toward a better tomorrow.

YEAR IN REVIEW, from page 3

Here on campus, the Lit Mag returned after three years, and a student was arrested for videotaping women in the restroom in Clark Hall. Also around the region and affecting students' lives was the grocery strike of the three major chains: Schnucks, Shop-n-Save and Dierbergs.

In November, a British bank and consulate in Turkey were bombed, killing 26 and wounding 400. Bush signed a bill to ban partial-birth abortions. John A. Muhammed was convicted of the 2002 sniper killings in Washington, D.C. and sentenced

to death. The first gay bishop was installed in New Hampshire, and Gary Ridgway confessed to being the Green River Killer, responsible for 48 stranglings in the 1980s.

December ended the year in triumph, as Saddam Hussein was captured. He had been hiding in an eight-foot hole in Tikrit, and surrendered to American troops. Students on campus tried to combat the stress of finals while dealing with seasonal depression. The Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity was granted recognition on campus after eight years, and SGA approved an increase in student fees

for the 2004-2005 school year.

2003 also saw the loss of several influential people, including Bobby Bonds, David Brinkley, Johnny Cash, along with his wife June Carter Cash, Gertrude Ederle, Katharine Hepburn, Bob Hope, Gregory Peck, Fred Rogers, Strom Thurmond, and Barry White.

After such a turbulent year, many hope that 2004 will have more peace and less tragedy.

All nation and worldwide events are from www.infoplease.com, and all campus events are from previous editions of *The Current*.

MOVIES, from page 11

By the time the woman recovers enough awareness to point out the mistake, the house has already been sold to the Iranian immigrant, who intends to resell the house for a quick profit to provide for his family and reclaim his past glory. The conflict between these immovable forces is almost Shakespearean, a confrontation between two worlds, two desperate needs and a prize they both must possess. The atmospheric photography by Roger Deakins (who is cinematographer for the Coen brothers) is gorgeous and the house itself almost becomes a character in the drama. Acting by Ben Kingsley is remarkable and likely to win an Oscar, even in a year of powerful performances.

"Elephant" - Gus van Sant's return to indie films, like his art film "Gerry," produces a powerful work of cinema. The film follows the daily life of several students, played by non-actors, through a typical day in a high school filled with all the usual high school concerns. The hand-held, unnarrated, documentary style seems almost like a home movie until the high school

starts to resemble Columbine. The effect is moving, emotionally stunning, as it unfolds without explanation or pat answers, just as the real events had no simple answers. A simply remarkable film that must be experienced for the insight it gives.

"Dirty Pretty Things" - Stephen Frears looks at a hidden side of London, the world of illegal immigrants. Instead of a documentary tale of woe, this film is a thriller and a mystery that is far more enlightening and compelling than any conventional approach could have been. It is not at all what you would expect.

"Girl with a Pearl Earring" - Little is really known of the life of the painter Vermeer or how he created his "Girl With A Pearl Earring" masterpiece but this fantasy creation seems almost like being transported back in time. The film includes the class inequities of the time and the powerlessness of women, along with the filth and dangers of the era. An intriguing and affecting film, with fine underplayed performances by Colin Firth as the painter and by Scarlett Johansson as the maid who poses for the painting.

beyond her years.

"Barbarian Invasions" - This funny and touching French Canadian tale of a dying, cranky, intellectual father and his estranged, practical, entrepreneurial son coming to grips with death and their relationship is a far-reaching comic swipe at nearly everything. Sarcastic, sexy, intelligent and sly, the biting humor mercilessly takes on culture, technology, American narrow-mindedness and the Canadian health-care system. There is something to delight and irritate both sides of the political spectrum but it is also a moving tale about the connection between fathers and sons and how to make a grand exit.

Mainstream near misses: "Mystic River," "Finding Nemo," "In America," "The Human Stain," "Master and Commander," "Kill Bill Vol. 1," "Cold Mountain" and "The Missing."

Indie and art film near misses: "21 Grams," "Jerry," "Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary," "Russian Ark," "Raising Victor Vargas," "Whale Rider" and "Magdalene Sisters."

Top Documentaries: "To Be and To Have," "Fog of War," "Capturing the Friedmans," "Winged Migration" and "Spellbound" (both of these last two were really 2002 films that did not appear here until 2003).

Films that opened elsewhere in 2003, or are still on the film festival circuit, that we hope to see here: "Big Fish," "Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress," "Singing Detective," "Melvin Goes to Dinner," "Monster," "Wilber Wants to Kill Himself" and "Autumn Spring."

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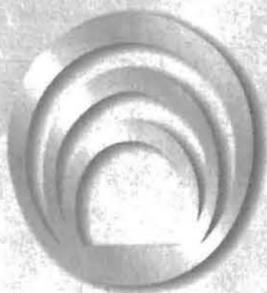
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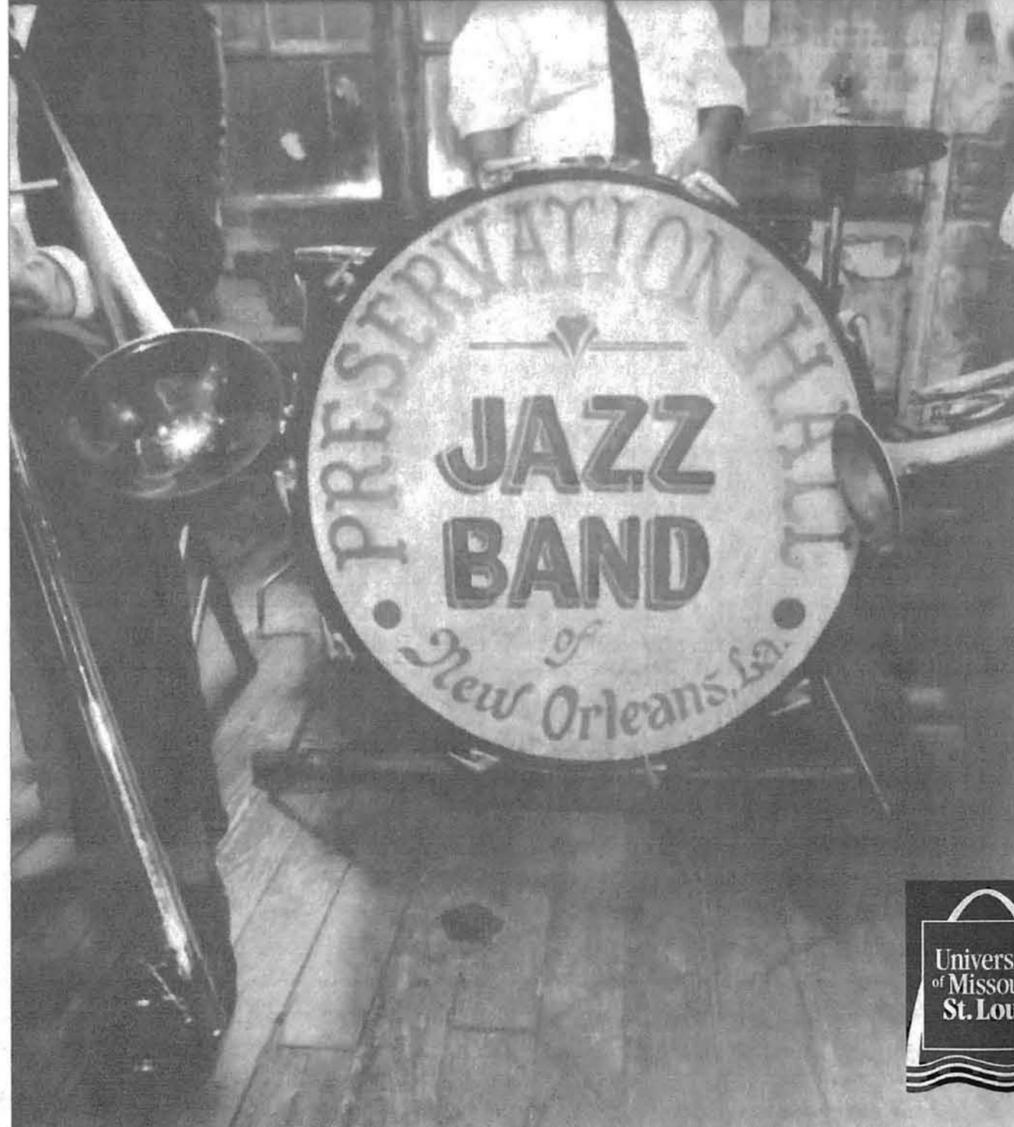
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Friday, January 30, 8 p.m.

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And coming this winter and spring...

Byzantine Choir of Pittsburgh, Jan. 24 •
New Century Saxophone Quartet, Jan. 26
• Arianna String Quartet Family Concert,
Jan. 31 • Arianna String Quartet Concert
Series, Feb. 1 • Canadian Brass, Feb. 4
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