



See NightLife p. 9
Check out Pepper and Nectar
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - ST. LOUIS

Higher ed increase could mean \$1 million for UMSL

Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder talks with student Dustin Coffell, after a press conference in the MSC on Friday. Kinder spoke in support of Gov. Blunt's 'State of the State' address which called for a 2 percent boost to higher ed.



BY PAUL HACKBARTH
News Editor

Gov. Matt Blunt reaffirmed his faith in higher education during his State of the State address on Wednesday, Jan. 11 with a proposed 2 percent \$17.1 million increase to Missouri colleges and universities. Chancellor Thomas George attended Blunt's address in Jefferson City and said his remarks were well received. George said the University should thank the governor for showing

that he places importance on higher education.

Of the \$17.1 million increase to higher education that Blunt promised, half or about \$8 million will go to the University of Missouri system. According to a campuswide e-mail sent out by George and Bob Samples, director of University Relations, "Not calculating a further funding gap adjustment, this would translate into approximately \$1 million to UMSL."

A 2 percent increase would help lower the University's budget deficit

and maintain UM-St. Louis' ongoing programs, George said. Samples added that the Budget and Planning committee would discuss which programs have priority to the money.

George named increasing the percentage of money donated to need-based scholarships as one priority. In his e-mail, George wrote that state appropriations "also would lessen the extent of internal reallocations to cover salary and benefits increases and other costs."

Jim Krueger, vice chancellor of

Managerial and Technological Services, said the money would additionally be used to cover the rising costs of utilities and maintenance and repair to campus buildings. Money will also be used for insurance, information technology and hiring new faculty.

The 2 percent increase will also affect tuition rates. George said an increase in state appropriations would not necessarily translate to no increases in tuition.

see **FUNDING INCREASE**, page 3

Police investigate campus carjacking

Incident took place in the afternoon in the MSC North Garage; student not harmed

BY PAUL HACKBARTH
News Editor

UM-St. Louis police are involved in an ongoing investigation of a carjacking on campus that took place during the afternoon of Wednesday, Dec. 7 in the Millennium Student Center North Garage.

Detective Tony Griemel from the UM-St. Louis police department said a male student was carjacked after walking to his car, which was parked on the lower level of the garage. The incident occurred at approximately 3 p.m. that Wednesday.

According to Griemel, an unknown black male approached the student and "pressed something hard hidden in his coat against [the student's] back, implying he had a weapon." However, no weapon was observed.

Griemel explained the suspect asked for the student's wallet and keys and forced the student into his car. With the help of the student's directions, the suspect drove out of the garage and onto Florissant Road.

The suspect reportedly drove to the Glen Echo Country Club golf course on Lucas and Hunt Road. There, the suspect told the student to get out of the car, and the suspect drove off. The student called the UM-St. Louis police from the Country Club. Griemel said the student was not hurt in any way.

"On Saturday [Dec. 10] evening, the car was involved in an auto accident near Grand Avenue and Highway 70 in St. Louis city," Griemel explained. A black male, a black female and two children were witnessed leaving the accident scene.

see **CARJACKING**, page 3

UMSL celebrates Martin Luther King Day



Adam D. Wiseman/The Current

Brian W. Kelum, Artistic Director/Conductor for the St. Louis Youth Chamber Ensemble, plays "Some Where Over the Rainbow" on the piano during the celebration for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday at the Touhill on Monday morning.

MLK event focuses on Rosa Parks' legacy

BY MIKE SHERWIN
Editor-in-Chief

With music, drama and compelling orators, UM-St. Louis celebrated on Monday the life and legacy of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

However, King was not the only one commemorated. Rosa Parks, who died in October, 2005, was remembered as a civil rights hero, whose refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala. bus sparked the bus boycott that led to a Supreme Court decision bolstering the civil rights movement.

Brandon T. Neal, deputy director of the

INSIDE:

An excerpt of Myron McNeil's first-place MLK Essay

See page 4

Democratic Governors Association, said Parks exemplified agape, or unconditional love for humanity.

"She had a love for her community. She had a love for us," said Neal, who attended Parks' funeral.

Despite the gains of the civil rights movement, Neal cautioned that racism still exists, but in less outward ways.

"Jim Crow Sr. is dead. Jim Crow Jr. is alive and well," Neal said. Education and national dialogue, he said, are vital to unify society and combat lingering vestiges of racism in America.

Three UM-St. Louis students were given awards for their entries in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest. Myron McNeil, Josalin Hunter and Jason Wendleton won first, second and third place prizes, respectively. McNeil won a \$500 prize for his winning essay.

The annual King Day event, held by the Office of Equal Opportunity, also featured the St. Louis Black Repertory Theater, which performed a dramatization of Parks' life in the Montgomery bus boycott.

Brady regains full-time status as baseball coach

■ Volleyball, softball coaches also full-time

BY BEN SWOFFORD
News Associate Editor

After three years and one court case UM-St. Louis Rivermen Baseball Head Coach Jim Brady is again a full-time employee of the University.

In December, UM-St. Louis Chancellor Tom George officially made the head coaching positions of the baseball, softball and volleyball teams full time.

"This is about student athletics and the fact that the chancellor recognizes the importance of athletics to the University and that the student athletes need support full time," said Brady.

The reinstatement of Brady and the softball and volleyball coaches is in line with recommendations submitted in fall 2005 by a chancellor appointed task force on athletics

calling for the reorganization of athletics under Student Affairs and an increase in funds and infrastructure for the athletics department.

"This move is consistent with the recommendations I received in August from a task force I appointed to review our athletic program and consistent with my personal belief that a healthy athletic program enhances campus life and ultimately student learning and growth," George said, in a memorandum dated Dec. 13.

"It's consistent with the chancellor's task force and consistent with the belief that a strong athletics department is important to a vibrant university community," said Bob Samples, director of University Relations.

In July 2002 the coaching positions where made part time, reportedly due to state funding issues. Brady's reduction to part time became a key component of his age discrimination lawsuit against UM-St. Louis that he won in 2004. The University is still appealing the case.

"The fact is it never should of happened," Brady said, adding that in his discrimination case, he proved state funding did not have a direct correlation with athletic funding.

see **BRADY**, page 3



Jim Brady
UMSL Baseball
Head Coach

UMSL, Express Scripts discuss potential partnerships

BY PAUL HACKBARTH
News Editor

When Express Scripts announced it was moving its headquarters to campus, SGA President D'Andre Braddix was among a handful of students initially skeptical of whether the company would be just a neighbor or a true partner.

After a six-hour meeting between University and Express Scripts officials, Braddix was assured it would be the latter. "I was surprised at how receptive Express Scripts was in creat-

ing a true partnership," he said.

The UM-St. Louis/Express Scripts task force committee met for the first time Dec. 14. Dean Keith Womer of the Business College and Steve Littlejohn from Express Scripts were appointed co-chairs. The committee consists about 10 individuals from UM-St. Louis and 10 from Express Scripts.

Womer said the committee will be "exploring all the possible ways in which we might have a partnership with Express Scripts, expecting a full partnership between the campus and

the company," he said.

Womer noted the committee developed two goals. "One was to try to come up with some guiding principles," he said. "And then secondly, to organize some working groups that might focus on looking at particular ways in which we might form partnerships."

Braddix said the guiding principles discussed included quick wins, defined measures of outcomes and support of both University and Express Scripts missions.

The goal of quick wins is crucial in

this partnership, Womer explained. The task force will look into developing a few projects initially that would produce observable results to show the potential benefits to both the campus and the company. Womer hopes identify these projects in the next month or two.

"If we can find opportunities begin doing something now versus 12 months from now, it will strengthen the validity of the partnership and people can see the value of it,"

see **EXPRESS SCRIPTS**, page 3

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Rivermen pick up two important conference wins

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Should you be worried about bird flu?

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Professor studies road rage in her new book

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Bulletin 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, One University Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63121, fax at 516-6811 or email at current@jinx.umsl.edu. All listings use 516 prefixes unless otherwise indicated.

Put it on the Board! Call 516-5174 for details or email current@jinx.umsl.edu

Tuesday Jan. 17

Scholar to discuss HIV history

Robert Paul, assistant psychiatry professor from Brown Medical School in Rhode Island, will talk about HIV history in his lecture, "Human Immunodeficiency Virus: What Happened and Where Are We Now?" The colloquium will take place from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in 445 Benton Hall. Call 5393 for more information.

Wednesday, Jan. 18

Researcher to discuss children with anxiety disorders

Cynthia Suveg, researcher from Philadelphia, will visit UM-St. Louis to discuss her lecture, "Emotion Regulation in Children with Anxiety Disorders: A Developmental Psychopathology Perspective." The free psychology colloquium will take place in 443 Benton Hall from 2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. For more information on the event call 5393.

Psychology Colloquium

Antonio Polo will visit UM-St. Louis to discuss mental health needs of linguistic minority youth in a lecture titled, "Attending the Mental Health Needs of Latino and Linguistic Minority Youth." The colloquium is in 101 Benton Hall from 2 to 3:15 p.m. Call 5393 for more information.

Thursday, Jan. 19

Workshop to address foster car cuts

A panel discussion called "Missouri Slashes Medicaid and the Guardianship Subsidies: Now What?" will take place in the J.C. Penney Conference Center from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The workshop costs \$25 per person. Call 5974 for more info.

Gallery Visio Exhibit to showcase elephant art

Gallery Visio will hold an opening reception for the Asian Elephant Art & Conservation Project from 4 to 7 p.m. in 170 Millennium Student Center. A joint fundraiser will take place from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in Century Room C of the MSC. Admission to the fundraiser is \$35 for the general public, \$20 for faculty and staff and \$10 for students. Call 7922 for more information.

Friday, Jan. 20

Psychology colloquium

Gary Brase, assistant professor in psychological sciences at Mizzou will discuss "Frequency Is As Frequency Does: When is Statistical Information Represented as Frequencies?" The lecture will take place in 120 Research Building from 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Call 5393 for more information.

David Alan Grier to perform standup comedy

David Alan Grier will perform standup comedy at the Touhill Performing Arts Center at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$35, \$28 and \$25. Call 4949 for tickets or more information.

Saturday, Jan. 21

Workshop offers fiction, nonfiction writing tips

The Write Stuff Program offers noncredit workshops for writers on Saturdays through April 15 in the J.C. Penney Conference Center and University Center. Fiction workshops take place between 10 a.m. and noon and nonfiction workshops are between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Workshops costs \$39 per person. For more information or to register, call 5974.

An Evening with Ice-T

Hip hop star and actor Ice-T will talk about his views on life, death, religion and the entertainment industry at 8 p.m. at the Touhill Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$20 for the event. For more information or tickets, call 4949.

Put your event on the Bulletin Board by emailing information to current@jinx.umsl.edu

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Campus Crimeline

The following incidents were reported to the UM-St. Louis police department between Nov. 25, 2005 and Jan. 13, 2006. Remember that crime prevention is a community effort, and anyone having information concerning these incidents should contact the campus police at 516-5155.

Dec. 1, 2005-Stealing Under \$500-121 Marillac Hall
Employees at the eye center indicated when they were checking the number of eyeglasses on the shelves they discovered one pair to be missing. They assume the eyeglass frame was stolen sometime between Nov. 28 and Dec. 1.

Dec. 2, 2005-Stealing Under \$500-Touhill Performing Center
A patron at the Performing Arts Center left her purse unattended in a chair during inter-

mission and when she returned it was gone.

Dec. 7, 2005-Stolen Auto-Millennium Garage North

A student reported that he was carjacked in the MSC Garage North. The victim reported that an unknown black male subject approached him and implied that he had a weapon although none was displayed and demanded his wallet. When the victim gave up his wallet, the suspect forced the victim to his vehicle and told the victim to get in. The suspect drove the vehicle from the parking garage and left campus. The victim stated that he was dropped off at the golf course on Lucas and Hunt Road, and the suspect left in the vehicle. The vehicle was later recovered in the City of St. Louis and had been abandoned, after being involved in an accident around the area of I-70 and Grand Boulevard. Evidence collected from

the vehicle is being processed; no suspects have been identified at this time.

Dec. 14, 2005-Stealing Under \$500-009 Research Building

The victim indicated that sometime between Dec. 1 and Dec. 14 person(s) unknown stole four five-pound blocks of aluminum from a storage area. The storage area is located in an office and it is not locked.

Dec. 20, 2005-Stealing Under \$500-102 Benton Hall

Sometime Between Dec. 19 and Dec 20 person(s) unknown stole one VCR from room 102 of Benton Hall.

Dec. 20, 2005-Attempted Burglary-7850 South Florissant Road

A witness observed a black male juvenile

suspect break out an apartment window and run. The campus police saw the suspect from a distance running on the bike path and gave chase. The suspect ran into and out of the woods in the area of Springdale and Nacomis Drive in the City of Normandy, eluding the pursuing officers.

Dec. 23, 2005-Stealing Over \$500-3rd Floor Social Science Building

A worker discovered that the change/coin machine attached to the wall in the hallway and used to make change and services the copy machine had been stolen. The entire unit appears to have been removed from the wall and stolen from the building.

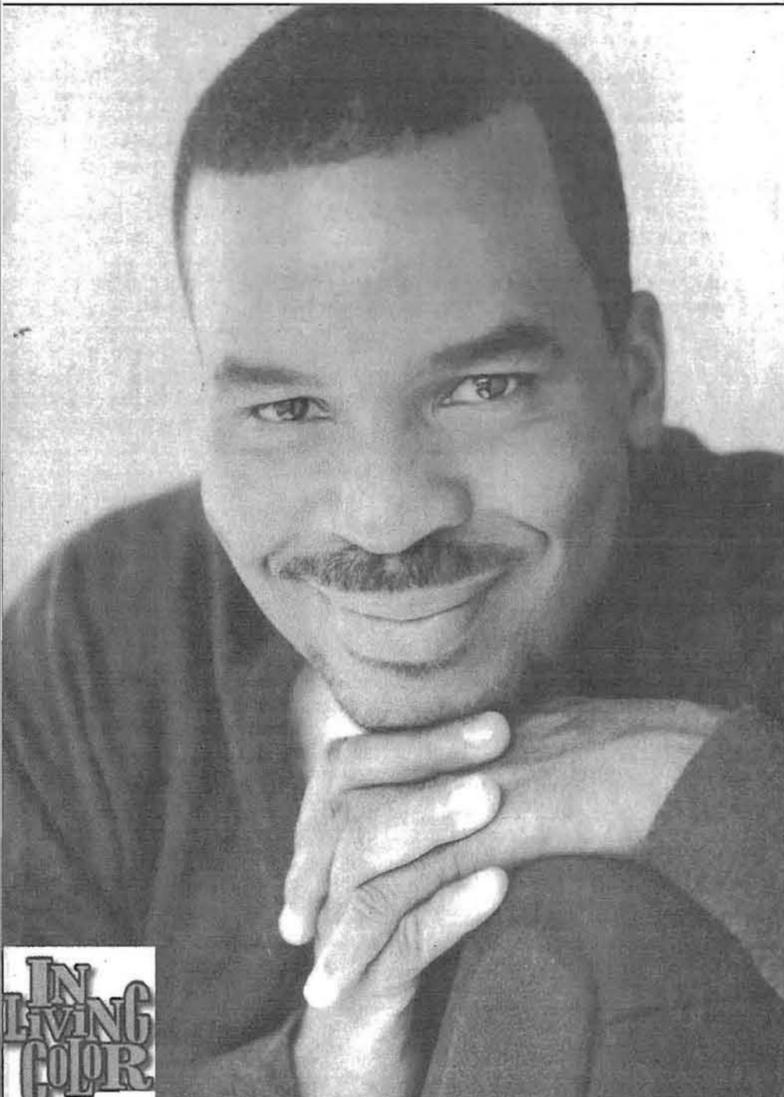
Jan. 4, 2006-Sex Offense-8173 Normandy Trace Drive Apt. D

A 14-year-old victim not related to the University was apparently raped by several

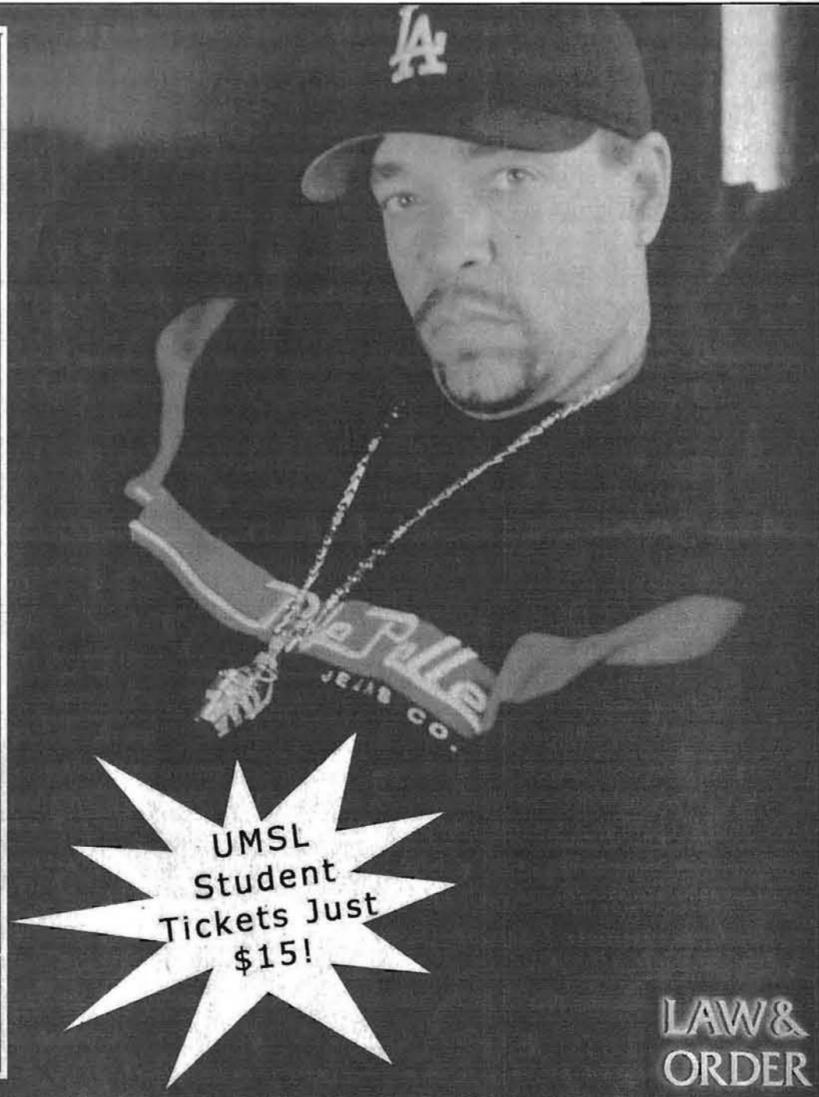
persons in the City of St. Louis. A suspect in these occurrences lives on University property. According to a St. Louis City detective some type of incident may have occurred at this apartment. Due to the ongoing nature of this criminal enterprise starting in the City of St. Louis, the St. Louis City police department will be handling this matter. Our department will assist with the reporting information and also submit a report to Student Affairs for possible disciplinary action.

Jan. 9, 2006-Stealing Over \$500-Bellerive Residence Hall Lobby

Sometime around Dec. 16, 2005 the suspect, a resident in Bellerive, apparently stole some furniture from the lobby area and moved it to another residence on campus. The investigation is ongoing by the UM-St. Louis police department.



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65 Vashon seniors move to UMSL



Adam D. Wiseman/The Current

Andy Fankhauser, junior, business administration, takes Vashon Highschool Students on a tour of the Mercantile Library on Thursday afternoon. 65 students will be attending classes here at UM-St. Louis for the remainder of their senior year. They will be on campus every day except Wednesday where they will be attending another school. The reason for the move is to downsize Vashon's population.

COACH BRADY, from page 1

Since Brady was here when the reductions occurred, he was reinstated to full-time status on Dec. 1. The softball and volleyball coaches at the time of the reductions have since left so the University posted the positions and began the hiring process. The softball coach position was filled by the part-time Head Coach Chuck Sosnowski. The volleyball head coaching position is still vacant.

"My desk is full of resumes,"

Athletic Director Pat Dolan said. "I think the leadership coming out of [Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs] Curt Coonrod's and George's offices is very strong," Brady said. "It's about giving students every possibility on and off the field and sends the message by being there full time that we really care." For the baseball team, the move is a boon, Brady said. It will improve his ability to attract and recruit players while letting him work full time

to support the players. "I think being able to recruit without all of this is great. It catches up to you," Brady said. "It will allow us to get an extra blue chip or two." "We are going to return to national prominence," Brady said. Brady also does not have to work the day job he had when his job at the University was downgraded. "It sure beats the hell out of getting up at 5 a.m. to work for the teamsters," he said.

FUNDING INCREASE, from page 1

not necessarily translate to no increases in tuition. "If there are no raises to the staff and faculty, there will be an increase in tuition, but not a double digit [increase]," he said. George added if salaries were raised by 2 percent, half of what Blunt recommends for state employees, tuition would increase by 10.7 percent, a measure George said he would not recommend.

George reaffirmed that UM-St. Louis would try to "minimize the increase and keep tuition as low as possible. We really want to benefit the student from this," he said. The increase in state appropriations for next year comes after several previous years of flat appropriations. According to Blunt's speech from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch,

"Prior to my service as governor, colleges and universities were hit with significant cuts. This year, my budget calls for a \$17,000,000 increase for state colleges and universities, providing them with the resources they need to improve quality and hold back tuition increases." Blunt went on to say, "We ensured that last year's budget provided public colleges and universities with more funding than any budget of the prior administration." After years of flat appropriations or cuts, "the 2 percent increase will move us up to the 1998-1999 levels." Samples said. This translates to a \$51 million budget for UM-St. Louis for fiscal year 2007. Missouri's economy last year

allowed for the increase in state appropriations to universities and colleges across the state. "The state is turning around," George said. "We're seeing more dollars, and putting this money into higher education is important." The Missouri Senate must approve the \$17.1 million increase that would begin July 1. George said last year, Blunt's prediction of funding for higher education was close to the actual amount received. George also discussed Floyd's continuing directive for a 10 percent reallocation of increasing efficiency in each campus's administration costs. A preliminary report is due in April, with a final report due in June. Cuts in administrative costs could happen as soon as July 1.

EXPRESS SCRIPTS, from page 1

Littlejohn said. The other goal of organizing work groups has already begun. "Different subcommittees are in the process of being formed to target different areas of the partnership," Braddix said. The different target areas include creating partnerships through people, information technology, research and data analysis, public policy research, sales and marketing, operations, surrounding communities and external relations.

The people category, Womer said, was probably the most talked about as it includes discussing possible internships, job placement opportunities, mentoring, student research and training and educational programs through Express Scripts. "With respect to students, certainly, internships and job placement are crucial activities that we see as being very involved," Womer said. With UM-St. Louis student involvement, Womer predicts an "increased potential and

diversity of [Express Scripts'] workforce," he said. Although Womer has interests in a partnership with the Business College, he said Express Scripts serves a wide variety of people's needs. "There's opportunities across the board," he explained. From an Express Scripts perspective, Littlejohn said the company is excited for the "potential of tapping into the knowledge and expertise of the resources at UMSL." The compa-

News Briefs

Floyd donates raise to four UM campuses

UM President Elson Floyd received a \$21,000 raise approved by the Board of Curators on Dec. 16, 2005. The curators approved the 6 percent raise by a vote of 6-3, in addition to approving to extend Floyd's term as UM system president to 2010, an extra two years as promised under his contract. In response, Floyd announced he would donate his raise among the development campaigns of the four UM campuses equally. Each campus will use the money as private funds to supplement other funding sources. Joe Moore, University Relations director for the UM system said, "In light of the fiscal crisis over the past four years, [Floyd] felt it was appropriate to give his raise back to the University." Moore said Floyd has never accepted a raise during his



Floyd UM President donated \$21,000 raise

term. In November 2004, the Board of Curators approved a 3 percent raise, which Floyd declined.

Baumann honored for archaeology work

Timothy Baumann, former assistant professor of anthropology at UM-St. Louis, received the 2006 John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology last week in Sacramento, Calif. "The John L. Cotter award is the highest award given to a historical archaeologist for his/her early career achievements to the field," Baumann explained in an e-mail interview. "Needless to say, this is a great honor and I am truly humbled by this award," he wrote. Baumann received the award for his excavation work for nearly 10 years at Arrow Rock, Mo. about 150 miles west of St. Louis. His work included "attempting to document the lives of African-Americans from slavery to freedom" at the Arrow Rock site. "Excavations were conducted as summer classes operated through UMSL and in conjunction with the Arrow Rock State Historic Site and the Friends of Arrow Rock," he explained. Baumann no longer works

with the anthropology department, but he is affiliated with the Public Policy Research Center and is starting a new project on the Scott Joplin State Historic Site.

UMSL gets new electric cars

In an effort to conserve energy costs on campus directed by a state mandate, Facilities Services at UM-St. Louis bought three electric cars. The cars, less than a year old, include two trucks and one five-passenger van. Frank Kochin, director of facilities services, said although three electric vehicles out of 20 to 30 maintenance vehicles is not a large percentage, the electric cars do save on certain costs. The electric cars have a top speed of 25 mph and get 30 to 40 miles per charge. Kochin said the Facilities Services staff has mixed reactions about the cars, but Kochin said, "They function fine. They're a good thing and easier on the environment." Kochin explained the University is looking at alternate options to save energy costs. "Someone even approached us about selling a hydrogen car," he said.

CARJACKING, from page 1



Detective Anthony Griemel shows where a carjacker attacked a UM-St. Louis student before taking his car in the north staircase of the MSC North Garage. He explained that the criminal then took the victim to his car where he was made to get in and show him the way out of the parking garage.

"Monday, we were notified, and we went down to the impound lot and recovered evidence and took fingerprints from inside the vehicle," Griemel said. No suspects have been identified at this time. In his seven and a half years working at UM-St. Louis, Griemel said he has only seen one attempted carjacking about three to four years ago and this recent incident. "It's a rare occur-

rence on campus," he said. To lessen the risk of being carjacked, Griemel said, "Hide valuables in your trunk or carry them with you." While carjackings do not happen often, Griemel suggested that students travel in groups. "Be aware of your surroundings, what you're doing and where you're going," he said. Griemel also recommended that students should walk in the opposite direction

or find an alternate route to their vehicle if they see a suspicious person. The UM-St. Louis police reminded students that blue emergency phones in garages and red phones on campus are there for safety reasons. "Call for an escort if you're taking evening classes," Griemel advised. Anybody with information regarding the carjacking incident is asked to call the police department at 516-5155.

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Our Opinion

Student carjacked, no campus alert?

A student was attacked Dec. 7 in a stairwell of the MSC North Garage, then dragged to his car, and taken for a ride by the assailant, who claimed to have a weapon. The student was then dropped off at a nearby golf course, and the perpetrator drove away with the student's car.

This was not in the middle of the night. Rather, it was in broad daylight at approximately 3 p.m.

Have you heard about the carjacking? Have you been told to be aware that a student has been attacked and forcefully taken in his own car? More importantly, have you heard that the assailant who targeted a UM-St. Louis student is still at large?

More than likely, you haven't. Instead of raising awareness that an incident had occurred, and that the suspect has yet to be apprehended, the University has chosen to keep quiet about a potential threat to students.

Without knowledge of the carjacking, students attending classes during finals week of winter semester had no reason to take extra precaution while on campus.

The University should take more seriously the need to promote awareness of potential dangers to students on campus when serious crimes occur, and assailants are not apprehended.

According to the Jeanne Clery

Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, Universities are required to take four courses of action (or face penalties from the federal government):

- Maintain crime statistics for the campus
- Publish an annual report of those statistics

- Maintain a crime log, listing all incidents involving the University (the last 60 days of which must be accessible to the public during normal business hours)

- Provide timely reports of crimes that present an ongoing threat to the campus.

While the University follows the letter of the law in respect to the Clery Act, which allows for some subjectivity of the term "ongoing threat," by neglecting to provide timely reports on serious incidents such as the carjacking in December, it fails to follow the spirit of the law, which seeks to promote crime awareness as a means of preventing future incidents.

University officials and campus police should expand their definitions for 'ongoing threats' to include any serious crimes that involve violence against students or campus personnel, particularly when the assailant has not been found.

When serious crimes occur, the

University should utilize the most inexpensive and effective tool available: campus-wide email.

By sending out a notification that a crime against a student had occurred and an assailant is at large, students could have at least been armed with the knowledge of the crime and might have taken steps to exercise extra caution while on campus. If nothing else, we all should be on the lookout for suspicious behavior.

UM-St. Louis is blessed with a very low crime rate. Indeed, it is statistically the safest campus of its size in the region.

That is why it is all the more important that when crime does occur, the University takes the safety of its students seriously by alerting them to the fact that an incident has occurred, and remind the campus of tips to stay safe and secure on campus. Common sense behaviors, such as not walking alone, or calling the police (516-5155) to have an officer escort you to your car or the MetroLink, can significantly reduce the possibility of personal threat.

There is no reason not to take extra precaution when crime erupts. The University should err on the side of sending too many 'timely reports,' rather than sitting quiet while a potential threat exists.

Editor's Opinion

Melancholy, despair and a slice of pity pie

I generally admire those who find a way to laugh in the jeering face of adversity. Who doesn't prefer interacting with optimists? Sometimes, though, I just want to grumble, feel sorry for myself and smack the overeager grin off those cheery faces...figuratively, of course.

Despite how ineffective that behavior sounds, it's not a completely bad idea. On occasion, we all crave the bitterness of a freshly baked pity cake (ingredients: lots of salty tears, a dash of ire, 1 cup helplessness, a pinch of resentment and a bit of cynicism to taste. Cook until black, ice with misery). As long as we don't develop an affinity for the flavor, everyone can benefit from a moment of gloom.

After "treating" my car to brand new tires, brakes and parts I'd never heard of, my little wallet ached last week. Trying to remain positive, I accepted the spending spree as the cost that comes with owning a vehicle. The next day, I went to bring my fiancé lunch and the car wouldn't start. At first I laughed out loud, appreciating the irony. Then I went in the house and called my mom, crying.

She didn't tell me to stop blubbering, nor did she make light of the situation. Her first words included, "Oh, sweetie, that sucks." She let me wallow in unabashed despair for a minute before helping me resolve the situation. After numerous futile attempts to



KATE DROLET
Managing Editor

jump the battery and identify the expensive-sounding clicking noise, I called a tow truck. The silver lining appeared: I would spend another day with my new nephew while mechanics worked on my car. By the time the tow dragged my car off to the auto shop, my positive outlook had returned and I didn't have to fight back unshed tears.

It's difficult to convey sympathy. In retrospect, my incident ranks pretty low on the bad luck scale. How do we offer consolation to a friend who has suffered a death in the family? People get tired of hearing, "I'm so sorry" and "Everything's going to be okay."

Instead of sending regrets, offer a hug and say, "This must be really tough for you."

Participating in a moment of self-pity just means acknowledging your negative feelings rather than forcing them behind a shiny, happy exterior. Learn to time pity parties appropriately. Breaking down during the middle of class or in traffic can invite negative consequences. Grit your teeth if the urge to wail overcomes you during unsuitable conditions, and find a place to bemoan your existence in private.

Pity cake can ease distress, but don't eat so much that your sorrow becomes unwieldy. Used sparingly, it can clear your head, giving optimism a steady ground.

MLK embodied, promoted and understood the cycle of utopia



MYRON MCNEILL
2006 Essay Winner

on his mental desk. His every word whistled the greatness of utopia. His speeches and demands quenched the dry hearts and minds of the oppressed. He observed the battlefield of impracticality. His actions, thoughts and speeches revealed that he was impractical. Yes, he was incapable of dealing efficiently with practical matters. It was practical to deny Negroes voting or schooling. It was practical for racism, segregation and violence to exist. It was practical for a nation to divide itself in half: one side being White and the other Black. However, Martin Luther King was impractical. King was a manifestation of utopia. His dreams of a world in utopia were spoken. His dreams left residue on the hearts and minds of humanity...

His words of utopia still linger today. Everyday the lines of social injustice are erased. The perpetual elimination of the lines of hierarchy amongst races and social classes allows people of all walks of life to participate in the greatness of our nation and also the task of furthering the goal of eliminating social injustice...Under the umbrella of King's dreams, all forms of life are compacted, connected, unified and gradually moving towards utopia. This unified state of bliss helps us realize that the best has yet to come.

Moving toward the future and pushing for the existence of utopia, many hope to create legacies that promote ideologies that go beyond themselves. People push for reform not to achieve acclaim. People seek and fight for reform to change the world for the

better. People are seeking utopia...So they can promote life and unity. Activists protest and work daily for understanding or merely to be heard, ignoring the opposition and their tactics of destruction. Once again, there are people who work and come home. Law abiding people who vote and pay taxes. They aren't famous. They are ordinary people who inspire multitudes by their conduct. Like professors, teachers, advisors, construction workers, deities and mentors that ignore illness and other pains to teach classrooms, give advice, heal hearts and give flow and direction to chaos. They are apart of the impracticality that King was apart of. They experience and help others to experience utopia. They fulfill the dream that King spoke of on Washington. They are the dream of King's imagination. If you listen to the whispers, observe their actions and process the meaning behind them, you will be convinced and demanding of yourself to promote utopia...Utopia is the repetition and life cycle of the famous quote that Martin Luther King used in his "I Have A Dream Speech" and originated by Thomas Jefferson, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal."

Myron McNeill is an English major at UM-St. Louis. He is active in the theatre community, a member of Phi Theta Kappa, and a student in the Pierre Laclède Honors College.

Alito's 'forgetfulness' concerning

James Frey I hate you. I've never met you, hadn't even heard of you until a few days ago, but I hate you nonetheless.

I spent a few hours over the last few days doing research for two possible columns, and had to abandon them because I realized I couldn't be sure of all the facts, at least not before deadline.

Then you, James

Frey, best-selling writer of something you call a work of non-fiction that has been atop the New York Times paperback best-seller list for months, acknowledge that you made up some of the stuff in your purported work of non-fiction. A New York Times reporter wrote that you said you made up probably less than 5 percent of the book, and quoted you saying that was "within the realm of what's appropriate for a memoir."

I get paid a lousy \$15 for each column and agonize over every detail. I don't know how much money you made from your book, "A Million Little Pieces," but since reliable sources say it sold more copies in 2005 than any book but the new Harry Potter, it would be safe to say you made a lot.

I respect my readers. I believe that if put something in my column that looks like a fact, then I'd better be sure it is. And if I find out later that it is not, I will put a correction in my column.

Which is why listening to the Samuel Alito hearings on the radio gives me the willies. Alito, who may soon be a Supreme Court justice, sounds to me like he is hiding some-



BENJAMIN ISRAEL
Columnist

thing. For example, in 1985 when Alito applied for a high ranking position in the Justice Department, he wrote that he belonged to Concerned Alumni of Princeton. A group of Princeton alumni founded the organization in 1972 to protest the admission of women to Princeton. Sen. Edward Kennedy read an article from CAP's

magazine that wouldn't be out of place in a Ku Klux Klan publication. Here are two sentences he read. "People nowadays just don't seem to know their place. Everywhere one turns, blacks and Hispanics are demanding jobs simply because they're black and Hispanic."

Alito said first he didn't remember belonging to the group. He put it on a resume, but claims to have forgotten he joined. Then he said he joined it to restore ROTC to campus.

In 1990, when the other George Bush nominated Alito to a seat on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, he told the Senate in a written statement that since he had invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the Vanguard Mutual Fund, he would recuse himself if a case involving Vanguard came up. A suit against Vanguard came before him in 2003 as part of a three-judge panel. He cast the deciding vote to dismiss the case. Then oops, he forgot something. He later said he would recuse himself if it came back to the court.

I guess honesty is not the best policy if I want to be a best-selling writer or a Supreme Court judge.

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LETTERS

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Letters to the editor should be brief, and those not exceeding 200 words will be given preference. We edit letters for clarity and length, not for dialect, correctness, intent or grammar. All letters must be signed and must include a daytime phone number. Students must include their student ID numbers. Faculty and staff must include their title(s) and department(s). Editor-in-chief reserves the right to respond to letters. The Current reserves the right to deny letters.

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letter to the editor

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American exchange student gets acclimated to London culture



LAURA AYERS
London Correspondent

Hello from London! I will be studying in London for four months with the Missouri London Program (MLP) from UM-St. Louis. I traveled to London several years ago and I am so excited to be back for a longer stay. While MLP is facilitated through the study abroad office, a separate group called International Enrichment (IE) actually conducts it. The semester is

an island program with Missouri professors teaching the classes on the Imperial College campus in London.

Whoever said "getting there is half the fun" should be dragged out into the street and shot. I left St. Louis on Jan. 10 and caught a connecting flight in Chicago. I took the group flight out of Chicago on Air India, a company of which I am not a big fan. Imagine seven hours squeezed between people you don't know, in a seat meant for a child that doesn't go back properly, infants screaming in the background, and a meal made of something resembling vomited curry. Not to mention the fact that we left over two hours late, and arrived at 10:30 in the morning.

However, once we arrived in London, we had no trouble finding luggage and our escorts from IE. A note about customs: always carry proof that you are enrolled in the host university. Yours truly forgot her acceptance letter and nearly broke

down when the agent said "I cannot let you into the country without proper documentation." Fortunately, a supervisor took pity on me and allowed me in after getting a lot of information about the program itself (I suppose that assured him that I was, indeed, a student traveling for school).

We arrived to the flats (not apartments) without incident and proceeded to move ourselves in. Having lived in the dorms at UM-St. Louis, I am not a stranger to student accommodations or European accommodations, for that matter. My current residence is over 110 years old. Needless to say, it shows its age. But everything is clean, and as we keep telling ourselves, it's all part of the adventure.

I have one actual roommate and two other flat mates, two from Missouri State University one from Truman State.

Once we reached our home for the semester, we took an hour of rest before we all walked to lunch a few

blocks away. I cannot think of anything more conspicuous than 50+ students walking in a line down the streets of London with cameras at the ready. At lunch -fish and chips, of course- we met a local Bobby (police officer) to give us a brief safety lecture.

"Yes, we all feel ridiculous in the little hats we wear," he remarked at first. He also gave us an insight to the differences between English and

American policemen. English Bobbies do not carry guns, though some choose to carry mace (which is illegal for citizens to own). He also told us that in case of an emergency we should dial 999.

"If you call 911, you will still reach us," he said, "because a lot of stupid people here watch too many American police shows and movies."

That night we embarked on an unofficial pup crawl in the neighborhood. The idea was keep us awake so jet lag would not floor us for weeks afterwards. After visiting about four

pubs, I wound my way back to the flats and fell straightaway into my bottom bunk.

The next morning we toured Central London. We covered the major hotspots, including St. Paul's Cathedral, Tower Bridge, Piccadilly Circus, Buckingham Palace, and of course, the changing of the guards. During the afternoon two other girls and I wound around Trafalgar Square where we visited the National Portrait Museum, which contains portraits of important British persons from Oliver Cromwell to J.K. Rowling.

Afterwards, my roommate and I went to a grocery store nearby to stock up. Has anyone heard of Merba's Chocolate Chip Cookies? Because I haven't, but according to the package Merba boasts "the famous American cookies." Also slightly frightening was the alarming number of Black Currant products. I don't know what a Black Currant is, let alone if I want a Capri Sun of that flavor...

Science Column

Should you be worried about bird flu?



BY CATE MARQUIS
Science Columnist

Should you be worried about bird flu?

For the past few years, epidemiologists, virologists, and those who work in public health has expressed concerns about a future influenza pandemic. Influenza pandemics have re-occurred throughout human history. Some of them are more deadly than others but the most deadly recorded was the 1918 so-called "Spanish Flu," which spread worldwide and killed 20 to 50 million people, even more than died in World War I. The 1918 flu was remarkably contagious and quick, killing within days or even hours rather than weeks. It also was unusual in attacking the young and healthy, targeting ages 15 to 34.

Recent years have seen outbreaks of bird flu. Cases where a deadly strain of bird flu, H5N1, has spread to people who live or work closely with birds, has resulted in several deaths, mostly in Asia.

Does this mean the next influenza pandemic will come from bird flu? Not necessarily, despite the recent media hysteria. Flu strains that have acquired the ability to move from one species to another, as H5N1 apparently has, have only half the requirement for a pandemic. Should you be concerned about bird flu? Yes, but panic is not right the response. Preparedness and pressure on government for more research to produce and develop anti-viral drugs and an improved method of vaccine development are the more useful response. Let's look at some facts about influenza.

Influenza is a very changeable virus and transforms into new strains every year. Pandemics occur when a new strain spreads to which few people have immunity. Many species can be affected by or carry influenza but different strains infect different species. It is thought that pandemics usually occur when a deadly strain acquires the ability to move from one species to another. The 'deadly' strain of bird flu, H5N1, seems to have the ability to jump from birds to people but there has not yet been a clearly confirmed case of transmission of the virus from person to person. It seems to have taken the first but not the second step to becoming a possible pandemic.

One of the most encouraging pieces of news is that scientists have reconstructed the deadly 1918 flu virus so they can study its genes and find out what made it so deadly. This will allow them to focus efforts on the most dangerous aspects of the virus rather than taking a more scattershot approach.

Little had been known about that flu strain and the few preserved samples had been handled carefully lest

they restart an epidemic. Only people who were alive during that pandemic would have antibodies to it. Only recently have we had both the knowledge to contain the virus and to sequence it for study.

There are three types of influenza viruses but it is the Type A, which infects humans, some mammals and birds, that is the concern for pandemics. Two surface proteins in influenza are involved in infection. Strains of the virus are identified by these two proteins, haemagglutinin and neuraminidase, with numbers for the variations of the proteins, such as H1N1, H1N2 or H5N1. Haemagglutinin is the protein involved in getting the virus into a cell for infection and neuraminidase is involved in the release of the virus particles to spread to new cells. Anti-viral drugs like Tamiflu inhibit neuraminidase, and contain infection that way.

Different species are susceptible to different haemagglutinins. H1 is a human haemagglutinin and H5 is a bird one. Once, the 1918 strain was designated H1N1 but its type was really unknown. In October 2005, a study was published in the journal Nature that identified the 1918 strain as a purely avian flu that had jumped to humans. Only ten amino acids changes separated the 1918 strain's polymerase protein from avian polymerases. The study also found that many of the same ten changes were present in the current H5N1 avian strain infecting humans.

As alarming as that sounds, what really matters is if the H5N1 flu strain can acquire the ability to easily spread from human to human. The key to that is in the haemagglutinin, not the polymerase, although that research shed light on why the 1918 flu was so deadly.

When two different strains of flu infect the same cell, they can exchange genes to create a new strain. This genetic change is called antigenic shift and the source of greatest concern for the rise of new pandemics. If a strain that had acquired the ability to move

into a new species and infects a cell that already harbors a flu virus that readily infects people, it can acquire that characteristic.

In October 2004, Yoshihiro Kawaoka of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Tokyo announced findings that a change to a single gene for haemagglutinin may have been responsible for the strain's virulent spread. Previous research at the Australia National University in 2001 had indicated that the 1918 genetic changes had arisen from recombination within the avian strain rather than the combination of two different strains. A February 2004 study first published by a Harvard scientist and one based in London in the online version of the journal Science found that the haemagglutinin of H5N1 bird flu was more like the 1968 Hong Kong flu than the 1918 flu.

Less deadly pandemics in 1957 and 1968 were also from avian flu strains but were created by combination with human strains, rather than a purely avian source like the 1918 flu. Such a reassortment event, like in 1957 and 1968, with H5N1 might produce a less deadly strain.

Other flu pandemics have originated in pigs. The Australian study found gene similarities that suggested the 1918 flu likely came from pigs but the October 2005 sequencing found that it appeared to be purely bird flu. One of the world's premier virologists, Dr. Robert Webster, has suggested that pigs may be the missing link in the chain towards human to human transmission of a new pandemic flu strain. Putting birds and pigs together, as is commonly done in Asia, might not be a good idea right now.

We will likely see a flu pandemic in our future but whether it will be H5N1 avian flu is far from certain. Furthermore, a November 2005 report by Dr. Robert Belshe at St. Louis University, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, points to "spectacular" recent advances on bird flu. Our government has been slow to respond and we are far behind other nations in taking reasonable, practical steps to address the health threat of a future flu pandemic.

The right thing to do it to increase research, not look for legal ways to call out the troops to restore order or enforce quarantines, the bizarre concerns voiced in our government's belated response to the issue in October 2005.

The scariest thing about bird flu is our government's slow and misdirected response to the possibility of any future flu pandemic.

Letters to the Editor

State funding 'fix' not 'efficient'

UM-St. Louis students, prepare to learn the hard way.

As the state legislature reconvenes, a number of bills will be presented that may profoundly affect our lives. At least one will attempt to "fix" higher education funding. I write "fix" because, while the current system of allocation is untenable, the proposed solution may not improve affordability or quality of public education.

This bill will likely focus on a voucher system, an experimental system of funding that pays schools per student. The intent of such a bill seems to be to increase "efficiency." I write "efficiency" because I think it is one of

the least understood concepts in economics, much less public finance. In general, the more efficient the system, the more it can do with less. Here, that means greater educational output for less money, apparently.

Rep. Bearden and others who call for greater "efficiency" in public higher education tend to quote the book "Going Broke by Degree" by economist Richard Vedder. Vedder argues for the "for-profit" university model (a la University of Phoenix), more distance learning via the internet, and more non-university certification programs.

Amazon.com tells me my copy will

arrive in three to five days. I look forward to understanding where Vedder and subsequently Bearden and his fellow voucher enthusiasts, see the future of PhD's (which are all but non-existent at for-profit universities), laboratory sciences (which are poorly learned over the internet), and the liberal arts approach to education (which will not be included in a certificate type of education). I also wonder how such measures will increase "efficiency," whether the private, not-for-profit schools would stand up to this test of efficiency.

Jeremy Loscheider
Graduate Student, Economics

Drag show and editorial are unpatriotic

The Current's Dec. 5, 2005 editorial pertaining to recent opposition to the drag show is very misleading. Apparently the author of this editorial does not believe in freedom of speech, because they absolutely blast a gentleman who spoke out against this campus event. It is interesting to note that our society is so willing to call a person who exercises his or her right to speak out against something that they deem socially unacceptable a supporter of censorship.

The question must be begged, "why did this gentleman have a problem with the drag show?" Did the editorial staff actually ask this question? Maybe the free, offensive t-shirts paid for by student activity fees made him raise a red flag; or maybe the fact that children were at this event made him very uneasy. It is inconceivable how, knowing the nature of this program, children were admitted when clearly it contained adult material. A couple of years ago I could not gain entrance

into a lot of bars for the simple fact that I was not 21, even though I had no intention to drink. Does the editorial staff call this censorship? Children should not have been admitted to this event period!

We are very fortunate to have the freedom of speech in this great country. I would never trade that freedom, but we must all realize that it must be used wisely. I do not suppose that UM-St. Louis would support a ku klux klan rally or a neo-nazi rally, but I guarantee that if there were student sympathizers with these groups, and let's hope not, that they would be yelling censorship as well. This drag show, from the letter I read describing the event, was pornographic, offensive to heterosexuals, and overall indecent. My student activity fees that I work so hard to earn should not be employed in such a disrespectful and unwise manner such as the drag show two months ago.

The Dec. 5 editorial also mentions

that other offbeat programs have been presented at UM-St. Louis before. Let me congratulate The Current for the lack of originality! Just because it has been done in the past does not mean that it should continue. For those of you who study history, part of what we study history is so we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. Clearly this pornographic, offensive drag show should not be presented again. If The Current wants to call name remarks censorship then be my guest but always know that the freedom we as Americans possess are not right but a privilege. Brave men and women fought and died to ensure future Americans these basic freedoms, and by sponsoring such indecent events we are basically telling these brave men and women that they died in vain. God bless America for the brave patriots of the past, present and future whose job it is to protect all!

Dennis Stoll, Senior

Granger plays 'Monday morning quarterback' in letter

It's all too easy to play Monday morning quarterback such as Jason Granger has in his last letter to the editor in the Dec. 5 issue of The Current. Instead of being short sighted and pointing blame at Bush, we should have an open discussion about support for the war in Iraq.

George Tenet was the head of the CIA prior to the war in Iraq. He wanted nothing more than to make his newly elected President happy following his controversial election in 2000. He has been quoted by many sources as stating, "Mr. President, [the WMD] is a slam dunk." Tenet has since resigned. The real blame lies with bad intelligence provided by the head of the CIA. It was not Bush who molded the information to fit their bias.

Granger presents some valid questions. Why are we attacking someone for human rights violations? Clinton was in charge when the US went into Kosovo. Did you forget that Slobodan Milosevic ordered the slaughter of thousands of Albanians? He is now on trial for what else, crimes against humanity. Crimes against humanity became a worldwide issue when the Holocaust happened. We are the world's police when a tyrant like Hussein, or Milosevic, is ravaging

entire generations of people.

While I won't disagree totally that we should not be making preemptive strikes, to ignore blatant disregard for human life is an atrocity unto itself. Is it right to watch a guy get assaulted in the streets because you do not know him? No it's not, so we can apply that to macroeconomic principles governing politics and now we have to stand up for the thousands massacred by Hussein. Although it may seem a minor point now, the U.S. did go to the UN, who gave their approval but were unwilling to provide the muscle to make Hussein comply with the seventeen resolutions he openly ignored.

The American Revolution provided us with our unending sense of freedom; however, without the help of the French you and I might have a British accent. We had the backing of a powerful nation coupled with the fact that the British needed to send their troops by boat to fight us. Logistically it was simply far easier for us to fight, than a totally unarmed contingent of those who had never fired a gun. Our gun rights today are around only because we used it to defend our selves in that revolution.

If the British had stationed a

standing contingent of troops large enough to wipe out dissent, could not have won. History books agree that without some dumb luck we would have lost. Unfortunately the people of Iraq have been oppressed for generations and they are people who do not know what life without the dictator would be like. Put yourself in the shoes of Iraqis.

Imagine being alive and one million strictly controls key aspects to the lives of citizens of Iraq. You had one newspaper that only praised Saddam because failure to do so would result in the death of the journalist. Does that seem as crazy as sounds? We have an infinite spirit of freedom. It's ingrained in our psyche from birth. Freedom is a scar that when you have never experienced it.

It's easy to blame others after the fact. Life is undeniably better now than when Saddam was in power. That is indisputable. People are happy that we did liberate them. While they do not want us to stay any longer than we have to, they are genuinely thankful for giving them the opportunity to better themselves. Iraqis are thanking us, and I'm proud to say you are welcome.

Patrick Ivy, finance student

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The Current is looking for candidates to complete practicums for the winter semester in the following areas: advertising, photography, production, writing and copy editing. Positions fill quickly. Call 516-5174 or email current@jinx.umsu.edu for more details.

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TRANSFERMATION

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MELISSA McCRARY
Features Editor

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the week's
best
bets

New Food Services
Beginning Jan. 17
MSC

A Cantina Loca, a new campus food venue, will open today in the Pilot. Food will be served between 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Also, Aroma's bakery is now serving the full Starbucks coffee menu.

Free Recreation Classes
Jan. 17 - Jan. 20
Mark Twain

Campus Recreation wellness classes are free this week. Register at the Campus Recreation, 203 Mark Twain. For more information call 516-5326.

Professor shares road rage research in new book

BY MELISSA McCRARY
Features Editor

Each day, hundreds of motor vehicle accidents are caused by drivers exhibiting road rage behaviors behind the wheel.

Tara Galovski, assistant research professor of psychology at UM-St. Louis, has an extensive background in researching and studying the psychology of road rage. In October, Galovski had a book published, "Road Rage: Assessment and Treatment of the Angry, Aggressive Driver," which describes the different forms of this behavior, how people develop it and some of her study findings.

Galovski said that she decided to write a book investigating this topic because there are not too many other published books covering it and because she became interested through her past work experiences.

"I used to work with motor vehicle accident victims who suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and I wanted to see what was causing the majority of these accidents," she said.

Galovski's book reviews available literature on aggressive driving and gives in-depth reports on research which she conducted in Albany, New York.

Part of her study entailed personality and psychology profiles,

where she looked at what types of people drive aggressively, and the effects of mood disorders or a person's heart rate and blood pressure. She said people who are anti-social, easily agitated or who have impulsive control disorders are more likely to be aggressive drivers.

The other component to her study was with developing a treatment for these drivers. Some of the people who participated in the study came voluntarily, while others were mandated by a court to attend.

Galovski said that the program was successful because she saw depression and anxiety factors decrease.

"Aggressive driving is dangerous on roadways and is a problem that is amendable to treatment," she said.

Galovski wants readers to be aware of this problem and said she is working on re-establishing an aggressive driving program at UM-St. Louis.

"College students are in the age range to have road rage and there have been high statistics for them to be involved in accidents," she said.

Although this is the first book Galovski has published, she said that she is in the process of working on an edited book about women who are professionals in the field of psychology and how they balance work and family.

"Road Rage: Assessment and



Adam D. Wiseman/The Current

Tara Galovski, assistant research professor at the Center for Trauma and Recovery, authored a book about how to treat road rage.

Treatment of the Angry, Aggressive Driver," was co-written by Galovski with the help of Edward Blanchard, psychology professor at

the University of Albany, State University of New York and Loretta Malta, a mentor and licensed psychologist at the University at

Albany. Readers can view her book and buy a copy on the American Psychological Association's web site at www.apa.org.



Adam D. Wiseman/The Current

Melissa Hattman, director of transfer services and articulation, discusses available opportunities and services with a transfer student. Transfermation took place on Friday, Jan. 6 in the MSC.

TRANSFERmation gives new students a taste of UM-St. Louis

BY PATRICIA LEE
Features Associate Editor

As the winter semester begins, more than 600 transfer students will start attending classes at UM-St. Louis. On Dec. 6, they had the chance to familiarize themselves with the campus at TRANSFERmation, an orientation program for transfer students.

Traditionally, orientation included both first-time freshmen and transfer students, but in the past year, the University has placed more emphasis on the specific needs of transfer students and tailored programs specifically for transfer students.

"Many don't necessarily need all the information a first-time freshman would need in coming to campus but they do need to know how things differ from the campus they're coming from," said Allyson Wilson, student services coordinator.

"Many of them are students who have families, who work full-time jobs, and need to know how they can balance all the different realms of their lives and use the resources we can offer them in order for them to be successful and accomplish their goals in the timeframe they have set," Wilson said.

Orientation included a welcome from UM-St. Louis provost Glen Cope, and students got to meet other transfer students, buy books, learn about the resources at the University and get acquainted with the various student organizations on campus.

Wilson said that attending orientation was an important first step for a student to become a part of the UM-St. Louis community and plays a role in student retention.

"Orientation is very important because students who don't have a lot of experience on campus need the opportunity to come to campus

and to learn where things are and the resources that they have on campus and the things we have for them to be involved and become a true part of campus if they are able to do so," Wilson said.

"I think this really does help with retention because they feel like they are important and they don't just show up here their first day and try to wander around and find out where things are," Wilson said. "The hope is if they attend orientation, they already have that feeling and they already feel like they're part of the community when they start classes."

"One of the things we find about transfer students, in order for them to be really successful in persisting to complete a degree is to feel connected to their transfer institution," said Melissa Hattman, director of Transfer Services and Articulation.

Transfer students now make up a significant majority of the student body at UM-St. Louis. According to the Office of Academic Affairs' Fall 2005 student profile, 77.9 percent of new undergraduate students were transferring from another institution. Hattman said that in a typical year, 2500 new students transfer to UM-St. Louis, mostly from area community colleges in St. Louis, St. Charles and Jefferson counties.

Anita Zeba, junior, marketing and accounting, transferred from St. Louis Community College-Meramec. "I decided to come here because I heard that it's a good accredited school for business and it's affordable," she said.

Recently, UM-St. Louis has placed an increased emphasis on transfer students. The newly created Office of Transfer Services and Articulation, located in 225 MSC, will provide support services and "promote and facilitate the positive engagement and successful integration into the UMSL student body of all transfer students."

Professionals offer career path advice

BY NAKENYA SHUMATE
Staff Writer

"Would you let a 19- or 20-year old choose your career path for you? If you are a college graduate, you probably did just that when you chose your college major," said Jim Pollock, producer of the Encarta eLearning Center.

Hopefully, students have a path they plan to take after graduation. For them, finding success in a career is the payoff of years of diligent study. Others may not know exactly what they intend to do after graduation, yet their need for a rewarding career is just as strong. Inevitably, what to do with this new degree is the pressing question when graduates seek successful employment.

Since there is not one single guide for college graduates to implore when seeking career success, students have to do research and consult many different sources to stay at the top of their game. Students should seek out career-building organizations for personal expert assistance, begin networking with professors and current employers, consult economical guides to the job market and attend job fairs.

"Take advantage of networking opportunities," said Heather Cunningham, assistant account executive for Casey Communications, a St. Louis based public relations and marketing firm. Cunningham is a recent UM-St. Louis graduate with a master's in communication who took advantage of a networking opportunity that earned her a successful position in her field.

Cunningham became acquainted with Casey Communication through Professor Al Akerson while working as a teaching assistant. "Cultivate connections [and] talk to your professors," said Cunningham. Students may only see professors as the people doling out passing or failing grades. In reality, they are the experts in their field of study and are invaluable resources to the road to success.

The Career Services department of the University offers a variety of career building solutions to degree-seeking students and to alumni. They can be a resource for students to consider when seeking career success. Career Services provide career coaching and counseling.

They utilize economical guides such as the Occupational Outlook

Handbook, produced by the U.S. Dept of Labor and O*Net, the Occupational Information Network. If you are among those who are unsure where their life is going after college, "we give them that ability to focus," said Teresa Balestrieri, director of Career Services. "We help with all of the stages of the job search, that empowers them, and [they] have those skills to progress in their careers."

How can UM-St. Louis graduates compete with the public market for jobs? "We are an urban university, a percentage of graduates stay in the area," said Balestrieri. St. Louis based companies rely on those graduates for their commitment to the region.

U.S. News & World Report rated audiologists, professors, physician assistants, landscape architects, librarians and engineers as some of the best jobs to have in 2006. UM-St. Louis graduates are finding those careers. 59 percent of graduates from May and August 2005 responded to the career services survey and 88 percent of those responses stated that they were employed or in graduate school.

see CAREER PATH, page 8

Psychology professor's educational values shape her goals for teaching students

BY BRIAN E. OLIVER
Staff Writer

She might seem like an ordinary teacher at UM-St. Louis but Jennifer Siciliani, assistant professor of psychology, has spent most of her life with helping students and educating the public about the field of psychology.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Siciliani is the fact that she is only in her early 30s and is currently co-authoring an introductory psychology textbook.

Introduction to Psychological Science is being written by Siciliani along with Daniel Corts of Augustana College and Mark Krause of University of Portland. According to Siciliani, the book is exciting because "this is the single most competitive collegiate textbook that can be written. Many millions of dollars are invested in this by Prentice Hall."

She said that writing and marketing this book keeps her extremely busy.

"We are heavily involved in the marketing of the text and were at the Prentice Hall national sales meeting in Orlando last week in order that the reps at the national level could meet us and we could meet them. We have traveled all over the U.S. and have contracts that will have us traveling to many major conventions each year," said Siciliani.

Another remarkable fact about the book is that, when published, Siciliani will become one of only two or three female first authors of an introductory psychology textbook.

Beyond being an author, Siciliani has been on the executive committee of "Focus on Teaching and Technology" for four years, is a mem-



Adam D. Wiseman/The Current

Jennifer Siciliani, assistant professor of psychology, is co-authoring an introductory psychology textbook.

ber of the Dean's Advisory Committee, is an editor at Psi-Chi Journal (a journal of undergraduate student's work) and maintains an active research program that includes presenting original research at annual meetings of the American Psychological Association.

In addition to her professional involvement in psychology, she has many life accomplishments. As an ordained minister of a non-denominational church, Siciliani had the chance to marry two UM-St. Louis students on New Year's Eve. Other past achievements include being one of two vocalists in a 12-piece band that opened for several notable performers, including Ray Charles, B. B. King and Bobby "Blue" Bland, and she was once a competitive weight lifter.

Besides her numerous life experiences, Siciliani's strongest passion is seeing her students succeed.

One reason she feels compelled to see that students succeed is because she is a first generation college graduate. None of her brothers or sisters attended college and she believes this was because nobody had talked to them about how to go to college.

"It had nothing to do with intelligence," she explained, "because they were all quite intelligent." As an undergraduate, Siciliani herself faced the same experiences that her siblings had. No one had explained the limits she would be faced with a bachelor's in psychology or with how to apply to graduate school. Being unaware that she needed to apply early for graduate school, Siciliani took a year off after obtaining her bachelor's degree.

Having encountered her own misunderstandings with college, she has become a very active professor who wants to see her students succeed and reach their educational goals.

One way that she helps students plan their educational future is by not only being an understanding teacher, but also being the director of psychology undergraduate advising. In this role, she and her advisers explain to students what they need to do to obtain a degree in psychology, talk to students about what can be done with this degree and discuss whether the students' futures include graduate school. Part of her drive in advising students is that she does not want them to get trapped by some of the hurdles she had to overcome.

see SICILIANI, page 8

NUTN BUT THE FUNK

"Fond Memories"



SCONEBOROUGH

by E. Gearhart



Advertisement for UMSL with text: 'FREE ADVERTISING!!! ATTENTION! Students, Faculty and Staff at UMSL. You can place classified advertisements in The Current FOR FREE!'

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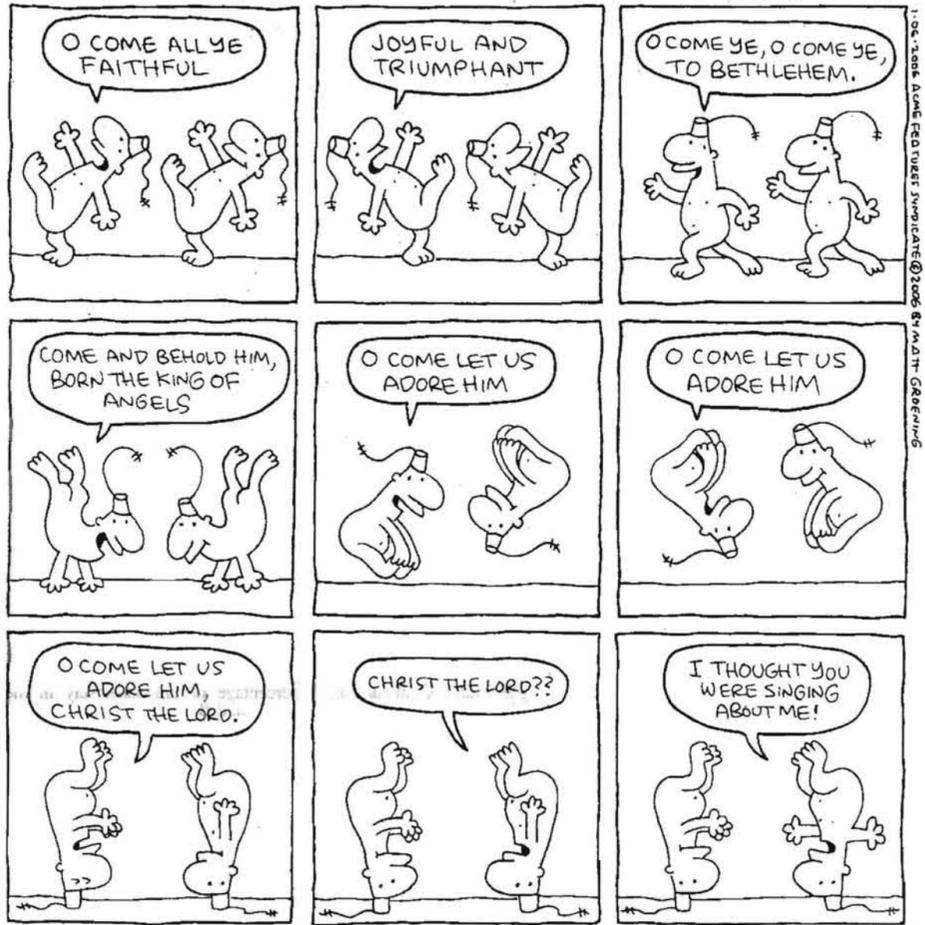
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Personals section with text: 'FREE AEROBICS! Aerobics & Spinning classes are FREE, JAN. 17-20 at the Mark Twain Rec Center! Check the Campus Recreation website for a schedule and more information.'

XMAS LEFTOVERS LIFE IN HELL

BY MATT GROENING



Salome's Stars

Super Crossword

BERN-ING DESIRE

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers. Clues include: '1 Fo', '6 Most adventurous', '12 Samoyed's smile?', '15 Solidify', '18 Half the diameter', '20 Actress', '21 Unwell', '22 Castilian cry', '23 Start of a remark by Billy Connolly', '27 He's a doll', '28 Maugham's 'Cakes and ID', '29 The Jetsons' dog', '40 Boxing blow', '41 Tom of 'Adam's Rib'', '44 Part 2 of remark', '48 Songwriter Jacques', '49 Pierce', '53 Corsage fastener', '54 Sycophant', '55 Border - Graham', '57 Antipollution gp.', '58 Squid's squirt', '59 Undo an error', '60 Rock's Pink', '61 October Revolution name', '63 Average grade', '64 Stack role', '65 Conspire', '66 Narrow shell', '67 Vitamin bottle abbr.', '69 Part 3 of remark', '73 Presidential nickname', '74 Philalistic's need', '76 Frank', '77 - Man' (84 film)', '79 Cleaning cloth', '82 Castle campaign dog', '83 Custom', '85 Belief', '86 Viral illness', '87 Everything', '88 Bacall or Chapin', '90 Paraguayan title', '91 UK honor', '92 Goofy Gomer', '94 Gourmet', '95 Part 4 of remark', '100 It may get pickled', '101 Half's partner', '102 - Dame', '105 Cavort in the pool', '107 Made cotton', '109 The chosen few', '110 WWII site', '111 Rush', '112 Periodontists' org.', '115 End of remark', '122 Zsa Zsa's sister', '123 Actor', '124 Virgilian epic', '125 Vintner Gallo', '126 Fled', '127 Word with roll or cream', '128 In', '129 Architectural features', '4 'Cara -' ('65 hit)', '39 Berrie sprite', '42 Put the metal to the', '43 Biblical priest', '45 To be, in Toulouse', '46 Poke fun at the famous author', '47 Range rope', '48 Shirley of 'Hazel'', '50 Novice', '51 Make - of oneself', '52 Beta roire', '55 Circus performer', '56 'Mama' Down', '59 Kind of paint', '60 Armada', '62 Cartoon cry', '66 Charla- magne's dad', '68 Excavated features', '70 Reserved', '71 Where Devils fight', '72 High-toned', '74 PDC', '75 Mrs. Munster', '78 It'll curl your hair', '80 Dramatist Edward', '81 Risk an opinion', '83 Tints', '84 Cuffs', '85 Saw features', '89 Record abbr.', '90 Hers and pens', '93 - Angel' ('65 hit)', '95 Something for two', '96 - don't say!', '97 Blockcar or O'Herly', '99 Firefly, for one', '100 Lawn cleaner', '102 More up-to-date', '103 See 34', '104 Big guy', '106 Skirt feature', '107 Silly Caesar', '108 Pedigreed pooch', '110 Ballad or barcarole', '111 Actress Lamarr', '112 Maintain goodies', '113 Actor Amaz', '114 Hammett hound', '116 Grab all the', '119 Free (of)', '120 Pro-gun org.', '121 Bankbook abbr.'

Large advertisement for 'The Old Spaghetti Factory' with text: 'Are you an energetic, hard working person? How would you like to work for the busiest restaurant in town? If you answered yes, then come to: The Old Spaghetti Factory 727 N. First Street (On Laclede's Landing) and fill out an application. We are currently hiring for all positions: *Server *Service Assistant *Kitchen *Greeter. No experience is necessary! You must be 16 to work here, 20 to wait tables. Get your summer job early!'

Rivermen take two conference wins

BY LINDSEY BARRINGER
Sports Editor

After losing three straight games, the UM-St. Louis Rivermen regained their momentum and took two trying conference wins at home.

On Thursday against Northern Kentucky University, the Rivermen were down after the first half 30-26. Momentum arose and the Rivermen dominated the second half with 40 points. With less than 30 seconds to play in the game, the score was tied

at 64. Joey Paul went for the winning three pointer and it was good. The Rivermen took the win with a score of 67-64.

Before the game, Head Coach Chris Pilz said the boys would need to play hard and tough to get the win against Northern Kentucky.

The men knew that they would not be able to make up the losses against the tough conference opponents, Lewis and Wisconsin-Parkside, so they had to play to their best ability.

Paul said that the win against

NKU put the men in the right direction. "It was a hard game and they made us take a few bad shots but we kept our heads up the whole game."

The win against NKU was the easier of the two games. On Saturday, the Rivermen battled Bellarmine University where the game was sent into overtime.

UMSL and BU were tied after the first half at 39. After one team scored, so did the other. With three seconds left in the second half, Derrell Minner went for the layup with the assist by Jonathan Griffin tying the

game at 79.

Griffin also made the game winning shot with eight seconds left in the game. The game would have continued except Adam Brames of Bellarmine, going for a tying three pointer, missed.

The Rivermen won the game 92-89. Griffin had the team high with 28 points scored. He was also 14 of 16 from the free throw line. The win brings the team record to 10-4 and 4-3 in the GLVC. The men play Thursday at SIU-Edwardsville for a GLVC game.

Riverwomen win against Bellarmine, lose to NKU

BY LINDSEY BARRINGER
Sports Editor

After winning six straight games at the beginning of the season, the Riverwomen's basketball team has posed an up and down season, losing important GLVC games on the road and at home.

On Thursday night, the women were defeated at home by Northern Kentucky University where the Norse dominated the game.

The Riverwomen only had the lead in the first half in the first two minutes of play when Jennifer Martin made a jump shot to start the game. Taylor Gagliano was fouled and made both foul shots to give the Riverwomen a

4-0 lead.

NKU came back and took the lead from the Riverwomen and did not let them have it again until the was only six minutes left in the game giving UM-St. Louis a 46-44 lead. The lead did not last long and NKU took total control of the game.

"We should have had that game and we knew it would be a fight till the end but we let it get away from us," said Miller who contributed three points to the game.

The last two minutes were crucial times where the ladies appeared to have lost their focus. "They scored two-three point shots in a row and those really hurt us," said Courtney Watts. "It was a close game and it could have gone either way."

Head Coach Lee Buchanan said that the girls' energy level was fantastic but they just did not get the "W."

The loss to NKU did not hinder the Riverwomen on Saturday at home against Bellarmine. At the half, Bellarmine had the lead at 36-27. UM-St. Louis started the second half scoring eight points narrowing the gap.

The Riverwomen's energy and determination during the second half was what gave UM-St. Louis the win. With 26 seconds left in the game, Bellarmine's Destiny Mattingly took a one point lead with a layup and was fouled by UM-St. Louis's Watts. Mattingly could not make the foul shot to give Bellarmine a two point lead.

With nine seconds left in the game, UM-St. Louis's Jennifer Dewell went for a layup and made it but was fouled by Ashley Lewallen of Bellarmine. The foul shot was good and it gave the Riverwomen the lead and ultimately defeated Bellarmine 68-66.

The win against Bellarmine put the Riverwomen's season record at 9-5 and 3-4 in the GLVC. Jennifer Martin also posted a career high with 25 points.

"We get better every day. As long as they believe in each other, then they'll get better," said Coach Buchanan.

The Riverwomen look to improve their record with a win at SIU-Edwardsville Thursday in a GLVC game.

Short Fuse

Prepare yourself for the Fuse Bowl



BY LAQUAN FUSE
Staff Writer

I watched college football a little more this year than I ever have before. I already knew that college football did not use a playoff system like the NFL, but I had no idea that there are 28 bowl games.

The first bowl game of the 2005-06 season was the New Orleans Bowl, where the Southern Miss Golden Eagles defeated the Arkansas State Indians 31-19. Wait a minute, it is the New Orleans Bowl but neither of the two teams are from Louisiana. That doesn't really matter because Southern Miss beat North Texas 31-10 last season to win the New Orleans Bowl. Since the first New Orleans Bowl in 2001, there has not been a single team from Louisiana playing in any of the games.

As I continued to watch highlights from bowl games on ESPN, I noticed that the names of the bowls had absolutely nothing to do with the game itself. Companies spend money to have their names included with bowl games. For instance, the Navy Midshipmen defeated the Colorado State Rams 51-30 in the first ever San Diego Country Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl.

Colorado State finished the season 6-6 and was able to play in a bowl game. The South Florida Bulls, Houston Cougars, BYU Cougars and the Arkansas State Indians also finished the season 6-6, and each played

in a bowl game. Seriously? These teams won half of their games and qualified to be in a nationally televised bowl game. When did champions start coming from the middle of the pack instead of from the top?

I have an idea for next season, the first annual Short Fuse Bowl. Instead of taking the best teams, or even the teams who win half of the games I want the two worst teams. I want to see the two teams with the worst records play to find out which of the teams are better, leaving an official worst team in college football.

For example, the two teams to play in the Short Fuse Bowl for the 2005-06 season would have been the Temple Owls (0-11) and the New Mexico State Aggies (0-12). I am sure that neither team would want to be official worst team in college football, so it would be a great game. This would be great for fans because one of the teams will win at least one game. The best thing is that the game would be a bowl game.

With 28 bowl games, each with a unique name, I am sure that the NCAA, the BCS or any of the other acronyms associated with college football can find room for another bowl game. So look out San Diego Country Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl, Short Fuse is coming.

CAREER PATH, from page 6

According to Career Services they are working at companies such as: Citimortgage, Mallinckrodt, A.G. Edwards & Sons, Solutia, Ernst & Young, Monsanto and Boeing, to name a few.

Job fairs are an easy way to see many companies at once. Students should plan to attend one of the job fairs being offered this semester. The UM-St. Louis Teacher Job Fair will be held on Feb. 17 and the UM-St. Louis Spring Job Fair will be held on March 10. Each event will be held in the Mark Twain Building and is sponsored by Career Services.

Consulting a service that provides guidance in finding the right job based on skills, interests, values and person-

ality will guide students toward satisfaction in their jobs.

Ultimately, career satisfaction will equal career success. It is not too early to start up the ladder of success. Students approaching graduation should bear in mind that a "typical job search is 3 - 6 months," said Balestreri.

Students should also network, attend career fairs and seek advice from professors since they are professionals in the major. To learn more about what to do after graduation visit "What can I do with this major?" at <http://www.umsl.edu/depts/career/major.html> Education alone may get you a job, but well-rounded graduates get careers.

SICILIANI, from page 6

Siciliani's colleagues have praised her and have said how they are also quite impressed with her abilities.

Ann Steffen, associate professor of psychology and director of clinical training, was on the review committee that evaluated Siciliani's application for employment and has known Siciliani ever since.

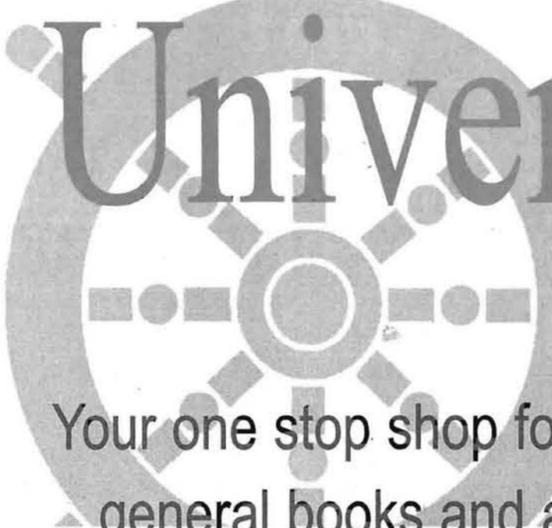
What impresses Steffen is Siciliani's commitment to teaching and to the field of psychology, as well as her ability to mentor students.

"In terms of professional strengths, Siciliani does a good job in using in her personal experience becoming a psychologist in her interacting with students," Steffen said.

Mark Krause, one of the co-writers for the textbook, has known Siciliani since 1996 when they were in graduate school together and agrees with the assessment that Siciliani is an outstanding teacher.

"She's very popular with students," Krause said. "She reflects a lot on what it was like to be a student and has great compassion."

As far as Siciliani's long term aspirations go, one of them involves finishing her book. Aside from that having a college level textbook published, she hopes to continue teaching and said, "I would always like to be near a student population who can benefit from my specific skill set."



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PRODUCERS, from page 8

As Brooks is well aware, humor is a powerful weapon, and the sight of a prancing, dancing, gay version of the famously homophobic Third Reich was a deliciously hilarious blow. The movie won Brooks an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay.

When Brooks adapted his film into a full-blown musical, he had to add more musical numbers, something he has long shown a comic flare for doing. He hit real pay dirt with the cast of Nathan Lane and Mathew Broderick on Broadway, and the musical became a smash hit and winner of a record-setting 12 Tony awards.

Lucky for us, this dynamic pair of Nathan Lane and Mathew Broderick is back in the film version of the Broadway hit, taking the film full circle. Added to the cast are Uma Thurman, in an eye-popping role as the Swedish secretary/receptionist and play's leading

lady, and Will Farrell, perfectly cast as the impoverished, deranged Nazi playwright Franz Liebkind, sincerely committed to showing the "lighter side" of Der Fuhrer. Also returning from the original Broadway cast are the wonderful Gary Beach as flamboyant director Roger DeBris and delightful Roger Bart as his assistant and companion Carmen Ghia.

The film opens a bit shakily with a timid, neurotic Leo doing an overblown bit about his insecurities. However, having gotten that out of their systems, the film settles down to delivering one hilarious bit after another, with a liberal sprinkling of brightly colored musical production numbers. Any doubts you may have had about the film version of the Broadway musical are quickly dispelled by Mathew Broderick's excellent singing and dancing in his first showstopper "I Want To Be A Producer."

Who knew he could dance like that and the man can really sing, too. Uma Thurman is also surprisingly good in their duet, playing a Marilyn Monroe-like, language-challenged Swedish dish who innocently embraces her sexuality. Thurman is a natural as a dancer and did her own singing, too. Nathan Lane smoothly sails through his numbers. He is especially good in the number where he dances across the city smooching a seemingly endless chorus of identically dressed old ladies with walkers, the play's soon-to-be-bilked backers. Will Farrell is perfect as the perfectly dreadful singing and dancing Nazi. His big song-and-dance number comes where he persuades the producers join him in a rooftop dance, along with his goose-stepping Muppet pigeons, before agreeing to sign on. It is one of the film's many hilarious showstoppers.

"The Producers" is directed, not by Mel Brooks, but by Susan Stroman, who directed and choreographed the Broadway hit. Stroman is making her movie directing debut, with Brooks as producer. The play was opened up for the screen by including some iconic Broadway and New York locations like the famous Sardi's restaurant, Fifth Avenue and Central Park. Studio shots were done in New York, giving the production access to Broadway performers for the supporting roles. The director was looking to create the feel of a classic musical like "Singing in the Rain," and succeeded well.

The bright, hilarious "The Producers" is the perfect holiday movie break. It also may be the best musical or comedy of the year. After the movie, you should stay through the credits for a little Mel Brooks treat at the end of the film. You will be sorry if you miss it.

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INSIDE:

Check out our top picks for albums of the year



See pages 6-7

night *life*

January 17, 2006



Brandon Baker and JJ Hamon are two bandmates new to the St. Louis music scene. The musicians credited delta blues, traditional African music and Motown-inspired pop melodies as the inspiration for their craft. The band will perform Jan. 21 in Belleville, Ill. and Feb. 3 in downtown St. Louis.

Soulful songs and tinkering toys: the music of Brandon Baker

BY MABEL SUEN
Night Life Editor

First thing's first. Let's get this straight. Brandon Baker is not a folk musician.

At his shows, which he plays frequently in area clubs and coffeehouses, you would be able to notice him as the handsome bushy haired, dark complexioned guy jovially greeting everybody in the time surrounding his set. Whether you've met Brandon or not, you'll feel like you've known him for ages after witnessing one of his intimate performances.

When I met with 20 year old Brandon and his somewhat soft spoken partner-in-crime JJ Hamon in the Loop on a windy afternoon, he was bundled up in a green hooded sweatshirt smoking a curved wooden pipe.

"Don't get me wrong. I don't do this all the time. I just started a few days ago," he said through a reassuring smile, while stopping to say hello to a friend.

Baker and Hamon have been performing together for almost a year, subsequent to Baker's open mic phase.

"I met the Hamons through a mutual friend and ever since then I've

been able to do more of what I want to do musically. We see eye to eye on a lot of things," said Baker.

When asked to describe their music, neither Baker nor Hamon could pinpoint the sound. They went through many words and phrases including "acoustic," "experimental instrumentation," and even "noise pollution." None of them seemed to do justice.

"People are going to call it what they want," said Baker. "Right now it's an acoustic thing, but I want to use all kinds of different things. I don't want to be the traditional acoustic person that's always in the café playing songs about his ex-girlfriend. I want to do something completely different."

The two musicians are heavily influenced by, but don't necessarily incorporate elements of delta blues, traditional African music and Motown-inspired pop melodies, among other styles, into their songs.

"A lot of noise influenced things that we're experimenting with are coming from inventing things," said Hamon, an instrument crafting aficionado. Hamon complements Brandon's acoustic guitar and vocals by singing harmonies and playing a variety of different objects including, but not limited to, electric slide guitar,

melodica, baking sheets, toy xylophones and a battery-powered Alfie robot.

The music they create is that of lucid dreams. Resultant of a combination of various thoughts and muddled emotions, the songs are not always clearly defined. However, it is always enchanting with Brandon's unique and powerful voice that swells and ebbs like a tide, although with less consistency. Often mystical sounding and beautiful in nature, their songs have the ability to develop into something surreally nightmarish.

He explains this in the central theme of his new album, already in the works. "Everyone's life is really precious and it's something that's special no matter how bad it's gotten or how good it's been to you. Sometimes life is beautiful in an awful way."

Although not a concept album by definition, Baker says that a lot of his words stem from his own life. "A lot of my lyrics are really personal. I think they're kind of like inside jokes, but

they're not funny. I think that sometimes I get what I'm talking about, and some people get something different from that. And that's fine with me, I'm not trying to get a particular message across - I'm just trying to talk about what's going on in my life but not from a standpoint that's really obvious," explained Baker.

So what does the future hold for Brandon Baker? "Musically as a goal, I don't want to stay the same thing. I want to make really interesting music," said Baker. If that's all he's going for, I'm pretty sure that he's already achieved it.

Check out myspace.com/brandonbaker to sample songs from the new album as well as the Child-Like Hymns EP. Experience Brandon Baker live at Three-1-Three in Belleville, Ill. on Jan. 21 and at Cummel's Café in downtown St. Louis on Feb. 3. Also see JJ Hamon's group Jonas Lyn perform at Cummel's on Jan. 20. For more information on these artists and more, go to www.thewisemanagement.com.

Umsl Night Life
published by
The Current
2006
Editor: Mabel Suen

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Best Films of 2005

BY CATE MARQUIS
Film Critic

The best films of 2005. Good, even great films, are still in movie theaters now. Beyond this list of the year's best films are some special categories - animated, documentaries and foreign language films - that should go on your I-ought-to-see list. Here is a look back at the 2005 year in movies in St. Louis.

Best Overall Films

1. Good Night and Good Luck - The best overall film of the year, from its visual style in recreating the look of the smoke-filled newsrooms of the 50s to the powerhouse performance of David Straithairn as journalist Edward R. Murrow to its subject of the people finding its voice against a national bully. This fact-based film is powerful and a much needed reminder of our history and a true American. And best movie music of the year too.

2. Cinderella Man - This film was released too early, in summer, and did not get the push it deserved. Actor Russell Crowe does perhaps his best work yet, along with Paul Giamatti, in another fact-based, polished period film about a real person, boxer Jim Braddock, who was also a quintessential American archetype. A classic American story of a second chance, driven by love of family, this oddly-named film is more about redemption than boxing. This is a film of real American family values, not the partisan kind. Ron Howard directs what is his best film ever, a far better boxing film than last year's Million Dollar Baby. Renee Zellweger is also very good as Braddock's wife and everything comes together to recreate the Depression era world.

3. Constant Gardener - The South American director of "City of God" reworks a John LeCarre tale

into a terrific and meaningful geopolitical thriller with pulse-pounding suspense and fabulous acting, set against the too-little seen backdrop of Africa's natural beauty. The thriller is about international politics and the pharmaceutical business but the film is also one of the best romantic love stories of the year. Ralph Fiennes and Rachel Weisz are excellent as the couple.

4. Capote - An acting tour-de-force but also a fascinating story, with Phillip Seymour Hoffman in a remarkable performance as author Truman Capote as he researches and writes his great non-fiction novel "In Cold Blood." Another excellent period piece but also a film that might give insight on why the book was Capote's last great work.

5. The Producers - The re-translation back to film of Mel Brooks' musical is just plain fun and just plain funny, even if you do not like musicals. Nathan Lane, Uma Thurman and especially Mathew Broderick are simply delightful, and the over-the-top fantasy numbers are just completely entertaining. If you like Mel Brooks' work at all, you will like this one.

6. Downfall - It was a hit around the world and played elsewhere in the U.S. in 2004 but the German film "Downfall" did not show up here until about mid year. This film took us inside the Hitler's bunker in the waning days of the war, for an astounding look inside the minds of fanatics.

7. Paradise Now - Another look inside the world of the fanatic, but in this case it was the minds of two young Palestinians who had been recruited as suicide bombers. Beautiful photography, fabulous acting and astonishing insight on the inner workings of terrorism.

8. Syriana - A challenging, complex geopolitical thriller with a good dose of action film that weaves together several stories to create the bigger picture of oil, politics and

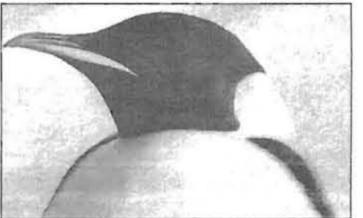
power in the Middle East. It is best to know the players beforehand: George Clooney plays a CIA agent working in the Middle East, Matt Damon is a TV Mid-East energy analysis and business consultant for a small company working hoping to work for the sheik ruler of an oil-rich nation, and the underappreciated Jeffrey Wright as a Washington lawyer. Fast-paced, with sometimes harrowing action with a reality-based, complex plot but the film rewards your efforts well.

9. A History of Violence - One of the most surprising films of the year, this effort from Canadian director Cronenberg has the underlying structure of a great Western but with the furious violence of "Straw Dogs." The film turns all our assumptions about the characters in these tales upside down. Knuckle-biting suspense and action, this year's edgiest onscreen sex and terrific acting from Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello, and William Hurt in a character-driven tale of good verses evil confrontation.

10. Brokeback Mountain - Perhaps the most talked about movie of the year, due to its subject, it is still a powerful performance by Heath Ledger as a lonely, emotionally isolated young cowboy who was orphaned at a young age and raised by emotionally distant older siblings. While tending sheep together on a distant mountain, this near-silent, reserved character is befriended, and then more, by another young cowboy (also well-played by Jake Gyllenhaal), who falls in love with him. Yet another period piece, whose start in the homophobic early 60s and setting in the culturally conservative West are important to the tragic turn of the story. The film is more complex and layered than you might expect, not just a gay love story, but a much more complicated story of friendship, different kinds of love and the price paid for not being oneself.

Documentaries

- March of the Penguins
- Enron: the Smartest Guys in the Room
- Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price



Animated

- Wallace and Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit
- Madagascar
- Robots



Foreign Films

- Best of Youth
- 2046
- Kung Fu Hustle
- Walk on Water
- The Edukators



Bottom Three of '05

- Sound of Thunder
- Herbie: Fully Reloaded
- The Dukes of Hazzard

Cure winter blues with weeknight excursions

BY LAURA MCCARTHY

Staff Writer

Wintertime. The holidays are over. There's nothing to do, or so it seems, and the best idea for a Tuesday or Wednesday night is to catch some Seinfeld reruns or rent a movie, right? Maybe work on that paper you've been putting off or actually study for a test more than one or two days ahead of time.

Or, you could gather a few of your buds and your favorite chunky sweater and head out to a pub to cuddle up with a pitcher of beer.

While spring and summer bring countless things to do outside, there is one major pastime ideal for the winter: hitting the bars in the middle of the week.

Unlike the hype that surrounds the weekends at any time of year, the middle of the week is when you never plan on going out, but somehow it just happens (either you or your friends agree on a whim, "Okay, let's go!"), and you decide on a place, then leave all in a matter of about 10 minutes. It is this kind of spontaneous attitude that often leads to a better night during the week than a Friday or Saturday when you usually have something planned.

St. Louis is chock-full of Irish pubs and other small places where you can just about have the bar to yourself, but many of your favorite, more popular weekend destinations become this same small novelty during the middle of the week. Weeknights during the wintertime are perfect to get a little creative and random with your choice of watering holes when it seems like there is nothing else to do. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

The Cheshire Inn, located just off highway 40 at 6300 Clayton Rd., at the corner of Clayton Rd and Skinker, has already been a St. Louis staple for years, but because it is one of the only 3 a.m. bars in the Clayton area (open until 3 a.m. every night), it becomes way overcrowded late on the weekends and sometimes weeknights. The most intimate time to really enjoy the ambiance of this old world lodge, and to enjoy your friends, is to come before the after-

hours crowd hits around midnight. But, of course, if you are part of the after-hours crowd, go for it.

One of the best features of The Cheshire is the more private rooms upstairs with oversized couches and fireplaces—perfect on those chilly winter nights when it's too cold to jump from bar to bar—and you may just pick up a cool English accent too.

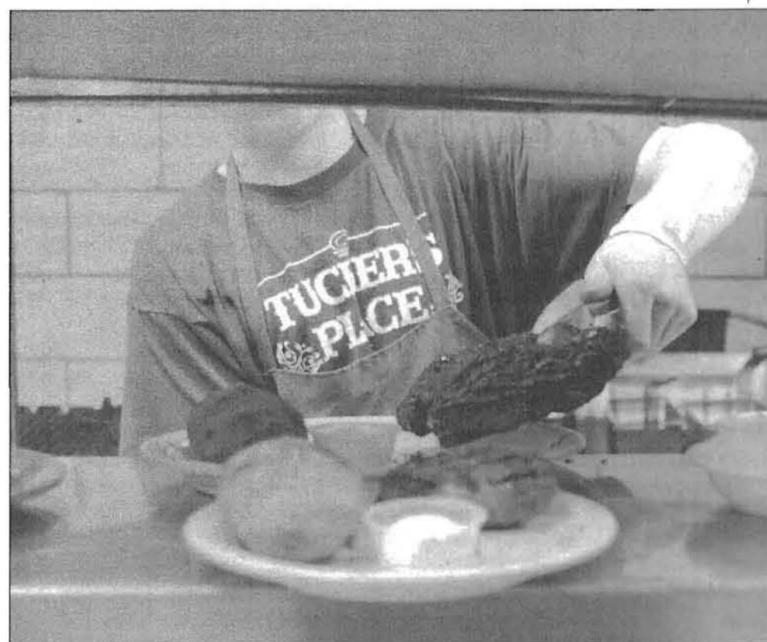
Among all of the late night destinations in Soulard, **Tucker's Place**, at 2117 S. 12th Street (right next to McGurk's), is mainly a restaurant known for its steaks, but it is also a low-key place to enjoy a few pints with your friends. What was once a four-family flat almost 30 years ago is now one of the coziest bars in Soulard, with seating downstairs and up, one fireplace downstairs in the smoking section, and two upstairs in the non-smoking section which overlooks a bustling 12th Street.

But don't look for a wild and crazy night at Tucker's, although those nights have been known to happen. Think more of a laid back evening with the wind and snow howling outside while you are enjoying your drink by the window or fireplace thinking, "Boy, am I glad I'm not out in that."

Tucker's sees customers ranging mostly from their 30s to 50s, with some in their 20s, especially during happy hour. Monday-Thursday features late-night happy hour with \$2 bottles and well drinks as well as half-price burgers and appetizers. Open Monday-Saturday until midnight, Sunday until 10pm.

Llywelyn's Pub, located in the Central West End, is a Celtic pub serving a full menu of traditional Celtic and American food. The crowds typically range from twenty-somethings to fifty-somethings and also largely include college students. With specials running through the entire week, this is a perfect location for a happy hour outing or just any night you feel like getting out by going in.

Monday is all day happy hour, with \$2.50 drafts and wine, Tuesday is trivia night, Wednesday is Karaoke, and Friday and Saturday feature live music. Pool tables, fuse

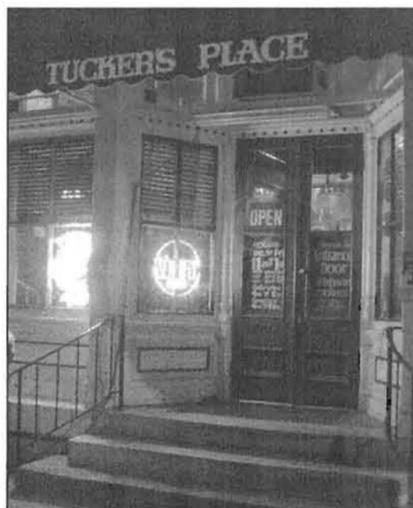


ABOVE:

A Tucker's Place cook plates one of the restaurant's famous steaks. The customer demographic include mostly the 30- to 50-year-old crowd, but a younger clientele joins the mix during happy hour.

RIGHT:

Tucker's Place, located at 2117 S. 12th Street, is a converted four-family flat. With up and downstairs seating, several fireplaces and a view of the street, Tucker's lends itself to a casual weeknight evening with friends.



ball, and Golden Tee are all upstairs, which overlooks McPherson's antique shops and art galleries. Llywelyn's is laced with wood moldings and seating, and high ceilings. It also features a patio and beer garden in the summer, and the capacity for private events. Open Monday through Saturday until 1am, Sunday until midnight.

Molly's, another Soulard gem, is a martini bar that caters to a wide variety of customers: mostly 20- to 40-year-olds, and casual or dressy attire. At Molly's you can make what you want out of your night—kick it

back or rev it up.

With happy hour from 3 to 7 p.m., drink specials on various liquors, club tunes from a live DJ Wednesday through Saturday, an upstairs seating and dancing area and outdoor deck, Molly's is perfect for a more upbeat weeknight and for wintertime bar-goers who refuse to only frequent Soulard when the lively patios are open (although Molly's does have one of the best patios in Soulard). This bar proves Soulard gets pretty lively indoors as well. Open Monday through Saturday until 1:30, Sunday until midnight.

The Big Bang plays to big crowds on the Landing

BY KATE SHAW

Staff Writer

Remember when it was cool to hear great American hair-rock and wedding staples performed by not one, but two piano players? At a pricy tourist destination? While off-key white people sing along to, and get visibly sentimental over, "Every Rose Has Its Thorn?"

Well, it never was, but the Big Bang wants you to forget about all that.

Located on Laclede's Landing at 807 N. Second St., the Big Bang has been selling nostalgia paired with lots of alcohol to its generally packed house since 2001. The theory is simple: for a decent tip, one of the cute, personable piano players will play the hell out of whichever song is guaranteed to take you back to happier times. (Like maybe when you would sit around drinking whiskey and rye with a brown-eyed

girl, sweet Caroline and Davy from the Navy.) Misty-eyed, you will raise your drink high, you will light the wrong end of your cigarette and, God help us all, you will sing along.

However, for a larger donation, the piano player will boot your song for someone else's self-actualizing memories of yester-year. The most bread in the jar wins at a dueling piano bar and what seemed at first like a simple night out on the town could turn into a shrill battle of the bucks between two distinct ways of life. The stakes are especially high during downtown sporting events. For instance, during the Final Four last March, some frenzied North Carolina and Illinois fans bid up to \$500 to have their respective fight songs performed for a few minutes.

Dueling piano bars may not be at the height of vogue but there are plenty of them out there. A quick web search shows that the concept, frequently attributed to New

Orleans bar mogul Pat O'Brien, thrives from coast to coast. Further investigation reveals that these bars are usually found in tourist areas. This would seem to imply that people are most comfortable being seen in a dueling piano bar outside of the city in which they live.

Unless they practice safety in numbers, like the large groups that tend to swarm the Big Bang five nights a week. Enter a diverse world where fraternity boys and bachelors mix pell mell with sorority girls and bachelorettes and where roving packs of conventioners collide effortlessly with the aftermath of office parties that start at 6pm and still have legs enough for last-call at 2:30am.

The packed-in popularity of piano bars isn't surprising when one considers that drunken sing-alongs have been common to just about every culture that has ever had access to some hops and a musical

instrument. Our own national anthem appears to be a re-working of an old English drinking tune ("To Anacreon in Heaven") though at the Big Bang one is more likely to sway along to "Tears in Heaven."

No, there certainly won't be any atonal jazz to drive you and the gang (I love you guys) right back into the cobblestone-paved streets. At the Big Bang you will hear the threadbare hits and nothing but the hits and you will get way too damned excited about it.

And then, tiny lap-dancer, it is time to count the headlights on the highway and head home. You've seen fire, you've seen rain and you've made-out with someone from Des Moines. More importantly, you and the gang (let's never lose track of each other) have done something fun that would otherwise be unacceptable and embarrassing but which no one will be able to remember the next day.

Jazz at the Bistro: still jammin' after ten years

BY EBONY HAIRSTON

Staff Writer

An intimate venue that showcases a variety of jazz artists, located right in the heart of Grand Center, Jazz at the Bistro started as a series of concerts and quickly grew.

"Back in 1995 a lady named Barbara Rose held a series of jazz concerts at the Hotel Majestic. When we first started, we were under the umbrella of Grand Center. In 1998, we became independent and we've been going ever since," said Gene Dobbs Bradford, Executive Director who has been with Jazz at the Bistro for 7 years.

Many great names have played there over the years including Harry Connick Jr., Diana Krall, Ahmad Jamal, and Michael Brecker. This year is a special one.

"It's our tenth anniversary, so we're bringing back a lot of favorite performers from the past ten years

like Ahmad Jamal, Ann Hampton Callaway, Freddy Cole and James Moody," said Bradford.

Jazz at the Bistro started with a special purpose in mind: "To present world class jazz artists that the St. Louis public otherwise wouldn't be able to see," said Bradford.

They say they're where the legends play. They feature well known national artists and as well as regional artists, each one with their own style, like Montez Coleman.

"Montez Coleman and Nicholas Payton (playing on Jan. 18-21) both play straight-ahead jazz with piano, bass and drums. Both put elements of soul, funk and hip-hop in their music," said Bradford.

Jazz at the Bistro, currently not a widely known student hangout, has special deals available to anyone with valid student identification that provide a sharp discount to the 25-55 dollars they usually charge.

"We don't get as many students

as we'd like, but some come down to our shows.

Student pricing is at 10 or 20 dollars and is sometimes buy one get one free. To find out when we have student pricing, sign up for the email list, at www.jatb.org," said Bradford.

Many young people do not know much about jazz, so they set up a program to get the word out to the next generation.

"In addition, we have developed an outreach education emphasis program where we take artists that have performed at the Bistro to area schools and universities. We also try to reach as many non-music students as possible. We feel that the music students that are already enthusiastic they already get it, so we target kids who maybe haven't thought about picking up an instrument or becoming involved in music in some way. Hopefully we can inspire some of those students as

well," said Bob Bennett, Director of Operations.

They also have some of their artists give private lessons to young aspiring jazz musicians as the best student musicians in the area come together for the THF Realty All-Star Student Ensemble.

What Bradford likes most about the Bistro is seeing people walk out of a great performance knowing that they really enjoyed the music. Bob Bennett has also found a lot to love.

"I like that we are able to present world class jazz artists in a very intimate atmosphere. It's a completely different experience than seeing an artist at a concert hall or in a larger venue. The audience can feel much more in touch with what's going on stage. They can talk to the artists when they get off stage. It almost feels like sitting at your living room listening to a concert," said Bennett.

Nectar and Pepper bring NYC style to STL

BY MELISSA MCCRARY
Features Editor

So you want to party like a celebrity and go to a hot and trendy club but do not have the money to fly to Los Angeles, Miami or New York City? How about visiting club Nectar or the Pepper Lounge, located on Locust Street in downtown St. Louis?

Nectar is slowly becoming one of St. Louis's most chic and high-class hangouts to spend a Friday or Saturday night, that is, if you have the money. This bar has been a hot spot for numerous St. Louis celebrities.

From the velvet roped off entry in the front of the complex to the door bouncers checking names off of a VIP list, one can see how this bar is trying to maintain its upscale atmosphere. In addition to being able to request private tables, purchase liquors by the bottle instead of by the glass and the option to buy special VIP spots, visitors can also receive free valet parking.

The old brick building with the orange NECTAR letters hung on the side does not look like much, but the fancy decor, multi-levels and lit up bar makes its inside become more alive. Besides their brightly colored window curtains, their decorated lantern lamps give the bar an extra glow.

The long center bar is easily accessible from all sides and is fully stocked with hundreds of imported and exported beers and liquors. Shots, martinis, and specialty vodka drinks are some of their most popular beverage choices; however, to add to their name, the bar is famous for their fruity cocktails made out of assorted nectars. For those who choose to purchase a bottle of hard liquor, a table and a spot



Adam Wiseman/The Current

to sit is a guarantee.

A DJ plays top music hits and mixes hip-hop for those who would like to dance.

Like every bar, guests must be 21 years or older. Whether you are in your mid-20s or 40s, Nectar makes a great meeting place for co-workers, for friends looking to have a good time or for those who just want a night on the town and to be seen.

It is not until midnight when the place becomes packed and people start coming in by the dozens. Cover charge is usually about \$10, but ladies get in

free before 11 p.m.

Not in the mood to drink, but looking for something sweet to eat? Nectar serves various deserts such as cheese-cake, chocolate fudge cake and pastries.

Located right next door to Nectar is the Pepper Lounge. A typical Friday night will cost \$5 to gain entry.

The Pepper Lounge has somewhat of the same type of scenery as Nectar. The front restaurant room is a place where people can lounge around and socialize enjoying American cuisines, where the back room serves more like

a club during the evening. High-top tables and large leather booths circle around the second room. With some spots to sit and relax, seating availability depends on the time one arrives.

In the left corner, the DJ booth blasts anything from 80s pop to reggae and hip-hop. While people can grab a drink at the bar, waiters attend to the tables throughout.

Both Nectar and the Pepper Lounge should be experienced at least once. Spending the extra cash could be worth drinking and partying with the next rock star.

Fresh food and fresh talent meet at Cummel's Cafe

BY MABEL SUEN
Night Life Editor

Cummel's Café seethes of freshness. From the wholesome homemade food to the refreshing live acts of up and coming musicians and poets, the cozy café combined with the downtown atmosphere down on Washington Avenue is one that is hard to match in the region.

Of course, not everything is new about the small business, which is at its third location in 17 years. When a friend and I walked into the dimly lit space on a Thursday night, we were confused as to whether or not it was open for business or not. The only people around were a small group playing on instruments and singing in front of the small stage by the doors.

After taking a minute to walk back through the vacant seats at small tables, upon which flowers in painted soda bottles sat, and past the open kitchen area that lines the left side of the café, an amiable woman who was singing with the aforementioned group approached us and asked if she could help us with anything.

Linda Mixon, open mic host on Thursdays, proceeded to give me a quasi tour through the building, happily explaining that the eclectic collection of chairs as well as various décor throughout the café including coffee-pots and pans had accumulated over the years. The arrangement of eccentric items certainly lent a homey quality to the history of the place. Colorful paintings also covered bright yellow and brick walls that were host to rotating art collections.

After a look at their menu, which changes on a daily basis, it was easy to see that the cuisine was both unique and affordable, with dishes in the \$5 range and tasty desserts like gooey butter coffee cake and pineapple coconut muffins made from scratch for only \$1 or \$2. The home cooked rotating menu includes anything from Cajun jambalaya pasta to a meal of meatloaf with real mashed potatoes, glazed carrots and French bread.

"You could eat here for six weeks and never eat the same thing twice... unless you want to!" explained Mixon. "You can adjust the menu to your tastes. The majority of the food is

somewhat neutrally spiced so that it's neither too much nor too little to handle."

With allegedly one of the best breakfast buffets in the area, there is also at least one vegetarian item on the menu at all times. In addition to the wide selection of food items, Cummel's is also a developing center for a community performance and art.

For those who feel like sitting back and relaxing, or even participating actively, Cummel's has an open mic for poets and musicians on Thursday nights and live showcases of poetry and music including folk, songwriter, classical, indie-rock and more on Friday nights for only \$5.

"There are many great unknown talented local musicians of varying styles that perform at Cummel's Café," said Dave Wise, booking director. "Cummel's plays a new role, one that has not existed in the St. Louis community for a long time, which is the role of a music community focused on coming together to enjoy a variety of musical styles and genres without competition. Cummel's Café

is a place where musicians support each other and the primary goal is to enjoy an evening of a variety of talent levels and styles without judgment."

Upon returning to a slightly more occupied Cummel's the next day, I found that relaxing with some of the snacks from the kitchen and delighting in the sounds of soulful singing, strummed strings and the gentle beating of light brushes on a small softly rattling drum set was the perfect way to wind down after a hectic week.

Cummel's Café is located at 1627 Washington Avenue, a block away from the City Museum. It is open Monday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tues. thru Wed. from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Thurs. thru Sat. from 7 a.m. to as late as there are patrons.

See The Red Cliché, Jonas Lyn, Koffee-N-T and Owen Pye on January 20th and Brandon Wann, I like the Future and The Future Likes me, King Cobra and Factura on January 27th at 7 p.m. Read more about upcoming acts at myspace.com/cummelscafe and for booking information, contact Dave Wise at dmwise@gmail.com.

The Strokes change it up with latest album, 'First Impressions'

BY ZACH MEYER
Music Critic

If one thing has remained undisputedly consistent through the band's career, it is the band member's reliance on aestheticism. From the debut album of "Is This It?" rock critics immediately took note of the band's pretty-boy looks, artsy album covers, and stage performances which could be mistaken as a fashion show mixed with live music. "First Impressions of Earth," The Strokes' third album, proves to be no different.

Apart from the band's aesthetic tastes, there are some definite changes on "First Impressions of Earth." The first and most obvious change is the increased production which has largely affected the

group's iconic gritty sound. For the third album, the band decided to record each song bit by bit, using only what they deemed "best." However this change in the band's recording process adds a layer of hi-fi icing to the already sweet cake. As a result, front man and lead vocalist Julian Casabalancas lost much of the gruff and drunken slur that gave "Is This It?" and "Room on Fire" their incontestable charm.

Furthermore because so much time was devoted to the recording process, the lyrics seem lagging in quality and repetitive. On the much hyped track "Ask Me Anything" the chorus, consisting of the phrase "I've got nothing to say," is repeated a tiresome eight times in a row.

The other downside to the album is the lack of any catchy rock riffs within the songs. Besides the

band's wisely chosen "Juicebox" single, few of the songs have the same basement pop-rock elements as on previous albums. The energy that was captured in songs like "Last Nite" and "12:51" is almost completely absent on "First Impressions of Earth."

That's not to say that the album is not without any value. In place of the pop-rock songs are more mature and somewhat aggressive tracks such as "Heart in a Cage" and "Ize of the World". On "Heart in a Cage" Nick Valensi chops the song up with one of the most intricate solos on any of The Strokes' albums. Also, Valensi and fellow guitarist Albert Hammond Jr. remain infallibly tight. It is easy to forget that two guitar players are present when listening to the band as a whole.

However at a closer inspection,

the dueling guitars add a complex and elaborate mix the dynamics of the band. On "Vision of Division" the guitars almost sound as if they're battling each other with Hammond Jr. pounding the rhythm guitar while Valensi throws in the leading notes.

Released on Jan. 3, "First Impressions of Earth" upholds The Strokes' credibility as one of the big names in rock and roll, albeit it does lack the charisma of earlier albums.

The biggest disappointment of the album is the band's decision to acknowledge the rock critics who accused "Room On Fire" of being a copy of "Is This It?" with different lyrics. Hopefully, The Strokes will take this as a learning experience and depend on their own musical tastes instead of silly rock journalists.

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People watching: cheap, unpredictable fun

BY BRONWEN VOSS
Staff Writer

So, you want to enjoy a night on the town, but run into some problems? For instance, maybe you're strapped for cash so you can't do anything too extravagant. Then, perhaps the club scene isn't high on your list of things to do. Finally, you have already seen every movie that has come out in the last decade. This leaves you a couple options and one of those happens to be the ever-popular people watching.

If you happen to get amusement out of watching new couples swoon over each other, girls in six-inch stilettos busting their rear ends on the way to the club or just watching the eclectic mix of our society intertwine, then people watching is definitely an entertainment option for you.

St. Louis offers many places to sit back and relax and enjoy this

evening activity, but some places have proven to be better than others. One of the best places to begin this nightlife activity is **MoKaBe's**.

Located at 3606 Arsenal and open until 1 a.m., this coffee shop offers free Wi-Fi, decent people watching and an excellent menu of food including soups, sandwiches, and excellent desserts. There are three sitting areas to choose from: the downstairs smoking area, the upstairs non-smoking area and the patio.

What about those girls with their six inch stilettos busting their rears? The best place to see this activity is the newly renovated **Washington Avenue**. Offering the widest selection of clubs in the

“
If you happen to get amusement out of watching girls in six inch stilettos busting their rear ends on the way to the club, then people watching is definitely an entertainment option for you.
”

St. Louis area, the abundance of six-inch stilettos along with some of the very “tasteful” clothing options of the club patrons can be quite overwhelming. All joking aside, Washington Ave. also offers a wide selection of bars and nice restaurants. Pick a spot, grab a beer if you're 21, sit back and enjoy the scenery.

If you want to party all night long and end the night with people watching, then make a stop at the Central West End's **Majestic Restaurant and Bar**. Breakfast is served at 6 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday when the crowds from closing clubs and college parties start pouring in. The food and staff are excellent, but watching the incom-

ing crowd is even better.

The Loop is a place that guarantees stellar people watching no matter what day or time you go. The best place in the U. City Loop to check out the individualist local crowd is the chain coffee shop Starbucks. The reason this is the best place in the Loop to catch glimpses of passerby is because it is situated smack dab in the middle of all the action.

If you want the best of St. Louis you need to go to the Central West End for the **Crème de la Crème** of people watching - **Coffee Cartel**. Coffee Cartel offers plenty of seating with window views all over and tons of patio tables. The menu features an abundance of choices including many flavors of Edy's ice cream. The thing that makes Coffee Cartel the number one Mecca for people watching is its hour. No matter what time you decide to stop in it will be open. It is a guaranteed 24 hours a day of people watching.

Catchy 'Producers' scores a hit all over again

BY CATE MARQUIS
A&E Editor

You want to see “The Producers,” to paraphrase the words to one of the many catchy, show-stopping songs, in what may be the best musical comedy movie of the year.

Mel Brooks' “The Producers” is the movie musical version of the hit Broadway musical based on a movie comedy about two producers who set out to present the world's worst musical. Talk about getting the most out of your material. But recycled is never a word you would use for this very entertaining movie delight. Winning a record twelve Tonys on Broadway, “The Producers” gives the audience one catchy, hum-able, humorous ditty after another. The movie version adds big, bold movie extravaganza, with the delight of a chorus line of dancing old ladies in walkers strung across the sidewalks of New York in a Busby Berkley style production number or a roomful of lamenting, singing accountants pulling back the handles

of their adding machines with the automaton precision of “Metropolis.” Nobody does this kind of silliness like Mel Brooks. The film makes an excellent transition back to the movie screen, as a bon-bon of fun-making and risqué playfulness, with a visually bright movie splendor harkening back to the golden age of movie musicals.

Set in 1959 New York, “The Producers” has faded Broadway producer Max Bialystock (Nathan Lane) faced with bleak finances after yet another failed play. That is, until shy accountant Leo Bloom (Mathew Broderick) off-handedly mentions that, if handled right, a producer could make more money with a flop than with a hit. Inspired, Max convinces a reluctant Leo to join him in producing the worst flop ever, raising way more cash than they need and then taking off for Rio with the money when the play flops on opening night. They set out to find the worst cast, worst director and most importantly, the worst play ever written. They find it in a play with something to offend



Photo courtesy rottentomatoes.com

The movie version of Mel Brooks' Broadway show “The Producers” features a star-studded cast of characters who set out to create the world's worst musical.

everyone, a “light-hearted romp” with Eva and Adolph called “Springtime For Hitler.”

The original “Producers” movie was not a musical, although it had the musical numbers from their appalling play “Springtime for Hitler.” The play was sort of Mel

Brooks' way of taking a parting shot at the Nazis, by subjecting them to the most over-the-top ridicule ever seen on movie screens since Charlie Chaplin's “The Great Dictator.”

see PRODUCERS, page 12

Tips for tipping

A how-to guide for when and how much to tip

BY MELISSA MCCRARY
Features Editor

Going out to eat or grabbing some drinks at a bar might seem like a breeze—that is, until the check comes.

Calculating how much tip to leave can sometimes seem like a treacherous chore rather than a service compliment. Tipping at different restaurants and bars varies often making some customers wonder, “How much is too little and how much is too much?”

Knowing what constitutes a superior, good and average tip can possibly save one from an embarrassing or awkward situation.

Not leaving a tip is understandable if a person receives poor service; however, numerous waiters rely on the major-

ity of their tips for their paychecks. Many waiters and waitresses are paid less than \$3 an hour and some are required to split their tips at the end of their shifts with busboys, food runners or hostesses, so receiving a good tip means more profit by the end of the night.

“I have worked in the restaurant industry for numerous years,” said Tiffany Schumann, prospective student. “At one of my jobs, I was required to do a 3 percent tip out at the end of the night, where a portion of my earnings were split among other workers. Sometimes it would be anywhere from \$30 to \$50 per night, but on very good nights, I would still walk away with at least \$200 of my own.”

Schumann said that how much money a waitress makes also depends on the day of the week and the time.

What's the right
TIPPING AMOUNT
at restaurants and bars?



Illustration by Rudy Scoggins/The Current

“I would make more money in tips working the dinner shifts on the weekends than if I would work a Monday afternoon,” Schumann said.

More expensive and formal restaurants are often likely to provide better service since they do not receive as much business as fast-pace chain restaurants. Tipsters should be aware that some elegant restaurants might automatically add in a 15 to 20 percent gratuity on checks.

Jennifer Cobbina, graduate student, criminology said that she thinks more upscale restaurants do require a bigger tip, but the service is the biggest key to how much she will leave.

“I will usually tip good if they provide excellent service and I will tip less if I have to keep calling them over or asking to be helped,” Cobbina said.

A 15 percent tip is normal for most

restaurants and a 20 percent tip is suitable for upscale restaurants or for parties over six.

“In most cases I will leave about \$2 per person or \$5 for more people depending on the bill amount,” Nicole Chromy, sophomore, accounting, said.

There are many factors that determine how much a person should leave. One factor depends on the type of meal or entree that is ordered. Another portion that comes to play is whether there are alcoholic beverages involved.

When most people receive their bills, their total amount includes sales tax. Gratuity should only be added to the cost of the check before taxes are applied.

Headwaiters and bartenders are the employees who should receive the most gratuity at restaurants. While headwaiters and maitre'd's expect a 15 to 20 percent tip, bartenders and wine stewards contemplate a 10 to 15 percent tip. It is not required for people to leave busboys or owners tips, unless one feels the need.

Coat check attendants, restroom attendants and valet parking attendants can sometimes be found at certain restaurants, night clubs and bars. In these circumstances, the normal tipping amount for coat check attendants is \$1 for one or two coats, 50 cents to \$1 for restroom workers and \$1 to \$5 for car parking attendants.

Leaving a tip means more than paying for an employee to work at a restaurant. It is a common courtesy for the meal in return.

St. Louis Film Critics announces winners for year-end awards

BY CATE MARQUIS
A&E Editor

The new St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Association announced its winners for the 2005 St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Awards, recognizing the best in 2005 films. To be eligible, films had to either be shown in St. Louis, open in area theaters or run in a film festival, or have a screening for critics. The St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Association is a professional association of St. Louis-area film critics, which promotes appreciation for the art of cinema in St. Louis and includes working film critics in the St. Louis area from all media out-

lets. The winners and runner-ups of the St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Awards were announced on Dec. 30, 2005 and are listed below.

Best Picture: Brokeback Mountain (runner-up: Good Night, and Good Luck)

Best Actor: Heath Ledger - Brokeback Mountain (runner-up: Philip Seymour Hoffman - Capote)

Best Actress: Judi Dench - Mrs. Henderson Presents (runner-up: Felicity Huffman - Transamerica)

Best Supporting Actor: George Clooney - Syriana (runners-up (tie): Mickey Rourke -

Sin City, Jake Gyllenhaal - Brokeback Mountain, Bob Hoskins - Mrs. Henderson Presents)

Best Supporting Actress: Rachel Weisz - The Constant Gardener (runner-up: Michelle Williams - Brokeback Mountain)

Best Director: Ang Lee - Brokeback Mountain (runner-up: George Clooney - Good Night, and Good Luck)

Best Screenplay: Brokeback Mountain - Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (runner-up: Good Night, and Good Luck - George Clooney and Grant Heslov)

Best Foreign Language Film:

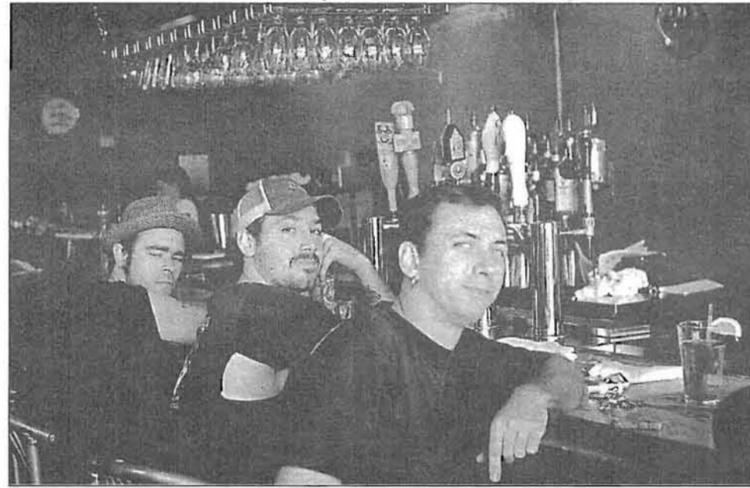
Tsotsi - South Africa (runner-up: 2046 - China)

Best Animated, Musical or Comedy Film: Wedding Crashers (runner-up: The Matador)

Best Cinematography or Visual/Special Effects: King Kong (runner-up: Brokeback Mountain)

Best Documentary: March of the Penguins (runners-up (tie): Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room, Mad Hot Ballroom)

Best Overlooked Film or Most Original, Artistically Innovative or Creative Film: Sin City (runner-up: Me and You and Everyone We Know)



These "South City Heros" have spent hours of quality time at Mangia Italiano.

South Grand serves up cultural cuisine

BY GENELLE JONES
Staff Writer

Grand South Grand is a vibrant district of authentic retail shops and restaurants. It is approximately six city blocks long and is located between Arsenal and Utah in south St. Louis. It is rich in international culture and influence, and is known to many as St. Louis' international neighborhood because many German, Italian, French and Asian immigrants have made the nearby streets their home away from home.

"It's kind of a mini Loop for residents that live in this area," said Monica Jackson.

Grand South Grand features include a variety of culinary venues.

The South City Diner is an inexpensive yet classic American cuisine in

a late 1950s setting. It is open 24 hours for those late night cravings for cheeseburgers and hand dipped chocolate shakes. Their menu also features anything from the classic fried egg and cheese sandwich to the New York strip steak.

Mangia Italiano is a lovely romantic Italian restaurant. It is the perfect place for a first date or to rekindle an old flame. Enjoy creative Italian dishes such as classic spaghetti and meat sauce, creamy shrimp pasta and chicken parmiguna over dim lighting and the soothing sounds of jazz. Goda l' alimento!

Sekisui Sushi Bistro is a fun beginning to the classic date night of dinner and a movie. Enjoy sushi, tuna belly, yakitori and tempura in an

upscale environment where Japanese cuisine meets American culture. Enjoy the finest Japanese drinks of Sake and Sake Gekkeikan while waiting for a table next to a cascading waterfall and a beautiful view through glass windows.

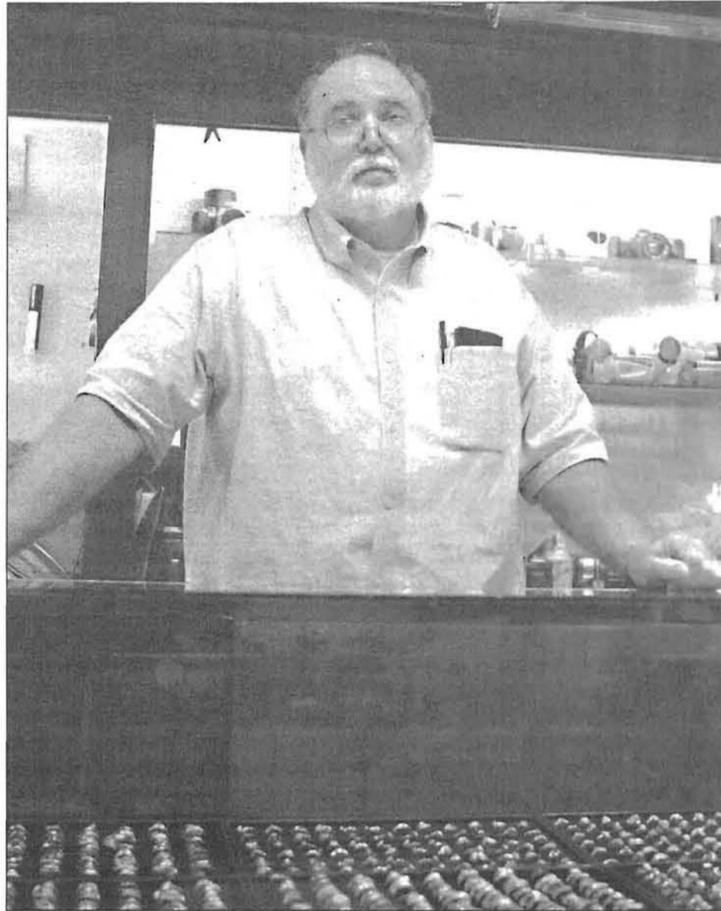
Qudoba' is an authentic Mexican restaurant that features excellent Mexican dishes of Spanish rice, tamales, nachos, enchilada de camarones and quesadillas! It is the newest addition to Grand South Grand but a great addition to this international district of culture. You can dine in and catch up on the latest sports highlights, or eat out at a great table on the busy streets of Grand and Arsenal.

The King and I is known to be one of the best Thai restaurants in St.

Louis. It has been in the same location of 18 years and is known as the "grand daddy" of Thai food. Their menu features high quality yet affordable dishes of panang tofu, seafood salad, sticky rice with mango, Drunken noodles and curry green chicken. It is the perfect place to impress a date.

If you are not in the mood for food, then one can easily have fun shopping at 1 of 100 retail shops or enjoy a soothing cup of java at Mokabe's or South Grand Coffee Company.

Grand South Grand is the perfect solution to an inexpensive night on the town, or if you are out and about during the summer months, Grand South Grand is the host for many festivals and parades such as the annual PRIDE Fest and the International Festival.



Brian Fagnani

College students looking for a little extra income may become familiar with Ray Weber, manger of A.J.R. Pawn Shop located on South Grand.

'Munich' is a worthy (and controversial) effort from Steven Spielberg

BY CATE MARQUIS
Film Critic

Filmgoers expecting Steven Spielberg's new film "Munich" to be another "Schindler's List" are in for a surprise, for they will find a much different film. While artistically, "Munich" is an excellent piece of filmmaking, filled with both vivid imagery and splendid acting, "Munich's" underlying themes are far more likely to divide audiences.

To complicate matters, Spielberg aims to make an action film with Jewish heroes, remind the world of the tragedy of the Munich Olympics, comment on the cycle of revenge and make a plea for peace. Quite an ambitious order for a single film.

"Munich" is a historical thriller/drama about the aftermath of the terrorist attack that killed 11 Israeli Olympic athletes at Munich in 1972. The attack was carried out by the previously unknown Palestinian terrorist group called "Black September." The terrorist attack grabbed world-wide attention, and horrified them when a failed German rescue attempt led to the deaths of all of the hostages and most of the kidnapers. The film's story follows the actions of a Mossad-assembled team, led by agent Avner Kauffman (Eric Bana), whose mission is to track down and kill all eleven Palestinians responsible for the planning and execution of the attack.

Unlike the Mossad agent in last summer's "Walk on Water," Bana's character, Avner, is no cold and efficient pro but a young, inexperienced agent with a pregnant wife to worry about. Despite his lack of experience, this son of a hero and Holocaust survivor is picked by Mossad agent Ephraim (Geoffrey Rush) and prime minister Golda Meir (Lynn Cohen) to head up the secret mission. The unofficial team is completed by the action-oriented Steve (Daniel Craig), document-forger Hans (Hanns Zischler), their clean-up man Carl (Ciaran Hinds), who makes sure no incriminating evidence, is left behind

and toymaker turned bomb maker Robert (Mathieu Kassovitz). The team is given a list of names of targets, unlimited funds and instructions that they are to only operate outside the Middle East. No matter how long it takes, they are to assassinate them all.

The film uses heart-wrenching archival news footage of the Munich hostage crisis early in the film, and intercuts bloody re-enactments of the tragedy throughout the film. "Munich" starts out with action film bravura, with the team of hit men confident, eager and unquestioning their mission. They make contact with an apolitical information mercenary, a Frenchman named Louis (Mathieu Amalric) with the connections to find their targets. His information is always for sale to the highest bidder, so there are no guarantees he will not betray them as well. As they cross the names off their hit list, the film turns darker, the emotions tenser and relationships between the team become tighter as doubts about their mission arise.

Hollywood movies are famous for simplifying stories to good guy-bad guy, black-and-white tales of heroism and glorious exploits. Politicians and pundits are also given to simplifying events to inspiring tales of glory. As any war veteran knows, real warfare, like real life, is more complicated and complex. Spielberg's film is all about the complexities. If movies have a single author or a single voice, that voice is the director's. This is Spielberg speaking on his view of the moral complexities of a war on terrorism and the path to peace.

This is a difficult film to review. As a Hollywood movie, it is filled with action and suspense, the thrill of the chase and explosions. "Munich" is violent, even grisly at points, increasingly so as the story unfolds. The acting is good and the thriller story is well-plotted, with a script by Tony Kushner (Angels In America) and Eric Roth. The film is

suspenseful and fast-paced, but is also emotionally draining. The spy thriller action alternates with its growing debate on ethics of their actions, with different characters giving voice to nearly every point of view. The debate over the film all lies in this subtext, not its qualities as cinema art.

Like other controversial films of recent years, there has been a great deal of discussion and debate about this it, although few have seen the film itself. Some have seen an anti-Israel message in the movie, notably the Israeli consul in Los Angeles, whose criticisms have been widely reported. In truth, the film challenges whether Israel's actions towards Palestinians are leading to peace, but not Israel's right to exist, as some have hinted. Others have expressed respect for the film's complexity and the moral questions it raises along with its cinematic value, while acknowledging that the two hour and forty minute film can be emotionally draining and daunting to absorb.

One of the problematic aspects of the film is that the victims all are presented in their role as family members, or in other neutral contexts, without reference to their terrorist or political activities. The director is on firmer ground when he points out that every terrorist eliminated is quickly replaced, raising questions about how much killing will be enough. There are the doubts that Avner raises about whether they are targeting the right men. Spielberg's most persuasive argument is when he asks what price, emotional and moral, the Israeli team pays for adopting the methods of their enemy.

Some people will simply not want to consider some of the questions Spielberg's film seems to ask. Spielberg asks us to consider if one runs the risk of becoming the evil one opposes and when one revenge killing leads to another, when does the cycle end. Spielberg clearly wants

to allow both sides to speak. At one point in the film, Avner, posing as a German communist, has a conversation with a young Arab named Ali (Omar Metwally). Ali shows no understanding of the Israeli point of view. In Ali's mind, he does not see why the Israelis are in his homeland. "I didn't gas any Jews," he says. Furthermore, Ali is convinced that the world will eventually come to the Palestinians' aid. When Avner challenges this assumption, Ali only says that his grandchildren and great-grandchildren will continue the fight, allowing Spielberg to conjure images of the centuries-long conflicts of Yugoslavia and the Irish troubles. Eventually, Avner grills his Mossad handler Ephraim about whether killing these plotters will put an end to the violence, something that clearly did not happen.

This is a fictional film, not a documentary, and Spielberg takes some liberties with facts. This is one of the criticisms leveled at the film. To be fair, Spielberg clearly states the film is historical fiction. Other is a purported biographical book by someone who claims to have been one of the Mossad supported assassins, but whose link is unclear. While some interpret Spielberg's film as a criticism of Israel, others have suggested that the film is really aimed more at post 9/11 America, alluded to in the film's final shot that includes the New York skyline, with the now-vanished twin towers prominently in view. Still, agree with him or not, Spielberg is clearly making a plea for peace and believes that communication between Israelis and Palestinians is part of the path to peace for Israel.

This film will be hotly debated but in the end, it is successful as a piece of cinema art, whether you agree with the filmmaker's views or not. Like all films with the potential for controversy, the best thing is to see the film for yourself instead of taking the word of others for its meaning or content.