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**Mon**



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**Tue**



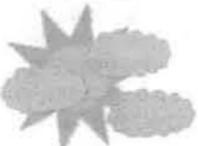
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**Wed**



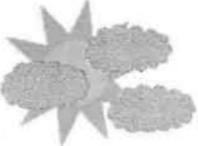
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**Thu**



High: 78  
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**Fri**



High: 61  
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**Sat**



High: 60  
 Low: 42

**Sun**



High: 61  
 Low: 42



Homecoming Step Show kicks off Homecoming Week

Photo by Ahmad AlJuryed/The Current

# UMSL steps it up for Homecoming

ANYA GLUSHKO  
 Features Editor

October's Homecoming Week brings University of Missouri-St. Louis's traditions and rituals to life on campus. The first event to kick off Homecoming Week is Associated Black Collegians' annual Step Show.

The Step Show is a significant part of African American culture.

"It was a culture-based experience," Candice Stevenson, sophomore, mathematics, said. "Every generation adds their own twist to it. It's never the same."

UMSL's Associated Black Collegians step team was in charge of the event, which featured the D-9 (otherwise known as the divine nine), historically black fraternities and sororities. Competing teams included Kappa Alpha Psi,

Alpha Phi Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta.

Local St. Louis-wide chapters of fraternities and sororities competed for \$1000 for first place, \$500 for second place and a trophy for third place. Winners also got bragging rights, of course.

Presenters gave shout-outs to the schools that attended the Step Show: Harris-Stowe,

Lindenwood, St. Louis University, Washington University and others.

"Oh, get loud, get loud," shouted someone from the crowd in the J.C. Penney Conference Center auditorium, which was filled with pumped-up viewers on Thursday night.

The seventh annual Associated Black Collegians Homecoming Step Show set the pace of events

for UMSL's Homecoming Spirit Week. This year's show was a success, with attendance nearly exceeding the auditorium's capacity at about 500 attendees.

"The show is a very interesting experience," Cecil Clay, junior, public relations, said. "Watching videos on YouTube is way different and is not as interactive."

There were six teams of Associated Black Collegians competitors. Each step team brought its own style and performed with energy.

"It was flashy, but it was fun and entertaining at the same time," Karlyne Killebrew, sophomore, English, and one of the Associated Black Collegians steppers, said. "The audience shouted and cheered for us. They snickered at our mistakes, but they were very supportive for all of the teams." (continued on page 9)

*"...The energy in the building was almost like fire... We have been tired from practice because we worked very hard for the whole month, but as soon as we got on a stage there was a rush of adrenaline."—Cohill*

# Improvised Shakespeare makes fun

CATE MARQUIS  
 Editor-in-Chief

Last November, the Improvised Shakespeare Company filled the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center's E. Desmond and Mary Ann Lee Theater with uproarious laughter with their improvised Shakespeare-style plays based on a title suggested by the audience.

This year the popular comedy improv troupe returned for a three-show run, one on Sept. 28 and two on Sept. 29. The theater space was set up cabaret-style, with small round tables in the space in front of the stage and the box seating and traditional seating in the rest of the theater. Small electric candles flickered on tables draped with dark red tablecloths as waiters in vests circulated among the patrons taking drink orders. The club-like atmosphere was the perfect

setting for the comedy.

The five men of the Improvised Shakespeare Company appeared onstage before the two-thirds-full house on Friday dressed in laced-front puffy shirts, black knee pants and brightly-colored stockings that suggested Elizabethan styles while also looking a bit improvised.

Blaine Swen, the troupe's creator and director, explained the basic premise of the evening's entertainment: Using only a suggestion from the audience, the troupe would create an entirely

improvised play in the style of William Shakespeare using the language of the Bard. The troupe bowed heads in unison at the mention of the playwright, setting the tongue-in-cheek tone for the evening.

Besides Swen, the players were Joey Bland, Brendan Dowling, Josh Logan and Jake Schneider.

The latter is a graduate of Webster University's Conservatory of Theater Arts, while Bland is a two-time Jeopardy winner.

Swen noted that it would be the play's world premiere - and its final performance - all in one evening. He promised that the play and the

characters would be created on the spot. "If you ever wonder where the story is going, so do we," Swen said.

The suggested title for the Sept. 28 show was "Chastity Belts and Beards." The troupe withdrew briefly from the (continued on page 6)



Improvised Shakespeare delivered plenty of laughs with improv play

Photo by Ari Scott

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www.thecurrent-online.com

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## Crimeline and Reports

**THEFT – LOT WW**  
 Sept. 21 – 1 p.m. Report # 12-427  
 An UMSL faculty member reported items stolen from a purse left in an unlocked vehicle. Disposition: Report taken.

**THEFT – (delayed report) SOCIAL SCIENCES & BUSINESS BUILDING**  
 Sept. 24 – 5 p.m. Report # 12-430  
 An UMSL staff member reported that a wallet was taken from her purse during a meeting she attended on Sept. 21. Disposition: Report taken.

**THEFT – WEST DRIVE GARAGE**  
 Sept. 25 – 10 a.m. Report # 12-433  
 An UMSL student reported that an improperly-

secured parking permit was stolen from a parked car. Disposition: Report taken.

**THEFT – THOMAS JEFFERSON LIBRARY**  
 Sept. 25 – 10:50 a.m. Report # 12-434  
 An UMSL student reported that a textbook was stolen when left unattended in the library. Disposition: Report taken.

**THEFT – SOCIAL SCIENCES & BUSINESS BUILDING**  
 Sept. 25 – 2:40 p.m. Report # 12-436  
 An UMSL student reported that a bag containing a parking permit, a cell phone and sunglasses was left unattended in a restroom. Disposition: Report taken.

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 1

**Homecoming Kickoff Fair**  
 Homecoming officially begins with our kickoff fair, 11a.m. - 2 p.m. on Thomas Jefferson Library Lawn. Enjoy food, games, activities and more to start off Homecoming week with a fun-filled day celebrating with UMSL students, faculty and staff. For information, contact the Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

**Monday Noon Series: "The Inverted Forest" book reading**  
 John Dalton, associate professor of English, reads from and discusses his new novel, "The Inverted Forest," a story of unlikely devotion and sudden crisis at an isolated Missouri summer camp, 12:15 - 1:15 p.m. in J.C. Penney Conference Center. "The Inverted Forest" was chosen by the Wall Street Journal Book Lover and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch as a best novel of the year. Dalton directs the MFA program in Creative Writing at UMSL. For information, contact Karen Lucas at 314-516-5698.

**"Greeks, Mathematics, and Neuroscience" Center for International Studies talk and reception**  
 In ancient Greece there were two opposing views about the human mind: Plato thought that every human being possesses a priori knowledge, whereas Aristotle emphasized that the mind is a 'tabula rasa' which is inscribed through experience. Athanassios Fokas, MD/PhD in applied mathematics, California Institute of Technology, will discuss philosophical mathematics theories of the ancient Greeks, within the context of modern neuroscience. Reception 7 p.m., lecture 7:30 p.m. in Century Room A of Millennium Student Center. For information, contact Bob Ell at 314-516-7299.

**Homecoming Outdoor Movie: "Brave"**  
 Join the Homecoming Committee for a free movie, free snacks and fun. Bring your own blanket or lawn chair. Movie begins at dusk, about 8 p.m., on Thomas Jefferson Library lawn. For information, contact the Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

**Homecoming Blood Drive/Bone Marrow Donor Registration**  
 Office of Student Life holding a Homecoming Blood Drive, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. in Summit Lounge of J.C. Penney Conference Center. Student organizations can sign up to earn Spirit Points by donating blood, or can donate 5 canned goods for Spirit Points (5 canned goods equals one person). Donations go to the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center. "Be the Match" Bone Marrow Registry will also be present. For information, contact Ashlee Roberts at 314-516-5291.

**40-Yard Dash**  
 Campus Rec's 40-Yard Dash competition is 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. at the Mark Twain Rec Field. T-shirts awarded to the fastest men & women sprinters. No advance registration needed. For information, contact Campus Recreation Office at 516-5326

**Founders Dinner**  
 2012 Founders Dinner celebrates the completion of the Gateway for Greatness Campaign, presents 2012 Distinguished Alumni Awards and honors major donors. Reservations required; tickets \$65 per person. For information, contact Cindy Vantine at 314-516-5442.

**Homecoming Almost Midnight Breakfast**  
 Live music from Goodnight Argent along with biscuits with gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage at our almost midnight breakfast, 9 - 11 p.m. on Oak Hall lawn. For information, contact Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3

**Homecoming Shopping Cart Parade**  
 Campus organizations and departments decorated shopping cart "floats" to match Homecoming theme "Here & Now" for a parade, noon - 1 p.m. in MSC Nosh and patio. Best carts win bragging rights. For information, contact Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

**"Synesthesia" at Gallery Visio**  
 Opening reception 4 - 7 p.m. for UMSL graduate Rebecca Haas' art exhibit, a collection of vivid, dramatic portrait photography combined with live art elements that plays with the senses. For information, contact Stephanie Sivils at 314-516-7922.

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

**Catholic Volunteer Network speaker**  
 Learn more about volunteer organizations that serve kids, the homeless or others, or involve travel, groups that need you for the summer or for a year, at the Catholic Newman Center, 5 - 6 p.m. For information, contact Rachelle Simon at 314-385-3455.

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

**National Student Day**  
 Celebrate National Student Day at campus bookstore, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. with refreshments and 25% discount on UMSL clothing and gifts. Winner of National Student Day contest, which recognizes student community involvement, will be announced. For information, contact Stephanie Eaton at 314-516-5765.

**Eastern District Court of Appeals**  
 The Eastern District Court of Appeals travels the state of Missouri to give students and the general public a chance to witness court proceedings. Court in session 10 a.m. - noon in J.C. Penney Summit. For information, contact Karen Pierre at 314-516-5823.

**Internships 101**  
 Workshop provides an introduction to internships and explains the internship search process, 2 - 3 p.m. at Career Services, 278 MSC. Register for workshop at careers.umsl.edu. For information, contact Rachel Boehlow at 314-516-5317.

**Homecoming activities**  
 A whole day of Homecoming activities, including Greek vs. Roman Volleyball (fraternities and sororities vs all others, 3 - 5 p.m. at Oak Hall volleyball court), Chili Supper (chili and hotdogs, right after volleyball at Oak Hall, 5 - 6:30 p.m.) and Lip Sync Competition (7 - 9 p.m. at MSC Pilot House). For information, contact Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5

**Homecoming Tailgate**  
 Gear up for the Homecoming Soccer Games at the annual Homecoming Tailgate, 3:30 - 5 p.m. in Mark Twain parking lot M, with free food, music and a chance to win great door prizes including an iPad. For information, contact Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

**International fun game night**  
 UMSL International House, right across Natural Bridge from North Campus, offers international fun game night, with board games and international games, 4 - 6 p.m. For information, contact Iris Sun at 314-600-5490.

**New Dance Horizons dance performances at Touhill**  
 Dance St. Louis presents New Dance Horizons, four renowned choreographers, four local dance troupes and four world premiere productions, for three performances, Friday 8 p.m. and Saturday 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., at Touhill Performing Arts Center. Student discounts available. For information, contact Touhill Ticket Office at 314-516-4949.

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

**"Term Limits For State Legislators: Pro or Con? Why?"**  
 Missouri voters approved term limits in State Senate and House of Representatives in 1992. Twenty years later, this conference explores the effects of term limits on the legislative process and state policy. Current and former elected officials, administrators, lobbyists, advocates, political scientists and the interested public discuss term limits from a variety of perspectives, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. in MSC. Fee: \$25, includes continental breakfast, lunch & reception. For information, contact Mary Gough at 314-516-5974.

**Homecoming Dinner & Dance**  
 Formal attire is needed for Homecoming Dinner and Dance, 6:30 - 11 p.m. at Chase Park Plaza Hotel. Find out who won the Spirit Competition, meet the Homecoming Court, and learn who will be crowned Homecoming King and Queen. Tickets are \$20 per person, \$35 per couple, \$200 per table of 10. For information, contact Homecoming Steering Committee at 314-516-5291.

**Polly Ferman tango piano concert at Touhill**  
 Internationally renowned Uruguayan-born pianist Polly Ferman plays Latin American music including habaneras, milongas and tangos, 8 p.m. in Lee Theater of Touhill Performing Arts Center. Sponsored by International Studies and Programs, Department of Music, Women in the Arts and Regional Arts Commission. For information, contact Touhill Ticket Office at 314-516-4949.

## The Undercurrent

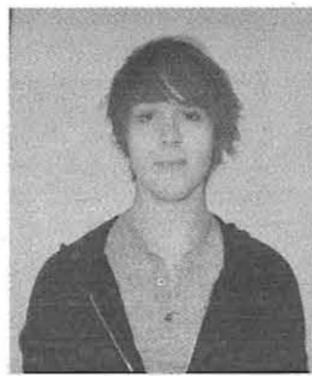
Are you voting in this year's election? Why or why not?



"No. I don't like my options."  
 - Tabitha McCullers,  
 sophomore, biochemistry



"Yes. A ringing yes. Having studied the Constitution, I know it is essential that people vote."  
 - Benjamin Uchitelle, professor,  
 Honors College



"Yes, but I don't like either of them."  
 - Scott Lewis,  
 freshman, biology



"Yes, because it is my duty as a citizen."  
 - Lindsay Meyer, freshman,  
 undeclared

# News

## 'The Major Challenge:' Take time in declaring your major

ALBERT NALL  
Staff Writer

Jane Miles, workshop and student development coordinator at the Center for Student Success, conducted a workshop called "The Major Challenge" on Sept. 27 in Millennium Student Center 225 at University of Missouri–St. Louis.

Miles, who has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in counseling, is a specialist in career advising and counseling.

Miles said that students' major choices are often influenced by common myths. One of those myths is the idea that people are locked into one career or profession for the rest of their lives. There is also a misconception that a major is the same as a career. According to Miles, students who have many interests must choose only one in which to pursue a major.

Zhong Yoe, freshman, economics, is evidently not passionate about her course of study. She said that people pressured her to take business and economics courses in order to get a job when she graduates. But Yoe's ambition is to become a novelist, not an economist. She wants to explore communications as a new major but believes that she will not be able to find employment in that field.

David McGraw, graduate, philosophy, is a student mentor and an advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences. At first, he was not sure what he wanted to do with his MA. McGraw felt divided between choosing a major that would enable him to find employment and doing something he was passionate about.

These are just two of many stories concerning UMSL students who faced difficulties in choosing their majors.

Miles said that freshmen should not be in a hurry to declare their majors. She cited studies stating that 20 to 50 percent of college freshmen are uncertain about their majors. Miles also noted that according to most studies, less than 50 percent of graduating seniors report accepting a job directly related to their majors.

*"We bring our gifts and who we are to the table when we are interacting and networking with others. You are your own individual and not what you major in."—Miles*

"What do you bring with you in networking and employment interviewing situations?" Miles asked. "You bring you with you, your personality traits and your passion for life and that attitude of 'I can't believe they pay me to do this.' This is a big secret, because this is what companies want to hire."

Miles recommends that students talk to an advisor to share their dreams and ambitions for the future, work out an initial academic plan and establish a list of possible majors and careers. One can also combine interests by double majoring or adding a minor or an interdisciplinary certificate.

Some students may need a self-assessment survey such as the Holland Self-Assessment Exercise to help in the selection of a major. John Holland's theory states that people with the same or similar interests are often found in the

same work environments. Themes in the Holland survey include "realistic," "artistic," "investigative," "social," "enterprising" and "conventional." People who choose to work in environments that are similar to their themes are likely to be successful and satisfied with their career choices. Working with people who have similar personality types creates productive and satisfying work environments.

Other activities that can help with the selection of a major include getting involved in organizations. One might also consider volunteering in order to gain skills and experience. The Office of Student Life can provide information on organizations and volunteer opportunities.

The first step to choosing the best major is to know yourself.

Explore major and career options by compiling a list of majors identified in assessments like the Holland Self-Assessment Exercise.

The process of choosing a major differs for each individual, so it is important to take one's time.

Finally, by learning about majors, occupations and oneself, one can narrow down the options and find the best fit before making a final decision on which major to declare.

"We bring our gifts and who we are to the table when we are interacting and networking with others," Miles said. "You are your own individual and not what you major in."

For help in choosing a major, contact Career Services at 314-516-5111, the Center for Student Success at 314-516-5300 or the Office of Multi-Cultural Relations at 314-516-6807.

## Homecoming is "Here & Now"

Sharon Pruitt  
Managing Editor

Homecoming Week will kick off on Oct. 1 with the Homecoming Kickoff Fair. The fair will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the lawn of the Thomas Jefferson Library located on North Campus. The fair will include food and games to get students in the mood for all the festivities Homecoming has to offer. At 8 p.m. that night there will be a free screening of the film "Brave," also on the Jefferson library lawn. Free snacks will be provided, and attendees are encouraged to bring their own blankets or lawn chairs to better enjoy the event.

Voting for Homecoming King and Queen will also begin on Oct. 1, along with Banner Wars. As part of Banner Wars, participating student organizations will decorate banners according to the Homecoming theme of "Here & Now," with judges selecting a winner on Oct. 5. All banners will be displayed on the Millennium Student Center bridge throughout Homecoming Week.

On Oct. 2 there will be a blood drive in the MSC Century Rooms from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Canned goods can also be donated in addition to or in lieu of blood. From 9 to 11 p.m. that night will be the "Almost Midnight Breakfast" on the Oak Hall lawn, where Tritons and their friends can enjoy biscuits with gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage.

On Oct. 3 student organizations and campus departments will show their pride as part of the Homecoming Shopping Cart Parade. This event will be held at noon in the MSC Nosh and Patio, and participating organizations and departments will show off the shopping carts they have decorated to match the Homecoming theme. At 7 p.m. that night in the MSC Century Rooms the Panhellenic Council will be hosting their annual "Big Man on Campus" male talent pageant. Each contestant will represent a student

organization and participate in four categories: active/sportswear, talent formal attire and a question-and-answer portion.

On Oct. 4 the University of Missouri–St. Louis Greeks will take on the UMSL Romans (students not involved in any Greek-letter organizations) in the Greek vs. Romans Volleyball Tournament. The tournament will take place on the Oak Hall volleyball court from 3 to 5 p.m. The annual Homecoming Chili Supper in Oak Hall will immediately follow the tournament. The Lip Sync Competition will take place at 7 p.m. Preregistered student organizations and teams will square off against each other to their own choice of music in the Pilot House.

The annual Homecoming Tailgate will take place Oct. 5 in the Mark Twain Athletic & Fitness Center, Parking Lot M from 3:30 to 5 p.m. This event will preface the Homecoming soccer games. UMSL's women's and men's soccer teams will take on Lewis University at the Don Dallas Soccer Field. The women's game will commence at 5 p.m.; the men's, at 7:30 p.m. The winner of the "Big Man on Campus" competition will be announced during the halftime portion of the women's game. Homecoming Court will be announced during halftime at the men's game.

The Homecoming Dinner and Dance will take place Oct. 6 at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., the dinner begins at 7 p.m. and the dance is from 8 to 11 p.m. Tickets are \$20 a person \$35 dollars a couple and \$200 for each table of ten. Tickets are available in the MSC Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will be sold until Oct. 2 or until sold out (tickets are limited). There will be free shuttle service from Provincial House to the Chase Park Plaza Hotel (Lindell entrance) beginning at 6 p.m. The final return shuttle will depart from the hotel at midnight.

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# Genomics Symposium is new turf for UMSL

CATE MARQUIS

Editor-in-Chief

Seminars about genomics are common on the St. Louis University and Washington University campuses, both of which have medical schools, and particularly on the Wash. U campus, which took part in the Human Genome Project. But on the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus they were generally absent - until this past week.

The Symposium on Genomics was presented by the Biochemistry and Biotechnology Program at UMSL on Sept. 28 from 1 to 5 p.m. in the auditorium of Stadler Hall. The event offered students and faculty three seminars on the topic of genomics.

As noted in the announcement of the one-day symposium, "genomics is an area of genetics that involves the study of the genomes or full genetic content of organisms." The breakthrough of the sequencing of the human genome and the technology spawned at the beginning of the 21st century ushered in an explosion of whole genome sequencing projects, which have revealed amazing biological discoveries.

The three seminars described particular research studies that employed genomics, each followed by a brief period for questions. David Wang of Wash. U spoke on "Genomic Approaches to Virus Discovery" from 1 to 2 p.m. Pui-Yan Kwok from University of California-San Francisco presented "From Studying Large Cohorts to Analyzing Single Molecules" from 2 to 3 p.m. Following a half-hour coffee break, Peter A. Sims of Columbia University spoke about "Microreactor Arrays for Sequencing, Digital PCR and Single Cell Analysis." The symposium concluded with student discussions with the speakers.

Wang presented three examples from his research of novel viruses that were discovered by using genomics. The first virus that he described was a polyomavirus dubbed WU virus (WUV). Polyomaviruses are circular,

double-stranded DNA viruses. The best known polyomaviruses, BK and JC, are associated with respiratory problems for immuno-compromised patients such as transplant recipients or those with HIV infections, although the virus has no health impact on healthy people.

Wang described his lab's procedures for identifying the novel virus, which was first found in a boy in Australia, and his methods for characterizing it. Genomic analysis revealed not only that WUV was a new virus, but that it was only distantly related to BK and JC.

"Identifying a new virus is just the start of the process," Wang said, noting that further research was needed to determine with what diseases, if any, it may be associated.

**Wang presented three examples from his research of novel viruses that were discovered by using genomics.**

Those two viruses are usually detected by screening urine samples, but the novel virus was not detected that way, so Wang developed a test to detect it in blood samples. The new test led to the discovery of the virus in about 80 percent of adult samples and the discovery of two more new viruses named MW and STL, the latter named for the city where it was found. The fact that the virus is so common in healthy populations can have implications for treatment of those undergoing transplants or those with compromised immunity.

Wang's next two examples focused on a virus associated with acute diarrhea, astrovirus, and the discovery of a virus in a tiny worm, *C. elegans*.

Wang noted that diarrhea, while not a health threat in developed countries, is a significant problem in developing countries, causing many children to die of dehydration. "... 40 percent of acute diarrhea cases have no known cause," he said.

Wang also took the opportunity to inject a little humor using a photo of smiling researchers posed around a toilet, ready to take samples. "I wanted to show that people can be very happy working on diarrhea," Wang said, drawing a big laugh from the audience.



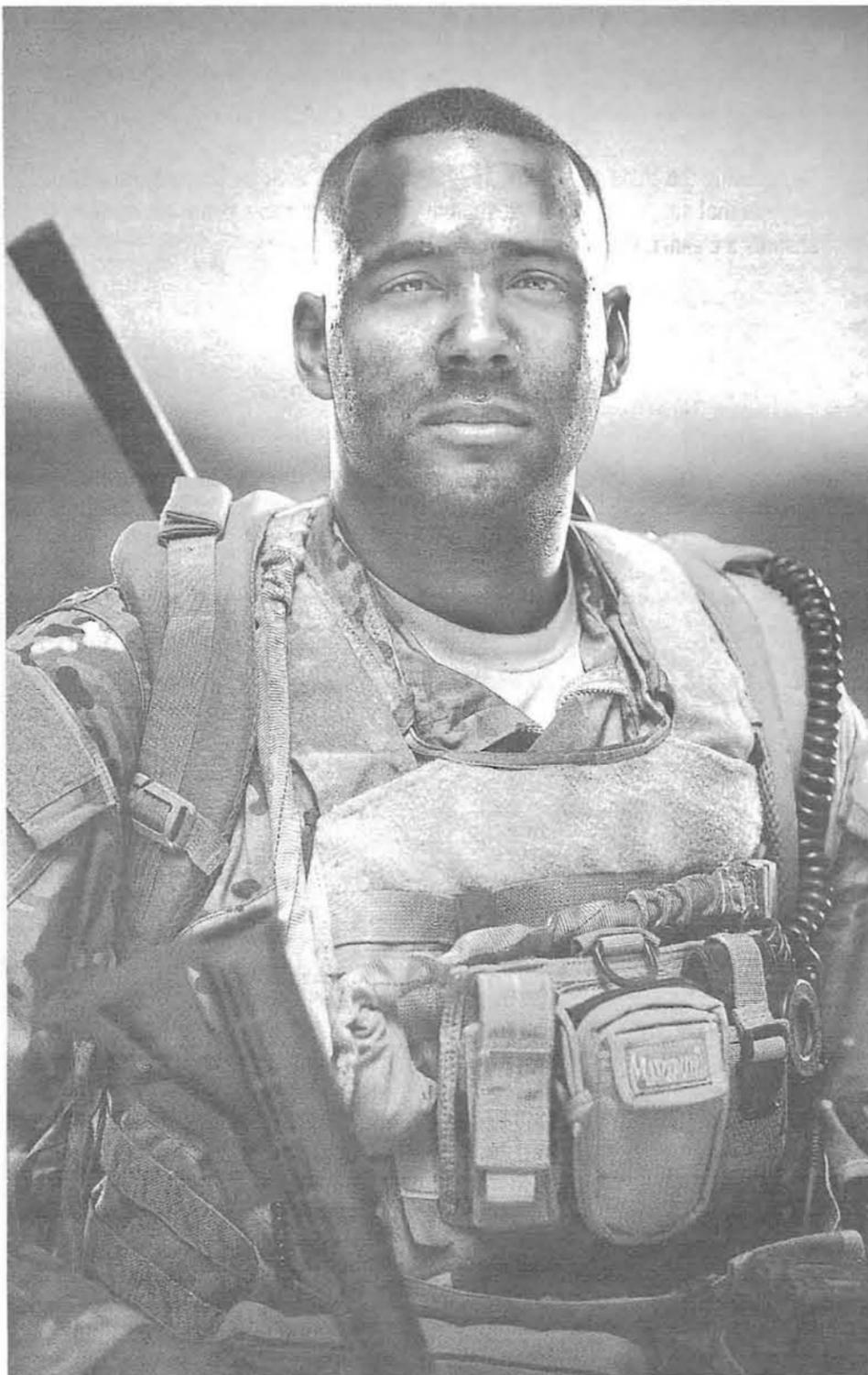
David Wang speaks at the Genomics Symposium

Photo by Yeseul Park/The Current

Wang's third example focused on the discovery of a virus in a species that was not even known to harbor viruses, the nematode *C. elegans*. *C. elegans* is a genetically simple nematode that has no known immune system but is a favorite of genetics researchers. Wang looked at wild nematodes found on rotting fruit in French orchards. An expert in studying the species on fruit helped Wang by identifying sick worms so that Wang's lab could determine whether or not they were infected with a virus. The study led to the discovery of the first virus ever found in the species.

Wang's three studies were striking examples of the power of genomic techniques. "We are now being taken for a really fun ride, a roller coaster ride," Wang said.

"I don't think we have ever had a genomics seminar here before." Stony Marsh, junior, biochemistry and biotechnology, said. Marsh said that he was very happy to be able to attend. He was apparently not the only person on campus excited about the genomics symposium, as the audience nearly filled the auditorium.



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# PBS's 'Washington Week' comes to UMSL

CATE MARQUIS  
Editor-in-Chief

"Washington Week" drew a near-capacity crowd to the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center's Anheuser-Busch Performance Hall for a taping of two shows of the long-running Public Broadcast System TV news program. The program is broadcast locally on KETC/Nine Network (TV channel 9) on Fridays.

"Washington Week" was taped Sept. 28 starting at 3 p.m. One of the shows taped was the regular half-hour broadcast, the year's third "road show" taped outside their Washington D.C. studio which was shown that night at 7 p.m. The other program was a special election-themed "town hall" in which selected audience members posed questions for the panelists to be broadcast later. Both programs are available now on the program's website, [www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek](http://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek).

The show's host and moderator is journalist Gwen Ifill. The show is a discussion with a panel of journalists about events and politics of the week. The panelists were Jeff Zeleny of The New York Times, Nia-Malika Henderson of The Washington Post, Jim Tankersley of The National Journal and Charles Babington of The Associated Press.

Jack Galmiche, CEO of the Nine Network, introduced Ifill, calling her "one of the nation's most accomplished journalists."

"As we approach the 2012 election, it is important to have reliable news sources. 'Washington Week' is one of those reliable sources," Galmiche said.

"This is the biggest crowd 'Washington Week' will have," Galmiche said, speaking of the "road shows." "You have shown why St. Louis is known around the country as the best market for public media."

Ifill said that this was her second broadcast from St. Louis, noting the big turnout and acknowledging those who brought gifts for her upcoming birthday.

"But we had no idea you were going to be so thoughtful as to give us an interesting 'senate race,'" she said, jokingly referring to the competitive Todd Akins - Claire McCaskill race, a comment that drew a big laugh.

Ifill spoke about the challenge of maintaining journalistic neutrality in such a charged, politically

taking a Mississippi River riverboat cruise, provided by American Queen Steamboat Company, after the broadcast. "What happens on the boat stays on the boat," she said with a chuckle.

"We've sponsored Washington Week for six years now," Chamila Jayaweera, who is in Regional Communications, Midwest for the Boeing Company, said. "The program is consistently excellent at keeping its viewers informed about a host of topics that are important in this country."

Ifill then introduced her panel and discussed the taping procedures. The two broadcasts were taped back-to-back with a brief break in between. The break was for the panel and the host, not the audience. "No bathroom break," Ifill said to the crowd. However, the audience was treated to a short video, recapping some highlights of the long-running PBS program.

For the regular program, the panel discussed the impact that early voting might have, noting that polls that take a snapshot of how voters feel before election day take on a new meaning when some of those polled were already voting. They also discussed how the candidates were doing in swing states and how Todd Akin's remarks placed the Missouri senate race unexpectedly in the spotlight.

The second program, the "town hall," allowed preselected audience members to pose questions to the panel. While the panel remained onstage, Ifill moved through the audience with her microphone for the questioners.

One of those who got to ask a question was Phyllis Jourdan, a University of Missouri-St. Louis alumna.

"I graduated in 2010 with a BSW [bachelor's degree in social work], and I am currently in a gerontology program at another university," Jourdan said.

"When I came in the door, there were people there asking, 'Did you have a question that you would like to ask the panel?' And I said, 'Sure, why not?' And so they gave me a number and the card to write my question down, and I turned my question in," Jourdan said. "I was just fortunate enough to be the one who got picked."

Jourdan asked about rising college costs and the burden of student debt, which now exceeds credit card debt.

"I think you have identified the really problematic issue in the downward spiral of the middle-class," Tankersley said in response to her question. "If there is a 'sleeper' issue that will emerge in the next four years, it's student debt."

"I'm not sure it's a 'sleeper' issue," Ifill said. "Regular people like this young lady are talking about it now."

"Because I am a student in the grad program and I was an undergrad, I see that [for] the students that are coming out of high school and going into college, that's their number one concern: 'How am I going to afford college?'" Jourdan said. "And for me it's, 'How can I afford to pay back what my college degree has cost me?' So student loan debt is almost at the same,

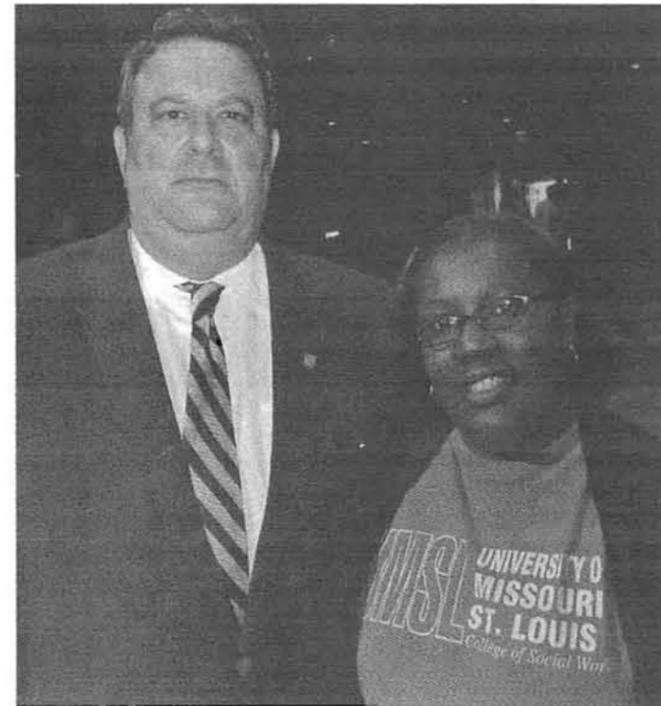
if not past, credit card debt in this country. And, you know, a lot of people who can't afford to pay their credit card bills can't afford to pay their student loans back, either."

The taping wrapped up at about 4:30 p.m. with a big round of applause from the crowd and Ifill coming into the dispersing audience to greet Jourdan in particular.

Among those present at the event was Louis Aboussie, district staff member for U. S. Representative William Lacy Clay.

"I am here as a guest of Boeing, the biggest employer in the First Congressional District," Aboussie said. "Congressman Clay also asked me to come and be with his friend Gwen Ifill. She wrote a book and mentioned his name in it, so they have had a good working relationship for a long time in D.C." Aboussie said that the event was great. "I wish we had more like it," he said.

*"This is the biggest crowd Washington Week will have ... show[ing] why St. Louis is known around the country as the best market for public media."* —Galmiche



Louis Aboussie (L) and Phyllis Jourdan (R) Photo by Cate Marquis/The Current  
divided time. "Some people forget there is a middle," she said. "To get the answer to the question, you have to keep your mind open."

For the show's panel, Ifill wanted working journalists rather than the usual pundits. "I wanted to have reporters who are actually on the beat, who could say what a senator told them in the elevator."

The theater was dressed for the event with floodlights adding light blue and orange accents around the theater and large red, white and blue star-spangled graphics decorating the stage, where five comfortable chairs were arranged around a low coffee table.

Ifill warmed up the audience before the taping by engaging in humorous banter. She told the audience that she and the program's staff were given a tour of Boeing's weapons manufacturing facility in St. Charles and tried out a flight simulator. She also told the audience that she was looking forward to

# Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

It is widely known that the increase in global warming and decrease in air quality is due to our dependence on dirty energy sources like coal and oil. Therefore we owe it to future Missourians to take action and voice our support of the clean and sustainable energy sources that are readily available to us in the state of Missouri.

Missouri is capable of taking leadership and generating, through the use of wind turbines, energy that would not only provide jobs and energy locally but also energy for export nationwide. Wind energy currently provides 2200 jobs within Missouri, and the reduction in coal use means we're not releasing 780,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide into our air each year.

If Senators McCaskill and Blunt want to see healthier citizens and a healthier economy, they must extend the wind power production tax credits before they expire at the end of this year. Their support will ensure that future generations will have a cleaner, greener and healthier Missouri.

Aashka Dalal

Washington University student

To the Editor:

Missouri needs to prioritize bringing innovation, job creation and sustainable living to its citizens. Wind energy for Missouri not only provides a renewable source of clean power, but also ensures long-term economic opportunities that can give us the local jobs and financial support our state needs.

Missouri's natural wind resource could provide over nine times the state's current electricity needs. With manufacturers in place and local jobs secured, using wind power to build a healthier and more efficient Missouri is easily attainable. However, Missouri's wind energy industry will suffer a crippling blow if Congress doesn't extend the renewable energy production tax credit that expires at the end of this year.

By renewing the clean energy tax credits, Senator McCaskill will help Missouri build a future that supports local production, provides sustainable power alternatives and ensures a cleaner, healthier state for all Missourians.

Sincerely,

Sara Molinsky

Intern, Environment Missouri

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**The Current**

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IN THEATERS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5

# A&E

## Missouri loves company: Q&A with Dylan LeBlanc

DAVID VON NORDHEIM

*A&E Editor*

Dylan LeBlanc is an independent singer/songwriter from Los Angeles. His debut album, "Paupers Field," was well-received by the indie folk community. His latest album, "Cast the Same Old Shadow," was released by Rough Trade Records on Aug. 23. He will perform at The Firebird on Oct. 6, appearing with Swedish folk duo First Aid Kit. The Current spoke with LeBlanc about his Louisiana childhood and his status as one of the youngest performers in a traditionally geriatric genre.

**The Current:** You've named singer/songwriters like Townes Van Zandt and Neil Young as some of your major inspirations. How would you say your music reflects their influence?

**Dylan LeBlanc:** Well, when you grow up, certain things are ingrained in your musical makeup. Your brain has a chemical makeup, you know, and around when children are between ages 1 and 5 is the most important phase in creating their makeup. I think my first spiritual experience with music around that age was with Neil Young and Townes Van Zandt, and it left a major impression on me.

*... when you grow up, certain things are ingrained in your musical makeup ... I think my first spiritual experience with music around [ages 1 to 5] was with Neil Young and Townes Van Zandt, and it left a major impression on me.*

**TC:** You recently finished a couple of international tour dates such as Brighton, England. What kind of reception did your music receive internationally compared to more domestic audiences?

**DL:** I think the audiences there are maybe a little more receptive. I think they're more into what I do. I don't think they really get it as much here.

**TC:** You're on the first leg of your second tour right now. How do your experiences on the road with First Aid Kit compare to previous acts you've toured with?

**DL:** Last year I toured with Lucinda Williams and Mitch Robinson. It was a great experience working with these icons, but First Aid Kit is entirely different. They're great, and they're good friends. They're just such loving people.



Dylan LeBlanc

Photo by Jamie Goodsell

They're extremely talented and sweet-hearted girls, and it's been a great experience touring with them so far.

**TC:** You come from a musical family. How do you think your music reflects the culture of your Louisiana birthplace?

**DL:** My dad was a hero to me. He was cool, he was funny, he played guitar and I just thought he was f'cking awesome. Yeah, he was cool, but I would say there's not much in truth to the influence now other than that I wanted to get the f'ck out of Shreveport! Mussel Shoals [La.] was more of an influential place for me, just because it was a quiet little town with pretty little hills and pretty little places to go. It's also a very lonely place, and that's where a lot of my music comes from. It's a great place to get quiet and get focused and write a bunch of songs. I really need somewhere it's quiet and isolated to get work done.

**TC:** Thanks to musicians like The Tallest Man on Earth and Fleet Foxes, folk music has made a powerful resurgence in the indie music community. What is your take on this trend, and how do you think it affects you as a musician?

**DL:** I guess I'm not really a part of a scene, and I think that kind of messes me up a little bit, because I'm not really in this for the popularity. Sometimes I just feel like I really don't believe I belong anywhere, but I guess because of that I don't really have to prove anything to anybody.

**TC:** You'll be playing at The Firebird next weekend. Is this

your first time performing in St. Louis?

**DL:** I actually played at the Duck Room at Blueberry Hill last October. I really love St. Louis. I think it's an amazing town, and I'm really looking forward to seeing it again. You know what they say: Missouri loves company.

**TC:** Folk and country musicians are typically informed by a world-weary perspective. How do you think your comparative youth influences your take on the genre?

**DL:** I've always been kind of bouncing around. I've never really had a solid home. I think that kind of prepared me for the tour lifestyle of always being on the road. My dad was a songwriter, so we moved around a lot. I was constantly going, and I never wanted to sit still. I just feel like I constantly need to be moving. That kind of theme throughout my life, a lot of time alone and wandering, helps me to feel that world-weariness the music needs.

**TC:** Your second album, "Cast the Same Old Shadow," was released early last month. How has the reception compared to your debut album?

**DL:** I don't really know, to be honest. I've heard a lot of mixed reviews. I've heard people say it's a sh\*t album. I've heard people say it's a great album. People who were fans of my first album are going to have to warm up to this one; I do know that for sure. It's a lot less straightforward.

**TC:** Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

**DL:** Just say "hi" to St. Louis for me. I can't wait to be there.

## 'Piramida' is soundtrack for arctic exploration

DAVID VON NORDHEIM

*A&E Editor*

There is something intensely arctic about Efterklang's latest album, "Piramida." Given that the Danish septet's latest album was inspired by an expedition to the abandoned North Polar settlement of the same name, it is only natural that "Piramida" should be a cold and lonesome affair. Just as Kraftwerk's "Autobahn" and "Trans-Europe Express" provide a complimentary soundtrack to European mass-transit, "Piramida" is the ideal companion for trekking through tundra, perfectly capturing the mysterious, barren and beautiful landscapes from which it takes its inspiration.

The insularity of Efterklang's latest effort is all the more striking when compared to their previous album, the grandiose "Magic Chairs." That album, their most popular release at the time, brought Efterklang's latent chamber pop ambitions to the fore, making for a sweeping, giddy and often self-indulgent listen that many disenfranchised fans interpreted as a plea for mainstream popularity. Their orchestra-driven post-rock was on the verge of becoming a Danish Coldplay, and though they would never achieve even a fraction of that group's chart success, their motives became suspect.

With the baggage of "Magic Chairs" in mind, "Piramida" seems to be a direct retaliation to the accusations of pop-friendliness. Indeed, nothing here is particularly catchy in the conventional sense. Most of "Piramida" involves little more than keyboards and percussion, largely forsaking the swelling orchestral maneuvers of "Magic Chairs." Several tracks, like the sparse "The Living Layer," would be borderline ambient were it not for Casper Clausen's vocals. Given the microcosmic intimacy of "Piramida," it is difficult to believe that Efterklang is still a seven-man effort.

*["Piramida"] is a demure, mannered take on experimental rock, one that skirts the experimentation in favor of a deliciously cinematic ambience.*

Efterklang's previous albums, from the "Kid A" post-techno of "Tripper" through the chamber pop excesses of "Magic Chairs," were all fairly by-the-numbers examples of their given genres. They were not particularly ambitious or experimental, but they were effective stopgaps for the latest Mum or Sigur Ros albums, two pioneering European post-rock groups that Efterklang is very clearly indebted to.

"Piramida," however, is a little more difficult to catalogue. It is more post-pop than post-rock, far less grandiose than the often self-indulgent Sigur Ros and far less quirky than the often precocious Mum. For the first time in their career, Efterklang sounds as if they are trying to develop their own unique take on the genre rather than simply replicating the sounds of their idols with diminishing returns.

This is not to say that "Piramida" is entirely unprecedented (Dan Snaith's releases under the Caribou moniker come to mind), but rather that Efterklang is finally beginning to expand their sonic palette. With "Piramida," less is truly more. From the ghostly "Hollow Mountain" to the frost-bitten ballad "Sedna," the isolation of "Piramida" is evocative precisely because Efterklang focuses on the minute details rather than tripping over themselves to create a major artistic statement. It is a demure, mannered take on experimental rock, one that skirts the experimentation in favor of a deliciously cinematic ambience.

It seems that Efterklang have come to the realization that their music can still be thought-provoking and ambitious without bringing a symphony in tow or wearing their influences on their sleeves. Of course, the fact that their sole U.S. tour date for 2012 will be with a 19-piece orchestra, with arrangements by members of Sigur Ros and Mum, may undermine the progress.

## The Improvised Shakespeare Company

(continued from page 1)

*"If you ever wonder where the story is going, so do we." — Swen*

stage before Swen returned to deliver a prologue for a play about star-crossed lovers frustrated by the prince's edict that all women in Verona must wear chastity belts.

The actors plunged right into the story with a scene between the star-crossed lovers, Antonio and Rosalind, pledging their undying love, bemoaning their cruel

seduction if necessary.

As in Shakespeare's time, all the female roles were played by men. Unlike Shakespeare's time, no effort was made to cast men who looked or dressed the part, which added an extra touch of comedy.

Besides a few snippets of actual Shakespearean verse, the play included a great deal of the silly and preposterous.

other costumes and use only a few chairs as props, this kind of effect is produced by hilarious and heroic creative means onstage. But this troupe has the training, as many come out of such storied comedy improv groups as Second City.

The play alternated between truly moving well-acted dramatic scenes and comic scenes, as Shakespeare's own plays do, but with a heavier dose of the absurd. As in Shakespeare's plays, there were an assortment of colorful supporting characters ranging from the loyal adviser to the prince, who mourned his dead wife, to a troupe of singing gravediggers who planned to try out for "The Voice" and other talent shows. Yes, contemporary references peppered the invented play, along with several references to women being given the right to vote - a little election year touch.

As the action took place, characters and situations evolved in surprising ways. A scene that began with a woman on a balcony and her new lover below transformed into a scene in a graveyard, driving the woman to quip that it was too bad her balcony overlooked the graveyard. A poor swineherd who came to the prince with a request that

the lord allow his wife to remove her chastity belt so she could give birth - to multiple offspring - then transitioned into a bit about how the law had been in effect for five years, and therefore school-age children emerged from her unbound body, along with a huge amount of comic mayhem. A character re-appeared in a scene until someone remembered that he had already been killed off, requiring a Monty Python-esque explanation for his

*As in Shakespeare's time, all the female roles were played by men. Unlike Shakespeare's time, no effort was made to cast men who looked or dressed the part...*

presence.

The audience roared with laughter the whole time, responding to every plot twist and clever line and the performers' energetic, inventive efforts. Whether one loves Shakespeare or silliness, it was a fully enjoyable evening, signaling the troupe's likely return next year.

Grade: A



Improvised Shakespeare plays with words.

Photo by Ari Scott

fate and plotting to send Rosalind's beautiful sister Cecilia, who was joining a convent in a few days, to try to persuade the prince to lift the ban - or belts - by

Last year, for example, a giant snake played by one of the actors "consumed" many of the characters before the play's tragic end. Since the actors work without



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# Features

## UMSL piano students ready for Russian trip

ANYA GLUSHKO  
Features Editor

A famous Russian saying translates to "everything new is from a well-forgotten past." This quote can be effectively applied to the concept of classical music. Classical pieces remain the most challenging and delightful to hear and play. Exceptional music enables listeners to experience various emotions; it also creates powerful

*Exceptional music enables listeners to experience various emotions; it also creates powerful imagery in their minds.*

imagery in their minds. People all around the globe can enjoy the same music, because it can be understood without words. Music is a universal language.

Award-winning University of Missouri–St. Louis piano students Tom Winkler, senior, piano performance; John Nuckols, graduate, life long learner; Daniel Kuehler, junior, music; and Daniel Dickson, senior, music, played a preview presentation of their musical trip to Russia.

The students will visit Samara, Moscow and Voronezh with their teacher, Alla Voskoboynikova, director of keyboard studies and teaching associate professor of music. They will perform concerts at state music academies and cultural centers. The main concert will be held at the Samara Theatre of Opera and Ballet.

The musicians will also study with Voskoboynikova's own teachers. "I left Russia 16 years ago and now I am going back," Voskoboynikova said. "Of course I feel very emotional. I came to this decision because of my students' hard work. They gave their hearts into that."

On Wednesday night the Recital and Lecture Hall in the Music Building was filled with the sounds of classical music written by Russian and German composers in the 19th and 20th centuries. The piano concert featured

works by some of the most well-known composers of the "Golden Era" and beyond. These composers included Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Prokofiev, Brahms and more.

The concert opened with welcoming comments by Dr. James Richards, interim dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, and Dmitry Kabargin, president of the St. Louis – Samara Sister City Committee.

"The goal [is] to promote Russian culture in St. Louis and different exchanges between Samara and St. Louis," Kabargin said. "We have been hosting and sending numerous medical, government and cultural delegations between Russia and the USA."

Each musician gave a brief introduction before beginning his performance.

"I liked how [the] musicians talked about the history of each piece," Brett Lindsay, junior, music, said. "That really added to the experience."

Most of the selections lasted about 20 minutes or more. The students had to memorize highly demanding and technically challenging pieces.

"It comes easy for me," Kuehler, senior, music performance, said. "I don't pursue memorization. I work in techniques and musicality."

Aside from remarkable memory, the students also proved their skill and experience through professional posture and driving energy. They truly gave themselves over to the performance.

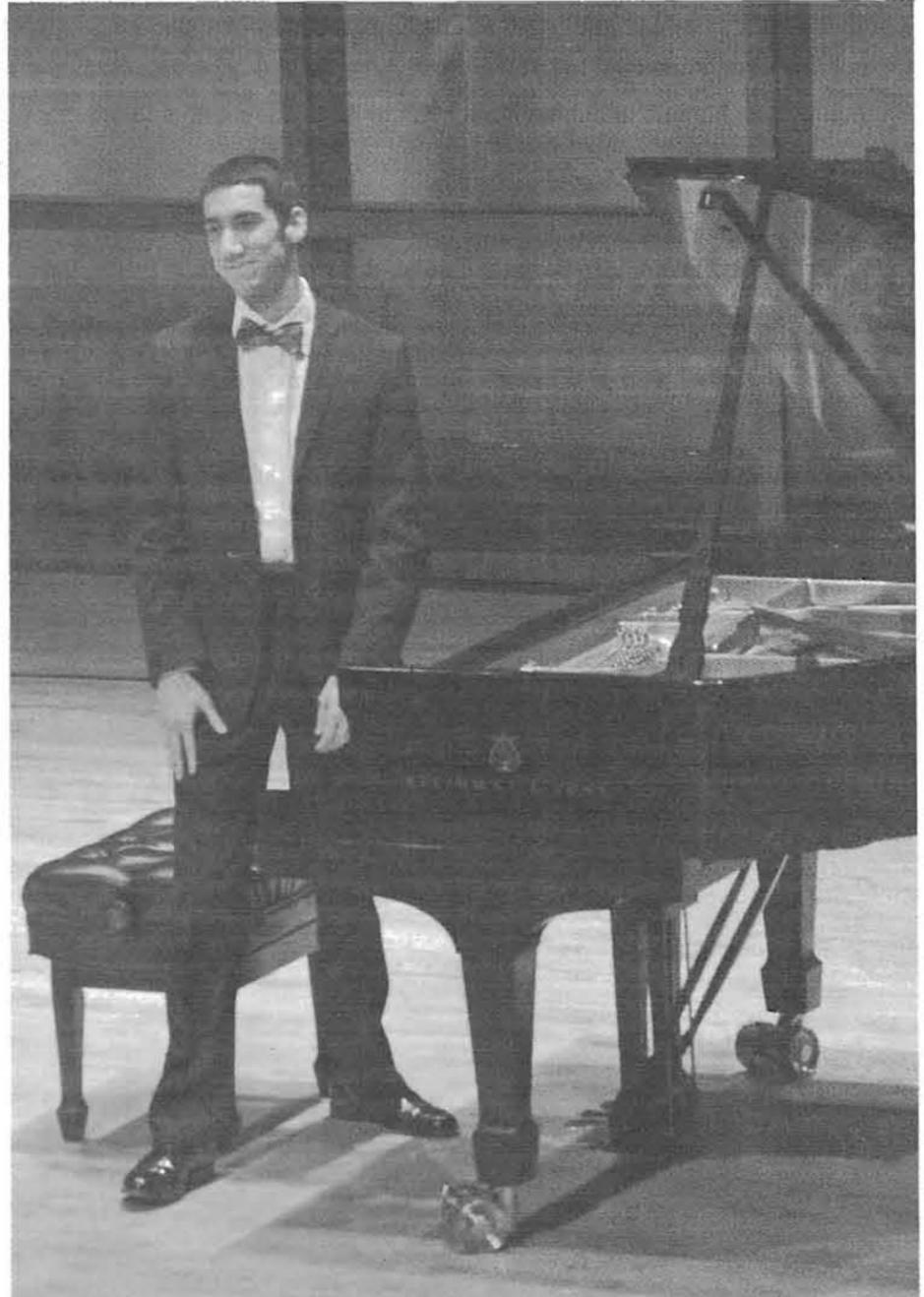
"I feel passionate about it [playing]," Winkler said. "I am giving into it and loving it every minute."

Some of the pieces reflected on the war and the hardships in Russia at the time, but they also had light notes of hope that left a lasting impression.

"Russian style of playing is very unique," Kuehler said. "It is noted for having a deep singing tone, just like a song."

Many of the works required a combination of various techniques. Such techniques included excessive use of the pedal to produce a flowing legato effect for harmonies. Another technique featured dissonant, choppy, quick staccato notes meant to create and suspend feelings of distress and achieve a powerful finale at the end. With such a challenging contrast of styles, listeners could get a taste of Russian culture and its ambiguous spirit.

Kuehler's performance of Prokofiev's "Sonata No. 6 in A Major" contained many thematic reprises that became



Daniel Kuehler after a performance at UMSL earlier this year

Photo by Yeseul Park/The Current

increasingly exciting as the pianist's hands flew across the keyboard with force and driving dynamics.

"This caliber of [Kuehler's] performance is achieved when a great composer's works are interpreted by a great musician," Eric Garber, senior, music, said.

Arensky's "Fantasia of Two Russian Themes" was performed as a duet by Winkler and Voskoboynikova.

"I will be pretending to be an orchestra," Voskoboynikova said before she sat by the piano to accompany Winkler.

An upright piano and a grand piano stood side by side and produced beautiful harmonies under the musicians'

hands. The multiple melodies complemented one another, creating a fusion of solo and background motifs.

Winkler has played for 18 years, three of which he spent practicing with this teacher.

"I was always resistant to learn the right way, but Alla showed it to me," Winkler said. "Stage fright is my number one problem. All you can do is to keep performing. I practice in front of my family and friends. How excited I am about going to Russia. I get to play with their Symphony Orchestra, and I think their music is elite."

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## Violence Awareness Project seeks stories

ALBERT NALL  
Staff Writer

Are you a woman who is concerned about the direction that your relationships with men are taking? Are they often leading toward violent outcomes? Are you tired of dealing with sexual harassment, stalking, abuse, or demeaning and sexist comments?

Assistant Professor of criminology and criminal justice

Kristin Carbone-Lopez, organizer of the University of Missouri–St. Louis Violence Awareness Project, seeks volunteers to share stories about unhealthy relationships and verbal oppression.

Carbone-Lopez has extended an invitation to women who want to share their stories about unhealthy relationships and regular verbal oppression. She will transcribe the stories

Carbone-Lopez specializes in intimate partner violence prevention and narrative research. She will conduct research and interviews along with Dr. James Linsin, psychologist and coordinator of outreach at UMSL Health, Wellness and Counseling Services.

"The interviews will be done with the broader purpose of educating on relationship violence as well as support for victims of violence," Carbone-Lopez said.

*"The purpose of the UMSL Violence Awareness Project is to increase the consciousness of relationship violence that does not generally get discussed." — Linsin*

Linsin will audition performers and write and direct a script composed of monologues and vignettes about the experiences of violence collected by Carbone-Lopez. The performance will occur in spring 2013. "Many of us know people who use violence and control, and the scripts will be a focus on the issues of how people deal with violence from personal relationships to dealings with law

enforcement," Carbone-Lopez said. While much of the focus will be on women, Carbone-Lopez hopes that the monologues will have a broad appeal in the university (continued on page 9)

## Violence Awareness (continued from page 8)

community. Volunteers who participate in the project will be asked about their experiences and backgrounds. Their testimonies will be recorded and transcribed for the script. The names of participants will not be revealed; instead the stories will be incorporated into characters identified by pseudonyms that will exclude identifying information. In some cases, multiple subjects may be combined to create a fictional scene. Volunteers will have the right to review and request edits to the recordings.

Linsin has been involved in presenting workshops on relationship violence. He has also written scripts and directed an interactive theater group at UMSL for five years. As a graduate student at Wright State University in Ohio, he was involved in a practicum that introduced him to workshops that counseled men involved in relationship violence. A fellow classmate who co-facilitated treatment groups for both men and women offered Linsin the opportunity to take over the group.

Linsin said that a typical treatment group would meet approximately once a week for 16 weeks. The groups involved educational resources and discussions and were designed to motivate changes in ingrained violent behavior. A woman

sometimes acted as a lead facilitator. Linsin said that many women do not confront their abusers due to the fears and risks involved in leaving the relationship.

"The purpose of the UMSL Violence Awareness Project is to increase the consciousness of relationship violence that does not generally get discussed," Linsin said.

Linsin also said that at this time there are no grants or budgets for the UMSL Violence Awareness Project. Much of the project is carried out by volunteers. According to Linsin, the need for future funding to take the show on the road will depend on how well the monologues are received when they are performed at UMSL in the spring.

"The departments where the monologues will be performed may donate space. However, the project is not that far along on the need for funding or sponsorship," Linsin said.

For information on how to volunteer or be interviewed for the UMSL Violence Awareness Project, contact Carbone-Lopez at 314-516-5426 or carbonelopezk@umsl.edu. If you or somebody you know is involved in relationship violence, call Health, Wellness and Counseling Services at 314-516-5671.

*...at this time, there are no grants or budgets for the UMSL Violence Awareness Project.*

## Homecoming Step Show (continued from page 1)

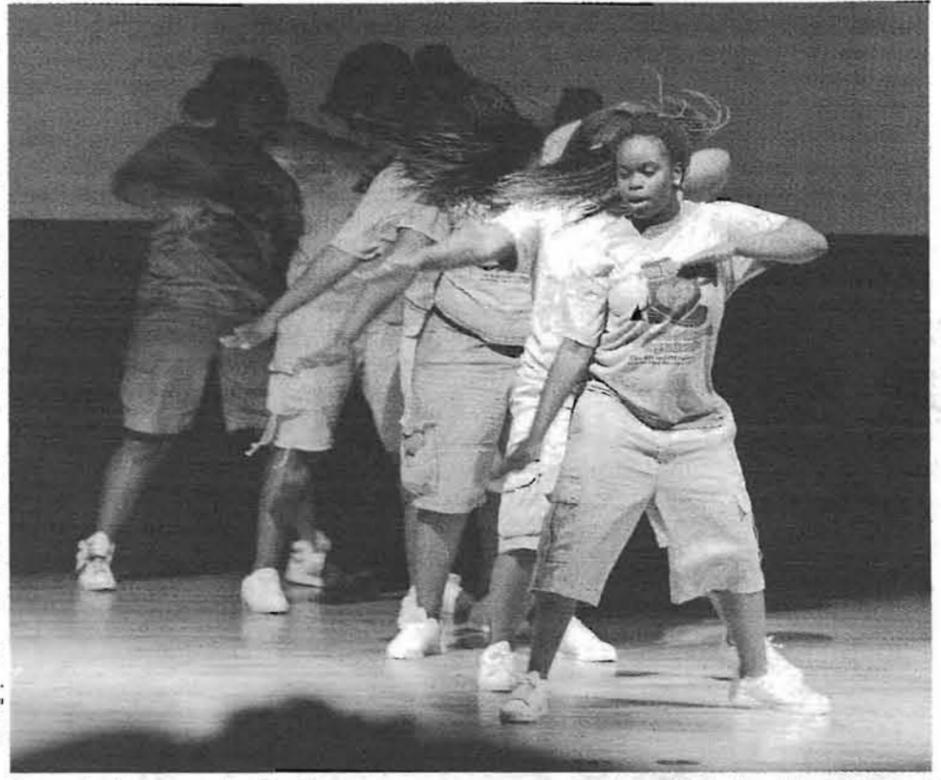
Kappa Alpha Psi scored third, Delta Sigma Theta came in second and Delta Kappa Alpha Psi took first place.

Delta Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity played around the Michael Jackson family theme. They started with a comic introduction that turned into real action. Steppers combined sleek turns with sharp claps and stomps. All of the moves were synchronized and professionally done.

The steppers were performing with such passion and energy that their wigs flew off several times, triggering several shouts of approval from the excited crowd.

"They [the steppers] always get the crowd involved ... It's a very energetic vibe," Craig Morris, junior, graphic design, said.

"It was refreshing to see Kappas in the competition," Darryl Harrell, sophomore, business and English, said. "The Alphas and Deltas always do their thing, so I wasn't surprised to see them win first and second place. However, I do not want to diminish the Kappas' performance, because they were also great. I'm also really proud of the ABC Step Team for putting in the work. I know they



**Dancers in the Homecoming Step Show**

*Photo by Ahmad Aljurryed/The Current*

prepared day and night for the performance, so it was great to see all of their hard work pay off." Many of the step teams practice hard during the year between each step show. "It is a showcase of hard work, dedication, creativity and unity," Associated Black Collegians stepper Christian Cohill, junior, graphic design, said. "... The

energy in the building was almost like fire ... The energy from the crowd was so contagious. We have been tired from practice because we worked very hard for the whole month, but as soon as we got on a stage there was a rush of adrenaline."

The atmosphere at the show was highly energized, as the audience and the steppers generated vitality.

The audience interacted with the performers, supporting and encouraging them with cheers and shout-outs.

"I loved the energy from the crowd and steppers, and I enjoyed the unity, all of those people coming together," Andrea Neal, sophomore, business administration, said.

# Attention first year students!

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For more information or questions please contact the Office of Student Life at 314.516.5291

# Opinions

## TRIO COUNTERPOINT

### American women have the right to breastfeed in public

In the U.S., 44 of the 50 states affirmed the right to nurse in public. In three states, public breastfeeding is exempt from indecent exposure laws. The state of Missouri mandates that surgical centers and hospitals provide obstetrical care as well as information on breastfeeding. Only three states fail to protect mothers who nurse in public. It is likely that many universities have yet to develop a formal policy on public breastfeeding, as such incidents are rare.

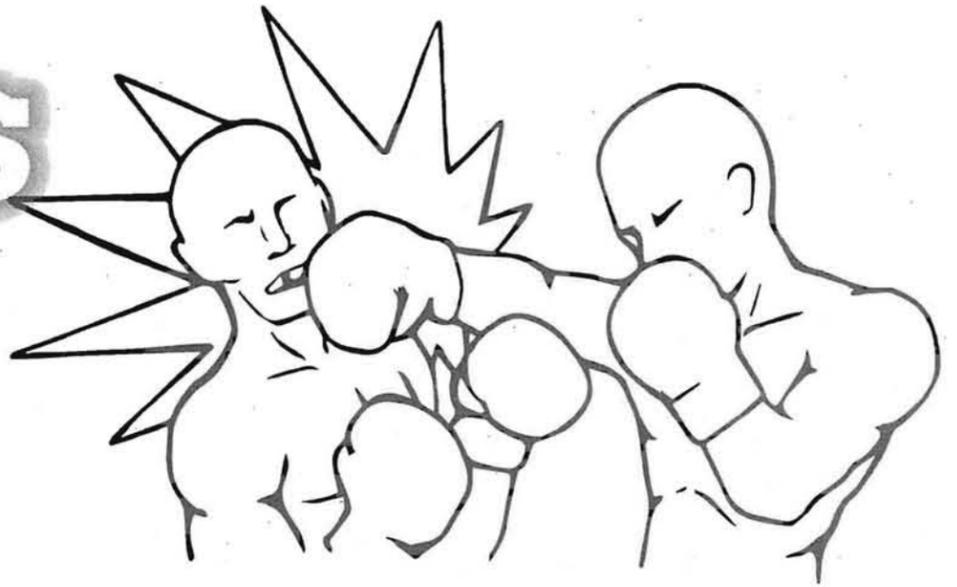
However, despite the laws protecting them from prosecution, mothers who nurse in public often incur negative attention in the United States. Americans have become accustomed to strictly sexualized images of women's breasts; few Americans have actually witnessed a breastfeeding mother. In America, public breastfeeding is seen as an illicit, lewd, exhibitionist act.

American women have the right to breastfeed in public without incurring public attention.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that breastfeeding rates for American infants are at 16.3 percent by 6 months. In contrast, the breastfeeding rates in Denmark and Sweden, respectively, are at 73 percent and 72 percent at 6 months.

Supporters of the right to breastfeed in public without attracting adverse attention point out that in the international community, it is typical for groups of young men to observe mothers breastfeeding without a single sign of indignation or disgust.

The concept of nursing freedom necessitates the viewing of women's breasts as a symbol of devotion, nurturing and love for a baby. Public breastfeeding deserves to be recognized as a beautiful and natural act. It is time for Americans to bring an end to the shame and taboo of breastfeeding in public.



### Public breastfeeding is not fashionable

Breastfeeding is one of the most natural things between a mother and her baby. But seriously, let's leave it at just mother and baby. Breastfeeding in public goes against societal codes for numerous reasons. In fact, in some jurisdictions breastfeeding in public is illegal.

First, breastfeeding is a private act. You can't really harp on the teens laying on top of each other at movie theaters if you're exposing parts of your upper body in public. Come on, people, there are laws against indecent exposure for a reason.

The basic point here is that while breastfeeding is important to the child, it doesn't need to be seen by everyone. In fact, many social networking sites have banned pictures of breastfeeding. If Facebook is banning something, then you know there's a serious problem.

Second, many people are uncomfortable with the idea of breastfeeding. While everyone has the right to live their lives as they choose, they do not have the right to

make others feel uncomfortable. If the situation makes people feel awkward—intentionally or not—it should not be allowed.

Another reason to ban public breastfeeding has to do with American culture. In Europe, there are naked statues and nude beaches all over the place. In this country, however, people are not as willing to expose themselves, and when they do it feels incredibly out of place.

For most people, the question has nothing to do with supporting breastfeeding. It's your body; do what you want with it. But a public place is not your living room. People don't want to see you breastfeeding your baby, and they should not have to.

The bottom line here is that breastfeeding in public is 100 percent avoidable. There is no reason for any woman to expose herself around people who are eating or trying to enjoy a relaxing day out.

Sorry, ladies, but let's keep the ta-tas tucked away.

### Unsolicited Advice column Should we settle for imperfection?

Hali Flintrop  
Opinions Editor

People make mistakes. Nobody is perfect, and nobody can be perfect no matter how hard they try. That's all good when it comes to accepting individuals for who they are or forgiving someone for mild slights. But in other situations, perfection is required; anything less is completely unforgivable and sometimes irreversible.

Take the 2007 comedic film "Knocked Up." Overall, that film was hysterical. However, the moment when the baby daddy gave up trying to don the condom, thereby impregnating the girl in his bed, was absolutely appalling. Sure, that scene of atrocious carelessness was necessary for the premise of the film to work, but it serves as a serious scene in a funny movie. It is not okay that he got fed up with that condom, and it is not okay that he failed to warn the person he was going to sleep with. Her rationale for forgiving him was probably that nobody's perfect. That's true, but do they have to be so imperfect that they forget to wear condoms?

There are some people who just have to get it right every time. People in esteemed professions or people who hold a lot of responsibility cannot fall back on the imperfection of the human race. They are expected to deliver. I'd like to see the reckless driver of a loaded school bus dare to defend herself by saying, "We all make mistakes."

The New York Times recently published an article titled "When Surgeons Leave Objects Behind." What? No. Please collect every last sponge and scalpel that you insert into our bodies, surgeons. That is why every patient and insurance company pays you and your liability insurance company thousands of dollars. We pay you because we trust you not to drop the various instruments of surgery inside our bodies before you sew us up. If that is too difficult for any

**Underwear should look the same when it is taken off as when it is put on. Everyone should aim for that small standard of perfection. Please wipe thoroughly.**



surgeons' medical gaffes on top of everything else when going under the knife.

Even on some considerably less significant issues, perfection is not too much to ask. Skid marks in underpants? There is no excuse for that, especially when another person is kind enough to do the laundry. It seems

like a small problem, and someone might defend it by claiming that "nobody is perfect." But if anyone is so imperfect that they cannot manage to wipe themselves, the smallest punishment they deserve is to be forced to wash their own alarmingly filthy clothes. Underwear should look the same when it is taken off as when it is put on. Everyone should aim for that small standard of perfection. Please wipe thoroughly.

So it's true that nobody is perfect and that we all make mistakes. But that doesn't give us an excuse not to take responsibility for what we do, whether the action seems significant or not.

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Claire M. Schenk is a partner at Thompson Coburn LLP in the firm's Business Litigation practice group.

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# A letter to the editor

An Open Letter to Chancellor George,

This is my third year at UMSL as a student in the College of Education. From what I've seen in St. Louis schools, the reputation of our university precedes itself in the community as an institution that puts forth very qualified and effective teachers. I promise to work hard and to live up to that reputation in the coming years. I am writing to you today with regards to the good name of our school and its association with a company known throughout the Appalachian region where I'm from.

Earlier this month you accepted a gift of \$750,000 from Peabody Energy to update two engineering labs on campus. In return for this gift, Peabody was given the naming rights for our Environmental Engineering Laboratory. As a longtime resident of West Virginia, I have to tell you that if you want to see Peabody's idea of environmental engineering, then come and look at the dead river systems and the mountaintops that have been blown apart. As my family travelled to West Virginia over Labor Day, we drove through a dust cloud drifting off Peabody's surface mine in Lynnville, Ind. The visible dust that draped the trees for several miles around the 40-mile marker of I-64 was a sight that I'm not at all unfamiliar with.

Studies conducted by West Virginia University have linked this particular matter containing sulphur and silica to microvascular dysfunction, which could explain the increases of cardiovascular disease in areas of close proximity to mountaintop removal sites. These coal companies unapologetically blast silica and sulphur

into the air while allowing lead, selenium, arsenic and other known toxins to seep into the river systems. The one bit of environmental engineering that these companies seem to be proud of, clean coal, involves blindly injecting the heavy water used in the cleaning process into abandoned, unsealed mines. Several Appalachian communities have been part of medical monitoring systems as a result, and the financial costs have been in the millions due to the contaminated water table that thousands of West Virginians rely on for drinking, cooking and bathing. Of course, we cannot put a price tag on the many people who have died of their illnesses.

How Peabody Energy could have the audacity to put their name on an environmental engineering lab is beyond me. As far as UMSL's engineering department is concerned, I really wish you would have found a more appropriate means of keeping the lights on. As your student, I must ask you to return the money to Peabody Energy and perhaps allow them to use it for the pensions that they are about to be sued for by the United Mine Workers of America. I would like to think that \$750,000 is an unfair price for the integrity of our institution. Any students or faculty members who are interested in working with me on this issue should contact me at [hardhitpeople@gmail.com](mailto:hardhitpeople@gmail.com)

Sincerely,  
David Scott  
Senior, Elementary Education

# Student Abroad column Observations of the Japanese

RACHELLE BRANDEL  
Staff Writer

I have now been in Japan for two weeks. I've been constantly busy getting ready for the school year. I've also explored a small portion of the city and learned a few things about the local culture.

Japanese people are very reserved. On train rides, no one will talk to or approach anyone if they think they're being rude. The Japanese mentality calls for minding one's own business, as confrontational situations are uncomfortable for all present. If you do end up talking about uncomfortable issues such as politics or religion, you can be sure that the person you are talking to considers you a good friend.



*Japanese people are very fit. Being small and skinny may be in their genes, but the Japanese people are constantly on the move... Japan is also not a flat country. From my own experiences in riding a bike here, the Japanese build with the land instead of against it, and this can result in numerous twists, turns and surprisingly steep hills.*

This doesn't mean that strangers will outright ignore people. The people I have met are always ready to help with directions when asked or will exclaim over the hot weather if they catch you fanning yourself.

The Japanese love very tall people like my friend Obi, who is a fellow dorm resident. Random people will approach him on the train or in the supermarket and exclaim over his height and even touch him.

Japanese people are always alert to those around them. It may be that no one talks on the trains, but you can be sure they are watching every fellow passenger. For example, when you eat with friends, Japanese custom dictates that you do not pour your own drink; it is expected that those around you will be watching your cup to make sure that it does not become empty. I've seen schoolchildren on the train give up their seats to older men or women after noticing them board the train. Much of this may have to do with the Japanese group mentality as opposed to the individual mentality that we carry as Americans.

But this does not mean that all Japanese are kind and friendly; some carry a blatant racism against foreigners. There have been one or two restaurants out of which we've been ushered, and many workers will not call to us to frequent their stores. However, the majority of people do not mind foreigners, though the blatant xenophobia perpetuated by the few is tolerated by all.

A final observation for this week: Japanese people are very fit. Being small and skinny may be in their genes, but the Japanese people are constantly on the move, and most do not have the luxury of cars. Bikes are predominant here, as is riding the train, but getting from point A to point B can take a fair amount of exercise. Japan is also not a flat country. From my own experiences in riding a bike here, the Japanese build with the land instead of against it, and this can result in numerous twists, turns and surprisingly steep hills.

The food is also on the expensive side compared to America. A McDonald's Big Mac meal costs around \$10. One peach is around \$5 and a small bunch of grapes goes for around \$8.

With these things in mind, I have no doubt that I will return to America much lighter than when I arrived.

And so, as I reflect upon the differences between my home country and the country of my dreams, I begin to feel a little homesick. Recognizing the things that make us different makes it clear how very far apart we are, even though we're sitting next to each other on the train.

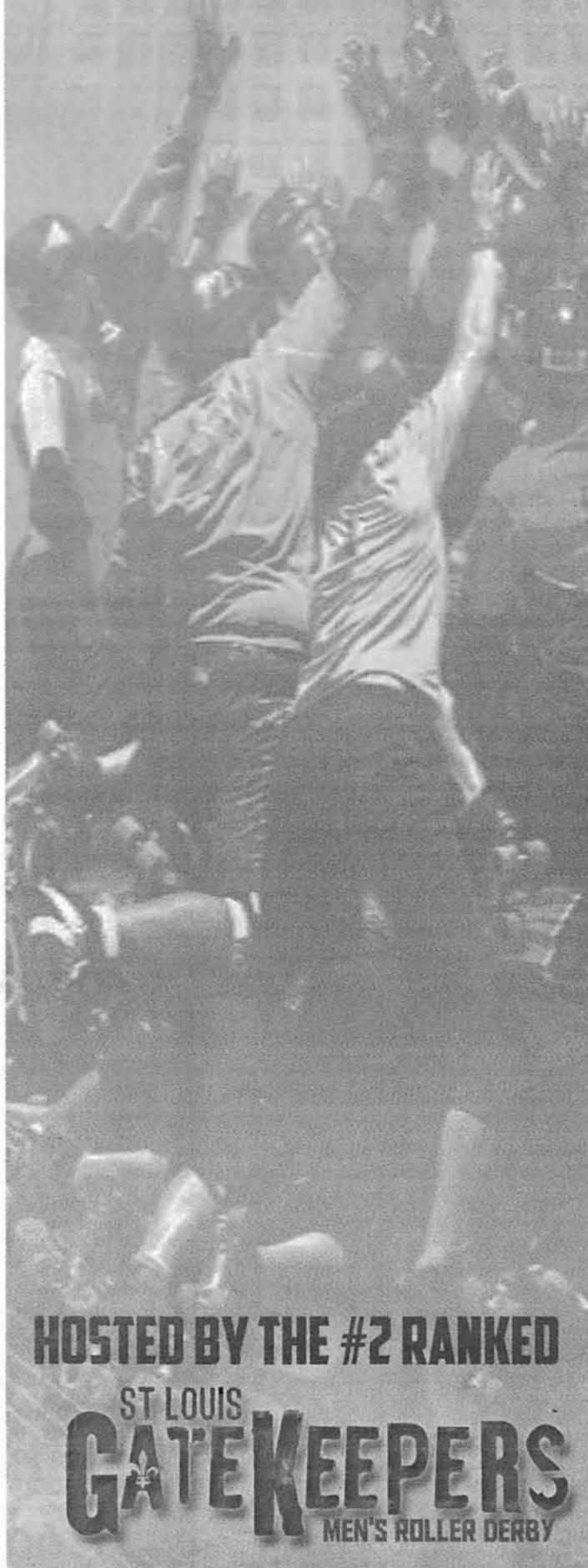


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20-21

# Comics

## JUST A COUPLE DRIFTERS

Christian Kessler



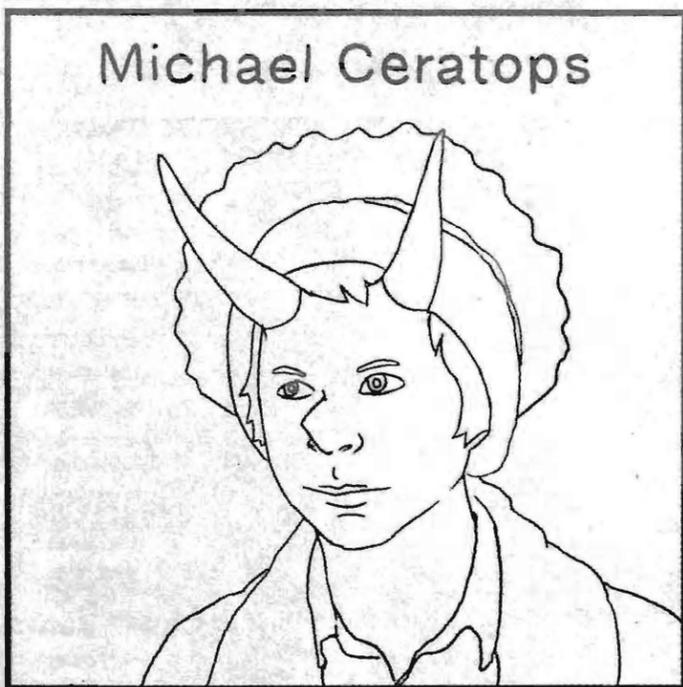
## MIXTAPE MUSE

Greg Hartl



## BRAIN DEAD

Zach McDaniel



## SIMPLY BEAGLE

Lee Sellars



No, Beagle, there is clearly no better use of anyone's time than reading the Current. Bad dog.—The Mgt.

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## CRYPTOGRAM

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