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University of Missouri-St. Louis

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The Current

WWW.THECURRENT-ONLINE.COM

Dec. 5, 2011

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VOL. 45;
ISSUE 1363

Happy Holidays from The Current



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The Current

VOL. 45, ISSUE 1363
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The Current accepts letters to the editor. All letters should be brief, and those not exceeding 250 words will be given preference. The Current edits letters for clarity and length, not for dialect, correctness, intent or grammar. All letters must be signed and must include a daytime phone number and, where applicable, student number. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to respond to and to deny any letters.

AFFILIATIONS



News

College websites increase in importance for prospective students while searching colleges

HALI FLINTROP
Staff Writer

The checklist used by students when shopping for an institution of higher education seems to have a new item creeping to the top of the list: their websites. As universities go online, letting their websites do the talking, which in turn causes the design and functionality of a university's website to play a large and ever increasing role in a student's decision to attend a particular university.

There are a lot of mistakes universities can make when designing their websites that can turn prospective students off rather than successfully attracting them. An Education News article entitled "Best Education Sites Shows Colleges That Rule the Web" reported that the vast majority of higher education websites feature bland colors, such as grey or black, while few feature gripping, aggressive colors such as red or innovative, original

colors like green or purple. Additionally, 94 percent of content throughout all higher education websites is in some type of "Sans" font, which can also be considered bland and not evocative.

The idea is that websites serve, in many ways, as a university's head of advertising—they can be the first contact a student has with a university. The issue is certainly more than just aesthetics such as color and font. The websites should be friendly, informative and easily navigable. If they are not, or do not at least provide other easy avenues through which a student can glean information about the university and get into contact with the university, the university runs the very real risk of discouraging students and turning them off just through their website.

A university's website is also often the most convenient channel of

exploration for a student; if it is too difficult for them to learn about and learn to love the university online, the student may not bother to look deeper into the university through other means and go elsewhere.

Education News also reported some ironic findings about very technology centered schools and their technologically backwards websites. "Of the top ten engineering schools, several have a hefty share of W3C errors — UC Berkeley is #4 and has 33 errors [...] The University of Phoenix — the undisputed leader in online education — has 198 errors in its CSS code, while the average for the top 400 university websites is around 40," Education News, said. Lackluster, poorly functioning websites would be especially crippling for technological universities, from whom students

would expect a website that not only functions but impresses.

Yet, web design is still not the only, or even the most important aspect of a university to consider. Hung Nguyen, freshman, chemistry and English, said that, when he was looking for schools, if it had been a strict contest of web design, the University of Missouri - St. Louis website sucks, and he would not even be here: other colleges win by far. "The website is one factor in many factors. It does make a difference because the information about the school and the ease for students of getting that information definitely shows how much a school cares and how prestigious it is, but a lot of schools may be small and under-budgeted and can be good schools without having the best website. The website plays a limited role. There's only so much a website can tell you," Nguyen said.

UMSL November Police Report

11/21 - 9:30 a.m. - UMSL Police responded to a report on West Drive. An UMSL employee reported that a mirror on a custodial vehicle was damaged while parked on West Drive.
 11/21 - 4:40 p.m. - UMSL Police responded to a report from an UMSL staff member about receiving a harassing telephone call from

an unknown individual. An ongoing investigation has begun.
 11/22 - 9:15 p.m. - UMSL Police responded to a report at the Mark Twain Gym. An UMSL student reported that a cell phone was stolen from his gym bag.
 11/25 - 11:16 p.m. - UMSL Police responded to a report at University

Meadows. A Resident Advisor reported an unknown person broke a window in his apartment, maintenance responded to board up the window until it could be replaced.
 11/26 - 10:15 p.m. - UMSL Police responded to a carbon monoxide detector sounding at the Zeta Tau Alpha house on

Natural Bridge Road. Fire Department determined a possible malfunction; maintenance was notified for a replacement.
 11/27 - 12:10 p.m. - UMSL Police responded to a report in Barnes Library that a sink and countertop had collapsed in a women's restroom. Maintenance was on the scene.

WEATHER



Susan Kendig takes charge of Missouri Task Force on Prematurity

Infant mortality rates and prematurity stats analyzed and reported in Missouri

MINHO JUNG

News Editor

Susan Kendig, associate teaching professor of nursing at the University of Missouri - St. Louis College of Nursing was recently appointed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon to the Missouri Task Force on Prematurity and Infant Mortality.

"By creating a statewide task force through legislation, the state of Missouri is making a strong statement about our commitment to the health and well-being of families in Missouri," Susan Kendig, associate teaching professor of nursing, UMSL, said. "The March of Dimes was instrumental in the creation of this Task Force and passage of this legislation, and they should be commended for their hard

work on this very important topic."

The Missouri Task Force was created through legislation passed by the General Assembly and then signed into law by Governor Jay Nixon. It is the state of Missouri's proactive approach to improving the health conditions of infants, children and their mothers, all of whom have been overlooked concerning the issues of prematurity and infant mortality. The ultimate goal of the program is to reduce Missouri's preterm birth and infant mortality rates any way it can.

"A premature birth is one that occurs before 38 weeks of pregnancy. Premature birth can lead to long-term health

problems and disabilities, such as developmental delays, chronic respiratory problems, vision problems, hearing problems, and other health issues. It is the leading cause of death among newborns in the U.S.," Kendig said.

According to Task Force on Prematurity and Infant Mortality, one of every eight babies is born prematurely and seven babies per 1,000 succumb to infant mortality in Missouri. In addition to humane issues, financial burdens are added to the state due to the issue of premature birth, regarding the fact that those premature babies are more likely to have developmental disabilities and other health problems.

According to the Missouri chapter of the March of Dimes, the rate of premature birth in Missouri is, unfortunately, slightly above the national average, which was measured at a rate of 12.1 percent in 2010.

"Nationally, approximately 11.9 percent of babies are born prematurely. In Missouri, approximately 12.2 percent of our babies are born prematurely," Kendig said. "We are striving to reduce this number to 9.6 percent by the year 2020. Some areas of Missouri, including pockets of St. Louis, have areas where prematurity and infant mortality rates are even higher than the national average."

Although the Missouri

Task Force cannot prevent every single occurrence of prematurity and infant mortality, it expects to be able to reduce the rate by discovering the main causes of the problem and providing methods of prevention to allow for more healthy pregnancies.

"The factors that affect prematurity and infant mortality are very complex, and we don't fully understand all of the factors that can contribute to these problems. For instance, some women may have medical problems before and during the pregnancy that can influence early delivery," Kendig said. "These can often be addressed if women obtain health care both before and during pregnancy to assure

that such conditions are managed and the woman is as healthy as possible."

The Missouri Task Force on Prematurity and Infant Mortality has been raising awareness of the issue through a variety of campaigns.

"I think that the first thing students can do to address this issue is to take care of their own health. Many of our students are of childbearing age and may already have families or be planning to start families in the near future," Kendig said. "So it is important for us to take charge of our health, be aware of health issues that can affect pregnancy outcome, and make lifestyle choices that help us to be as healthy as possible."

The UNDERCURRENT

by Jarred Gastreich

"What methods do you use to study for finals?"



"I tend to wait until the night before the test, read over my notes, freak out a bit, then go to bed at a decent time."

Kristin Blum
Senior
Graphic Design



"I take a nap in the evening so that I can stay up until the morning. It's not easy to study during the day when you work."

Becky Obenhaus
Senior
Graphic Design



"I get distracted very easily, so study groups help me a lot. Flash cards are a necessity for art history."

Emily Gogel
Junior
Graphic Design

Undergrad student research program available this spring

Research Teams Initiative to be enacted; communication research project boom expected spring '12

BADIA EAD
Staff Writer

The Department of Communication hopes to begin the Research Teams Initiative, designed to promote student participation in communication research at the graduate and undergraduate level, as early as spring 2012.

"The idea is to have a small group of undergraduate students working together on a project that will develop their research skills. In collaboration with a graduate student in communication, the undergraduates would develop research questions and select appropriate methods to test them," Dr. Alan Heisel, associate professor, chairperson, department of communication, said.

Although student teams will conduct the research study, Heisel says that faculty will provide guidance at all stages.

"Faculty will oversee the process to insure viability and to facilitate project approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approved, the research team will collect data, conduct preliminary analyses and draw conclusions about the research questions (...) The research team will be expected to present their findings to the faculty when the project is complete," Heisel said.

Heisel says that because UMSL does not have a doctoral program in communication, faculty can at least give promising students a chance to cultivate their talents and compete at any institution. The Research

Teams Initiative provides many benefits and opportunities for undergraduate students.

"For a student who thinks he or she might want to go on to graduate school, having a research-project under your belt is a huge asset. A student who participates in a research team project might end up presenting their findings at the Undergraduate Research Symposium here on campus, at a professional conference or, in some cases, publishing their study in a peer-reviewed journal," Heisel said.

There have always been opportunities for undergraduate students to participate through supervised research, and those opportunities are usually through a course designed for credit. But there have been drawbacks.

"Over the years, this approach has been successful, providing many students with a great opportunity to work one-on-one with faculty on research projects. Unfortunately, the number of projects that faculty can oversee is limited, and many students never knew that it might be an option," Heisel said.

The Research Teams Initiative does not offer credit.

"Because the course would not be considered part of the regular teaching load, anyone working with the research teams would be donating their time and talent. At a point when everyone is being asked to do more with less, I think that

this is something students should know," Heisel said. But participation in The Research Teams Initiative by undergraduate students could be invaluable.

"These types of achievements open doors and present opportunities. Don't underestimate the value of applying the scientific method to communication—it will inevitably develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills," Heisel said.

Students who intend to take part in the initiative will eventually be required to complete COMM 3330: Communication Research Methods I as a prerequisite, but initially, undergraduate students will be chosen by recommendations and student interest.

"For the pilot, recommendations from the undergraduate research faculty will identify students who excelled in the course and invite them to participate. Of course, it never hurts to express an interest. There is a level of competence we want, but motivation has a lot to do with student potential," Heisel said.

Heisel says what the project will look like remains to be seen, but he has high hopes.

"Of course, we hope that participating on the research team will be viewed as the same type of achievement as being inducted in Lambda Pi Eta (the UMSL chapter of the Honor Society of the National Communication Association)," Heisel said.

NEWS @ NOON
12:15-1:30PM
SGA CHAMBERS

FALL 2011 TOPICS & DATES

NOVEMBER 2nd-
The Results Are In: Census Numbers Mean BIG Changes for MO
Dr. William E. Winter
THIS SESSION CO-SPONSORED BY THE POLITICAL SCIENCE ACADEMY!

DECEMBER 7th-
Homeless in the City
Dr. Margaret Sherraden

FREE FOOD & PRIZES

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THE CURRENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER
THE NEW YORK TIMES
THE CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

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PublicRadio
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A Service of The University of Missouri—St. Louis

Scott Perkins accepts National Alliance on Mental Illness of Southwestern Missouri's Excellence in Government Award

ALADEEN KLONOWSKI
Staff Writer

In Missouri, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for people between the ages of ten and 53, according to the Missouri Department of Mental Health. Of these age ranges, the highest hospitalization rate is for 15 to 19-year-olds. In the United States, nearly six times as many men as women between 20 and 24 die by suicide, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, and about 11 nonfatal suicide attempts occur for every death.

Compared to the highest suicide rate, Lithuania with 31.5 percent in 2009, and one of the lowest

rates, Jordan with 1.1 percent in 2009; so the US falls somewhere near the middle. The suicide rate in the United States was 11.84 per 100,000 in 2008.

Scott Perkins is working to change those statistics. As the project director of the Missouri Suicide Prevention Project he recently received the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Southwestern Missouri's Excellence in Government Award. The Missouri Suicide Prevention Project is a collaboration of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health at the University of Missouri –

St. Louis and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

The Missouri Suicide Prevention Project "has trained over 50,000 people to serve as 'gatekeepers' in their communities and help recognize persons at risk of suicide and refer them to help," Scott Perkins, Project Director, Missouri Institute of Mental Health, said. "When a friend or loved one is suicidal, it is important to involve others and not try to handle everything. Even when you are concerned about someone, it's impossible to be there around the clock to look out for them. It

really needs to be a team effort, bringing in others such as friends or family members, a counselor and clergy."

According to The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 90 percent of people who die by suicide have a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric disorder. Training people to recognize warning signs is a logical step toward prevention.

NAMI's Excellence in Government Award is given "to the individual or group who has contributed to the positive advancement of the mentally ill through

support of legislation efforts, developing new program or improving access to treatment – and for all his efforts in the suicide prevention project over the years, we felt it most appropriate that Scott should receive this award," Denise Mills, president, National Alliance on Mental Illness St. Louis chapter, said. "Since 2008, this state-wide program has helped thousands of individuals learn the warning signs and ways to assist someone in crisis. In addition to offering free gatekeeper training on suicide prevention, [Perkins] encourages other services such as educational

presentations, depression screenings and support groups for survivors."

Suicide and its warning signs should not be faced alone. There is a lot of information on the internet and it can be overwhelming to those unprepared for such an intense subject. If you are worried about someone in your life, a good place to start looking for help and information can be at a community or state level so you can see what your neighbors are doing to help prevent suicide. For more information on the Missouri Suicide Prevention Project, they can be found on Facebook.

The Nosh

UMSL
DINING
presents:

sodexo

STUDENT CHOICE MENUS

Build Your Own Pasta Bowl

Build Your Own Rice Bowl

AM All Day

Chicagoland

Kansas City BBQ

Fajita Bar

Philly Cheesesteak Bar

Taco Bar

Fish Fry

January 17th through the 27th students can vote on food choices for next semester. The top 5 selections will be ran throughout the Spring semester. This is your chance to have a say in what you eat so don't miss out on this opportunity! We'll post individual menus in the MSC so you can see what will be on each menu!

sodexo

Vote on facebook at [facebook.com/SodexoUMSL](https://www.facebook.com/SodexoUMSL)

The Nosh

What's Current

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.



A reproduction of Da Vinci's invention, the pulley system, is on display at the Da Vinci Machines Exhibit in downtown St. Louis.

NIKKI VAHLE / THE CURRENT

Tuesday, December 6

Mass and soup

From 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Located at the Catholic Newman Center and open to all. Every Tuesday we have 5:30 p.m. Mass here at the Newman Center in our living room. All are welcome. We are a friendly group and would love to see you. The Mass is very relaxing, so you should check it out if you need some quality time with God. Also, we have a simple but delicious meal of homemade soup and bread available after Mass. For more information, call Rachelle Simon at 314-385-5455.

Wednesday, December 7

Getting to know grants

From 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Located in 229 JC Penney Building and open to faculty/staff. There will be a review of the financial reports in PeopleSoft Web Applications that should be used for grants. We would also like to introduce our newest staff members, as well as give you an update on other chances in our office. For more information, call Karen Boyd at 314-516-5923.

Monday, December 12

Study party

From 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Located in the MSC Century Rooms and open to all. With finals coming up, life is getting more and more stressful. The last thing you should have to worry about is where you or your group will study. Come join UPB for four hours of study madness! During this event, two Century Rooms will be reserved (one for quiet study and one for group study). These rooms will be joined in the middle by a snack bar with free snacks promoting brain power and concentration. For more information, call Scott Morrissey at 314-516-5531.

Thursday, December 8

Tai Chi Qigong practice

From 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. Located in 202 JC Penney Center and open to UMSL. This Qigong session is a blending of meditation, breathing and slow, fluid movements incorporated into a 30-minute set with an emphasis on the breathing. The practice is free and open to all UMSL faculty, staff and students. It is suitable for people of all sizes, ages and fitness levels. No previous experience or special clothing is needed. For more information, call Linda Gatson at 314-516-5091.

Friday, December 9

IC short course - file management

Starts at 11:00 a.m. Located in SSB 202 and open to UMSL. This course is designed to teach you the basic beginning steps of how to organize, save and access your files on a Windows-based PC that may be required for classes, your job or your own computing purposes. Topics Included: Organizing Windows Live Email, backing up data, properly organizing files and folders, etc. For more information, contact Instructional Computing Staff.

A&E



George Clooney as Matt King, Shailene Woodley as Alexandra and Amara Miller as Scottie in "THE DESCENDANTS."

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX SEARCHLIGHT

'The Descendants' is trouble in paradise and headed for Oscar

CATE MARQUIS
A&E Editor

George Clooney gives the best performances of his career in "The Descendants," a drama/comedy from "Sideways" writer/director Alexander Payne about a Hawaiian family. The film is the leading contender to win big in Oscar gold.

George Clooney stars as Matt King, a man coping with caring for his two daughters after a boating accident puts his wife in a coma. At the same time, King's family is debating selling a large chunk of land they inherited as descendants of both Hawaiian royalty and American missionaries.

As Clooney's Matt tells us near the film's start, living in a beautiful place like Hawaii

does not mean their lives are untouched by life's tragedy - cancer, poverty, trash and urban decay.

"The Descendants" features very real people in real-life situations. Like "Sideways," situations that sound like pure drama often have absurd, even comic elements, just as they do in real life.

Matt King describes himself as the "back-up parent," who concentrated on his law practice while leaving the raising of their two daughters to his wife.

Things in Matt's family had not been going well even before the accident. Rebellious 17-year-old daughter Alex (Shailene Woodley) had been sent off to a boarding school, while ten-year-old Scottie (Amara Miller) has become

increasingly sassy and difficult. Meanwhile Matt and his wife have drifted apart, with Elizabeth spending much of her time engaged in risky sport activities.

In fact, the film opens with footage of Patricia Hastie as Elizabeth King reveling in the thrill of a speedboat ride, creating an image of an active risk-taker that lingers in the mind throughout the film.

While King is coping with his personal tragedy, he is faced with resolving a thorny land issue. King's extended family are the descendants of a Hawaiian princess, one of the last descendants of the great King Kamehameha, and the son of American missionaries. The family holds in a joint trust the last

big parcel of undeveloped Hawaiian land but changes in the law are forcing them to sell.

Their parcel of land represents the largest, last remaining piece of undeveloped land in the islands. Since it is the legacy of Hawaiian royalty, everyone he meets seems to feel they have the right to tell Matt what the King family ought to do with it.

The American missionaries and Hawaiian royalty story is a central one in Hawaii history. While the film alludes to it briefly, mostly this is a more personal story of this family.

Elizabeth's coma reveals some unpleasant facts about her, setting Matt off on a quest for answers with Scottie, Alex and Alex's stoner friend Sid (Nick

Krause) in tow.

The story has the absurdity that real life often has, where tragedy is no shield against the intrusion of banal problems. It is the total believability of Matt and his daughters and their relationship that makes this film work as both drama and comedy.

Like "Sideways," this story is peppered with colorful characters and wonderful performances. Elizabeth's doting, combative elderly father (Robert Forster) clearly resents Matt, while his daughter could do no wrong. Beau Bridges is marvelous as Matt's cousin Hugh, a long-haired man in a flowered shirt whose laid-back manner conceals a more calculating mind.

Of course, the physical

world around them is gorgeous, as is the polished cinematography. If this film does not make you long to visit Hawaii, it is not clear what would.

"The Descendants" is filled with great performances and features a great script. But what will really stick with viewers is how real these people are and the unexpected humor and touching moments in this wholly real-world story. The story has lessons of both sticking together as a family and being true to oneself, wrapped in the most charming and appealing of packages. There could hardly be a better film for a season that brings families together.

Grade: A

Looking for that special word? Try “Word Power” or “Wageslave’s Glossary”

ALADEEN KLONOWSKI

Staff Writer

The books “The Wageslave’s Glossary” by Joshua Glenn and Mark Kingwell and “Word Power” by John Fleming would be excellent additions to the coffee tables of writers, philosophers, politicians and satirists alike.

Together they effectively represent what a collection of defined words can say about not only the author, but the purchaser of the book as well.

“Word Power” is not the kind of book a person reads from cover to cover for pleasure but it is a book that will remain useful long after one has made it through any Judi Picoult novel. A writer looking for inspiration need only thumb through Fleming’s “dictionary of fascinating and learned words and phrases” to find a concept worth exploring. It would also make for excellent kaffeeklatsch, a German word that means “conversation over coffee.” Every person should be concerned with expanding their vocabulary, and this 232-page collection of oddities will make doing so much more interesting than flipping through the goliath that is the Oxford English Dictionary.

The only complaint this reviewer has is that “Word Power” does not give the various parts of speech that

a word may function as. This may frustrate English majors in particular. When dealing with a defined word from another language, it is helpful to know its uses.

“Everybody knows a brown-noser when they see one. But how about a freeter? A jack? Can they tell downsizing from greybearding or brightsizing?” reads a blurb on the back of “The Wage Slave’s Glossary.”

Did you know glossaries could possess political leanings? If you are feeling put out by the economy or your personal daily grind, pull this book out of the back of your desk drawer and have a laugh at Glenn and Kingwell. With startling satire and a plethora of pop culture references from Star Wars to Pink Floyd, this glossary is sure to entertain.

“The Wage Slave’s Glossary” suffers from the same downfall as “Word Power” in that it does not give the parts of speech, but it seems to take itself much less seriously. A few of the entries feel more like anecdotes than definitions so if you are looking for the cold, clipped language usually present in a glossary, you will not find it here. It also does not have pronunciation key.

“Word Power” will let you know that when you

are wishing there were two of you this year at the Christmas party, one to get all the presents and one to deal with the “when I was your age, I’d already graduated,” your double would be called your “doppelganger.”

Alternately, if you would like to impress you dad with corporate jargon that will utterly befuddle him into not asking about your job market prospects as a communications major, you might throw out a sentence such as, “Due to a great number of my predecessors in the field of communications f***ing the dog, not to mention incredible improvements to the technological aspects of the job market, not to mention the massively growing army of freelancers taking over the positions once held by full-timers, at far below flint rates demanded by those of us with degrees, my chances would seem slim, although I certainly do not intend to spend this time in funemployment.”

If you or a loved one is a lexophile, or lover of cryptic words according to urbandictionary.com, then these two books would make great stocking stuffers.

Grade: B

LATEST + GREATEST

OPENING FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9:

THE SITTER (everywhere)

- A comedy starring Jonah Hill as a college student pressed into service as a babysitter. Also stars Sam Rockwell.

NEW YEAR’S EVE (everywhere)

- An ensemble cast of stars, weaving various NYC stories of New Year’s Eve in the style of last year’s “Valentine’s Day.” Stars Sarah Jessica Parker, Jessica Beil and Ashton Kutcher. Directed by Garry Marshall.

PASSIONE: A MUSICAL ADVENTURE (Tivoli)

- A fanciful, playful documentary, narrated by actor John Turturro, about the musical heritage of Naples, Italy.

OPENING FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16:

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE: GHOST PROTOCOL (IMAX screens only; opens everywhere 12/21)

- Tom Cruise continues his action heroics in this new installment of his spy/ action series, whose title derives from a clever ‘60s spy TV show. Also stars Jeremy Renner.

SHERLOCK: A GAME OF SHADOWS (everywhere)

- The second re-imagined Sherlock Holmes tale, starring Robert Downey Jr. as Holmes and Jude Law as Watson, from director Guy Ritchie.

YOUNG ADULT (everywhere)

- Comedy from “Juno” scriptwriter Diablo Cody and director Jason Reitman about a hard-drinking writer of young adult series novels (Charlize Theron) returns to her small home town bent on rekindling a romance with her high school boyfriend (Patrick Wilson), who is now married and with a new baby.

OPENING DECEMBER 21-25:

THE GIRL WITH A DRAGON TATTOO (everywhere)

- David Fincher directs this English-language re-make of hit Scandinavian thrillers, based on bestselling books. Stars Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara.

TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY (everywhere)

- Adaptation of John LeCarre’s complex bestselling Cold War spy thriller, already a big hit in Britain. Gary Oldman heads up an all-star British cast including Colin Firth, Tom Hardy, John Hurt, Toby Jones

WAR HORSE (everywhere)

- Steven Spielberg presents a young adult tale of a poor British boy and his horse against the backdrop of World War I. Stars Benedict Cumberbatch, Tom Hiddleston,

THE ARTIST (everywhere)

- A clever, entertaining mix of action, comedy, romance and old movie tricks, in a story about a silent movie action-comedy star resisting the change to sound films. Starring John Goodman and (who previously spoofed James Bond) and shot on location in old Hollywood.

THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN: SECRET OF THE UNICORN (everywhere)

- Spielberg’s second holiday offering is a rollicking animated version of the classic Tin Tin comics, that plays a bit like a kid’s Indiana Jones.

IN THE LAND OF BLOOD AND HONEY (everywhere)

- This Angelina Jolie-directed film about the Bosnian war caused much uproar during filming. A Serbian man and Bosnian woman once attracted to each other meet again during the war.

For more reviews go to:
www.thecurrent-online.com

Tyrese returns to his first love with 'Open Invitation'

ENDEA WILBERT
Staff Writer

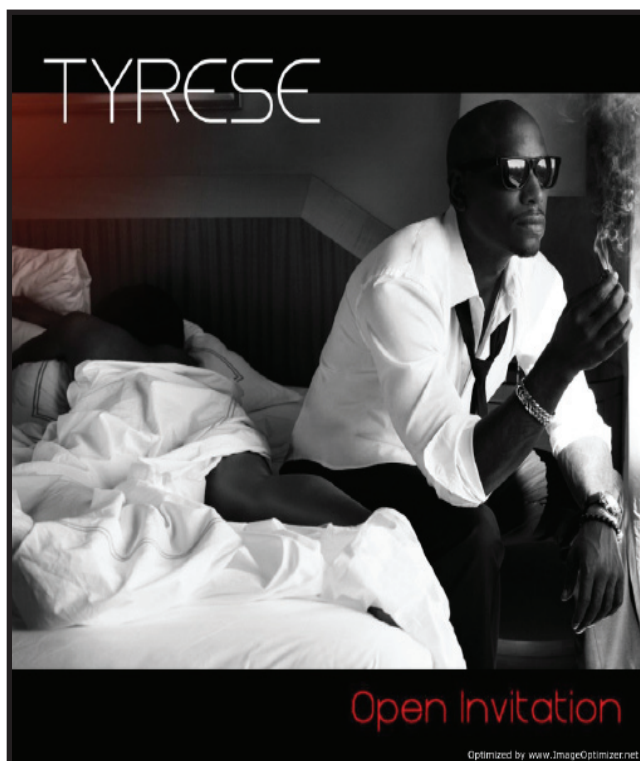
After a five-year break, Grammy-nominated musician Tyrese has returned to his first love with his latest album, "Open Invitation."

Tyrese is now considered a triple threat after veering away from music to pursue and dominate in acting and modeling. He starred in films such as "2 Fast 2 Furious" and "Transformers." Tyrese took his career to new heights with his self-help book titled "How to Get Out of Your Own Way," and he is now a New York Times bestselling author. One might think there was no time for Tyrese to put together such a masterpiece with his busy schedule. However, on track eight of "Open Invitation," Tyrese boasts, "I make it look too easy," a statement that the triple threat has earned the right to make.

With "Open Invitation" being the first album released on his own label, Voltron Records, Tyrese was determined to pour his heart and soul out on each record.

"Open Invitation" debuted in the top ten of Billboard's top 200 album chart this week and is also the number one R&B album on iTunes and the number two R&B album in the country. Tyrese announces he is back on the first track, "I'm Home." He gives his appreciation to his fans at the end of the song, stating, "I just want to say thank you to all my fans who kept my music alive. You never gave your heart away to anybody else. I just appreciate you. I'm here to stay, I'm home."

For the rest of the album Tyrese shows that



uncompromising music can still be made and that 'love songs' are not dead. He returns to his roots of soulful, heartfelt melodies with tracks such as "Stay," "Nothing on You" and "Best of Me." However, it is track 13, "Angel," produced by R. Kelly, that Tyrese's emotions and sincerity are poured out the most and it feels like the 1990s again, when artists actually sang their hearts out about something meaningful. Tyrese shows his sensual side with tracks such as "One Night" and "Make Love" and proves to younger artists that their lyrics do not have to be lewd to be accepted or appreciated by listeners.

To make the album appeal to people who enjoy more upbeat tempos or "club bangers," the album has tracks such as "I Gotta Chick" (Rick Ross) and "Too Easy" (Ludacris). The album ends with a poetry piece titled "Walk," in

which Tyrese gives reverence to God and thanks him for his many blessings. He also says a prayer for his listeners, praying that they embrace change and walk into the "unfamiliar." He states that "faith is climbing invisible stairs," encouraging his listeners to have faith in their dreams, no matter how things may seem. "Walk" was a different type of inspiration and it is no wonder that his self-help book has done so well.

"Open Invitation" is an album that you can put in, press play and listen to the whole way through. There are no fluff or filler tracks that some artists add just to get a full album. Each record exudes the hard work that Tyrese has put into it. Tyrese openly invites us to experience a piece of him and it is an invitation worth accepting.

Grade: A

Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill bring "Celtic Festival" to Touhill

DAVID VON NORDHEIM
Staff Writer

On Saturday, November 19, the Irish dance and folk music community of St. Louis showcased the centuries-strong musical tradition of the Celtic culture with an exceptional performance at the Touhill Performing Arts Center.

The Celtic Festival concert, sponsored by University of Missouri's Center for International Studies and arranged by St. Louis' Irish Arts, featured virtuoso fiddle player and world-renowned folk musician Martin Hayes and equally gifted guitarist Dennis Cahill in a truly breathtaking performance. The concert also included an impressive ensemble of the center's gifted students and alumni of Irish Arts.

Although it would have been a rewarding experience to see musicians of this caliber under any circumstances, the dedication of these performers in sharing their rich heritage offered a unique perspective to the Touhill's expanding roster of world music performances. It provided an experience that was educating, entertaining and truly exhilarating.

The dramatically different approaches these performers took in exploring the musical heritage of their collective cultural history presented a stirring exploration of the richness and depth of traditional Irish music.

The evening's first performance, featuring a talented troupe of

musicians and dancers from Irish Arts, was the more formal and traditional of the performances, as evidenced by both the impressive coordination of dance and music and the remarkable skill and reserve of the performers. The company included several generations of performers in its numbers (and even an UMSL professor), who wove through several beautiful compositions featuring the fiddle, kettle drum, accordion and more alongside impeccably choreographed interludes of traditional step dancing. The performance had the same air of kinship and familiarity as an impromptu talent show at a family gathering, becoming a heartfelt testimony to the endurance of the Irish culture miles from its native source.

By comparison, Hayes and Cahill's performance was a much more casual affair but no less stunning. Hayes, a fixture in the Celtic folk music community and a legend in his native Ireland, was an absolute spectacle. Taking to his fiddle with a biblical fury, he burned through brilliantly arranged medleys of traditional Irish tunes and folk songs. Accompanied by Cahill on the guitar, Hayes demonstrated a truly jaw-dropping mastery of his instrument. He showcased the uniquely improvisation-heavy bent of his performance, a rarity in most traditional Celtic music.

The same applies to Cahill who, although humbly resigned to his supporting role, practiced a fascinating, minimalistic finger-picked guitar style that allowed him complete control over the minutest sound of every string. His insistence on pitch perfection became a running joke during the performance as Hayes ribbed Cahill for his obsessive and methodical tuning between pieces, warning the audience that Cahill's parallel parking was just as neurotic.

Hayes was nothing short of a delight. Like the most gifted of performers, Celtic or otherwise, he has a warm, bubbly personality always handy with a quip or anecdote for lulls in the performance. These included a great anecdote about performing for the president ("Although I have nothing but respect for the man's leadership qualities, he'd best leave the Irish dancing to the professionals") which inspired his original composition "Reel for Barack Obama."

As Hayes name-checked St. Louis' premier Irish pubs between pieces to the audiences' cheers and laughter, it was clear that this County Clare native found a home away from home on Missouri River soil. It was truly as powerful a testament to the strength and importance of the Celtic tradition as the concert itself.

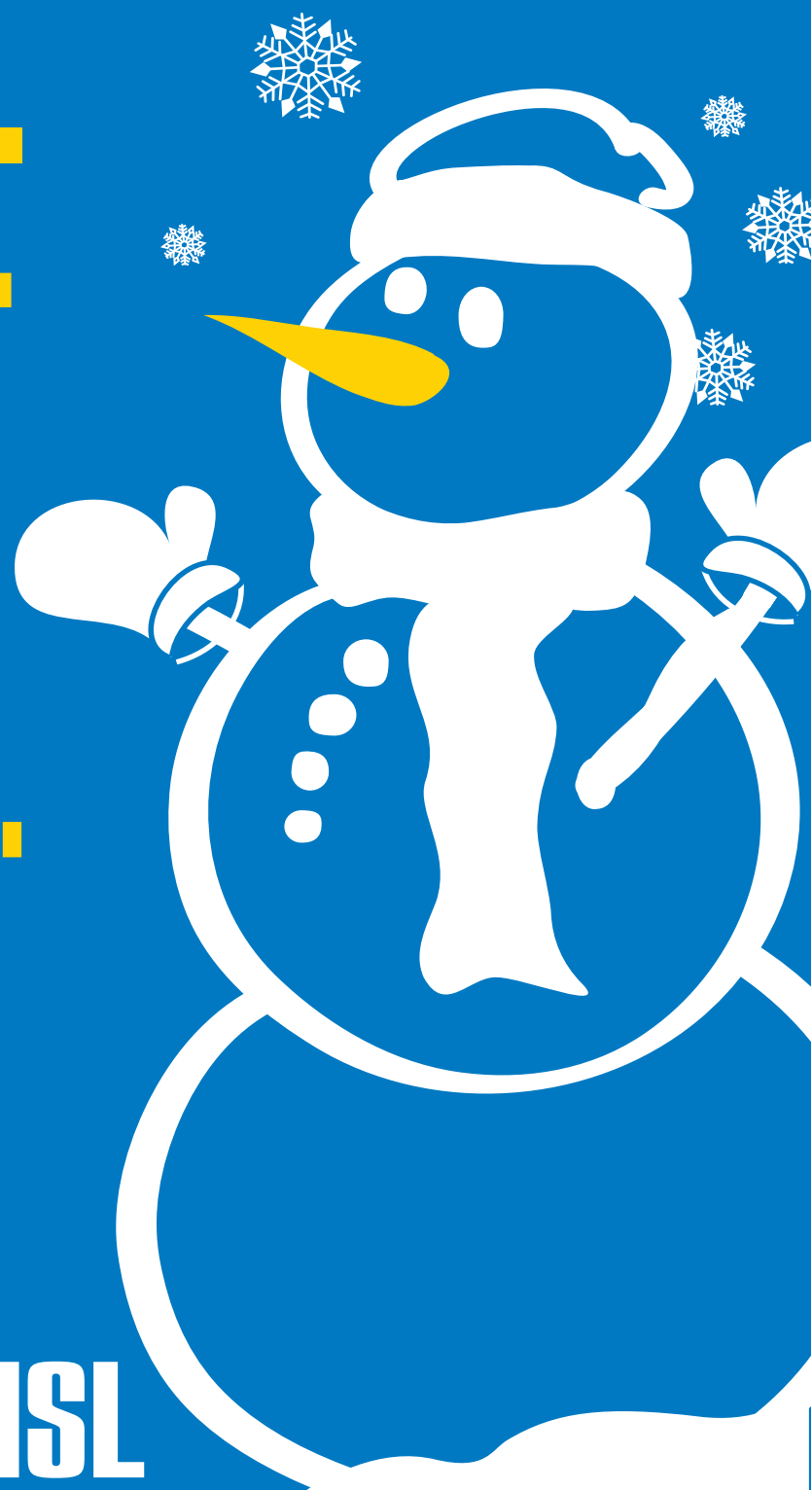
Grade: B+

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Wale impresses fans with second album, "Ambition"

OWEN SHROYER
Sports Editor

It has been two years since Wale debuted his hip-hop career with "Attention Deficit," which left fans anxious for Wale to get back in the studio. His first album created a large buzz, and he changed his record label to Maybach Music Group and Warner Brothers Records for his second album release, "Ambition."

"Ambition" was released on November 1. It peaked at number one in the United States on both the Billboard Top R&B/Hip Hop and Top Rap Albums, and number two on the Billboard 200.

The only single from the album, "Lotus Flower Bomb," was released October 21. "Lotus Flower Bomb," featuring Miguel, is an intimate, smooth R&B song with high vocals from Miguel as the refrain and Wale rapping lyrics of seduction in the chorus. It is an interesting choice for the single, as Wale is not known for his sexy R&B. It is also surprising as it does not represent the album all that well, since there is only one similar song on the album, "Illest Bitch," which features only Wale's vocals.

The true feel of the album is consistent with what Wale provided with attention deficit, defiant arrogance. The first song on the album is entitled "Don't Hold Your Applause." It is a solid opening song for the album, letting listeners know Wale is sticking to his style and attitude, as he says "Don't ever hold your applause for me" as a woman's voice is played high over a snare drum. The song even features the lyric "no days off," which was Wale's motto during the recording of "Ambition."

The second track of the song is "Double M Genius," again suggesting Wale's arrogance. He opens the song by saying, "I'm trying to tell them that I am one of the best thinkers of this class I'm in." Then producers Mark Henry and EhDuhStreatZ drop a fat beat for Wale to rap over one of the best songs on the album.

Wale continues the pattern of getting huge names to be featured on his albums, with Rick Ross on two songs, Ne-Yo, Lloyd and Kid Cudi all featured on "Ambition." Rick Ross is featured on the song

"Ambition," which may be the best song on the album. If there is any example of inspired rap music, this is it. This song is smooth, but goes hard. Wale's ambition indeed shows.

Anytime hip-hop fans see the name of familiar artist Kid Cudi on a track, they get excited. No doubt Cudi and Wale deliver with "Focused." This is the first time Wale and Kid Cudi had been in a studio together to record a track since 2009 for Kid Cudi's debut album "Is There Any Love." After a falling out, the two put their differences behind them and got back together to make a great track. "Focused" has huge bass, with a solid hip-hop groove. This song, in a way, perfectly personifies Wale and Cudi's feelings, showing that they are on top of the hip-hop world right now, and they "gotta keep at it, gotta stay focused."

Wale has truly made himself a stable in the hip-hop world with this album. He is good to his fans, and dedicated to his work. Expect to be hearing the name Wale a lot more in the hip-hop/R&B/rap world.

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(L-R) Justin Fuller as Joe Harper, Tom McKierman as Tom Sawyer and Robbie Tann as Huckleberry Finn in The Rep's 'Adventures of Tom Sawyer'

©PHOTO BY ERIC WOOLSEY

Rep's 'Adventure of Tom Sawyer' captures fun of Twain boyhood

CATE MARQUIS
A&E Editor

Mark Twain's remembrance of his Missouri boyhood, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," remains an entertaining adventure tale for both adults and children. Despite the passage of time, Twain completely captured the sense of childhood in many ways. What child, or adult recalling childhood, sulking after some rebuke, would not relish the fantasy of disappearing for a few days and having the whole neighborhood looking for us. Reappearing at one's own funeral to tearful embraces only caps the triumph.

"The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," playwright Laura Eason's energetic adaptation of Twain's classic, is the Repertory Theater of St. Louis' current Mainstage production

through December 23.

In recent years, the Rep has presented musicals for its holiday production. Thankfully, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" is not a musical but a clever, high-spirited play. There is no need to interrupt Twain's humor and adventure tale with unnecessary songs of questionable merit.

Childhood fun and adventure are the themes of this delightful production. The play draws from the timelessness of childhood, with the characters played as real people rather than stiff nostalgic icons. The naturalness makes the story more contemporary and the production more lively.

The play opens with a narrator, Joseph Adams, quoting Twain on his intention to entertain both

children and adults. Adams appears in costume as one of the story's characters, rather than as Twain, and returns periodically to help the story along and sprinkle in more of Twain's humor.

Tom Sawyer (Tim McKiernan) has inadvertently whiled away the school day swimming - again - his small Missouri town on the banks of the Mississippi. Rushing to arrive home with the other kids after school he encounters his friend Huck Finn (Robbie Tann), a ragged social outcast who does not bother with school, and new girl in town Becky Thatcher (Hayley Treider), who floors Tom at first sight - at least as long as none of the other boys are watching. Tom races home to Aunt Polly (Nance Williamson) and his too-good brother Sid (Nate Trinrud)

hoping to conceal that he has spent the day playing hooky.

All three actors in the lead roles of Tom, Huck and Becky bring considerable fun and energy to their characters. They spring to life as everyday kids, capturing boys' timeless interest gross stuff and every kid's imaginative play and sense of adventure. McKiernan's Tom is full of bravura and a confidence in his ability to talk his way out of every difficulty. Tann's Huck is a charming urchin, full of folk lore about curing warts as he willingly follows Tom's lead. But Tann's Huck also has a melancholy undercurrent of awareness of evil unfamiliar to the more sheltered Tom. Treider plays Becky with a wide-eyed sweetness that makes her character irresistible.

Apart from Tom, Huck and

Becky, the rest characters are played by an ensemble cast in multiple roles. The story's villain, the resentful, vengeful Injun Joe is played with great stage presence by Michael D. Nichols, who also plays the teacher and the preacher with delicious humor. Besides serving as narrator, Joseph Adams plays bad-luck drunk Muff Potter and other towns people. Justin Fuller plays Tom's less daring pal Joe Harper and Nate Trinrud plays ill-fated Doc Robinson in addition to Sid and various others.

The play is fast-paced and delightfully entertaining as directed by Jeremy B. Cohen. Scenic designer Daniel Ostling's moveable, pared-down set serves as everything from the white-washed wall, to the graveyard, to two story houses with a series of

moving walls and suspended windows. One of the cleverest pieces of staging is for the church scenes, where the cast sits among large prop dolls anchored to the benches serving as pews. The cast members operate the dolls like puppets, nodding heads or leaning into each other or away to whisper gossip. The effect is both funny and effective.

"The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" is a fine choice for family fun, enjoyable for adults and kids alike. The play is presented at the Loretto Hilton Theater on the Webster University campus, 130 Edgar Road in Webster Groves. Their website www.repstl.org has information on student discounts, rush tickets and show times.

Grade: B+

Jim Brickman “Holiday Celebration” concert kicks off season of cheer at Touhill Performing Arts Center

ASHLEY ATKINS

Features Editor

Over the weekend, while college students were still recovering from the mental drain of Black Friday or working off the extra calories from a fantastic Thanksgiving feast, Jim Brickman decided to grace the elegant stage of the Anhesuer Busch Theatre in the Blanche Touhill Performing Arts Center. He was not alone in the premiere of his 2011 “Holiday Celebration” tour, for he also brought along his closest friends and guests, Anne Cochran, Tracy Silverman and ex-NFL and Super Bowl champion Ben Utecht.

Attendees from all of St. Louis came to the event on November 26, taking up over half of the Millennium Student Center parking lot at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. According to the Weather Channel, this was of the coldest nights of the week with a drop in temperature, rain, and possible snow, but that did not keep “Brickheads” away from this get-together. A get-together is a perfect way to describe such an event to which families came to bask in the glory of the Christmas spirit.

While waiting for the show to start, the audience had their own private discussions in the hallways and took advantage of the beverage bar and the souvenir table. Some guests were so excited for the show that they did not dare leave their assigned seating.

As the lights began to flicker to warn lingering guests that the show was about to start, DJ Cindy Collins of Oldies 103.3 FM appeared on the stage in her festive red to commence the start of the show. Not hiding her own appreciation for the upcoming artist who has graced the Touhill stage on various occasions,

she called out to her fellow Brickheads, who cheered her in recognition. Brickman walked into the spotlight that was waiting for him at the corner of the stage, took a seat at his black Yamaha piano and, with a single spot beaming down on him from the top of the stage, began to play.

He played a couple of known Christmas tunes before introducing his longtime friend Tracy Silverman and his one-of-a-kind yellow six-string electric violin. Silverman, a true showman, started off modest in his playing, then made the switch to rockstar violinist. The men in the crowd who may have been uncertain about their attendance at the performance were suddenly struck speechless as Silverman incorporated a bit of rock music into the Christmas songs. Occasionally, he did a little jig with his leg. An older gentleman in the front row threw up the metal sign. If not for a planned set list, it is certain that Silverman would have had no problem morphing the Christmas celebration into a celebration of rock gods.

As focus returned to Jim Brickman and the celebration of the season, he introduced his second guest, Anne Cochran. An established singer herself, Cochran and Brickman had gotten their start together by winning a song contest in their hometown when they were in high school together. Taking a stroll down memory lane, Brickman said that when he saw her perform at a tender age, he knew that she would be the perfect female addition to his one-man act. They have been co-writing together since.

Cochran showed her true colors after intermission when she had a vocal



Jim Brickman played at the Blanche Touhill Performing Arts Center on November 26. Photo courtesy of Jim Brickman

showdown with Ben Utecht. It was hysterical watching both artists fight over how they should end the Christmas mash up. They made sure to get the audience involved, which gained more applause on their behalf. Ex-NFL player Utecht surprised the crowd with his vocal strength. It was not the voice one would expect from an athlete. But if athletes can

dance, why can't they sing? Cochran and Utecht's best stage collaboration was to the song “Noel,” when Cochran appeared wearing all white, exposing a sense of elegance. Her style complimented the white drapery on stage that gave the viewer an illusion of a bedroom or dream world. Multicolored lighting flickered in the background and changed colors with

each different Christmas song. The overall set was relaxing to look at.

One of the best parts of the show was when Brickman talked about his inspirations as a young pianist, which was followed by a demonstration of popular childhood songs such as “It is Hard being Green,” “Rainbow Connection” and “Charlie Brown.” As he bowed his

head, he looked like the character Schroeder from the classic comic strip.

This show in its entirety worked because it was not afraid to expose the basics, communicate with the audience, and encourage audience participation. It was definitely a family affair.

Grade: A

Muslim Student Association offers an inside into Muslim culture

ASHLEY ATKINS

Features Editor

In the month of November, the University of Missouri - St. Louis' Muslim Student Association promoted Islamic Awareness week. Throughout the week before Thanksgiving, they conducted various lectures on the subject of Islamic culture. The student body was offered a chance to attend lectures on honor killings, Muslim marriage and other subjects.

"Tuesday was Islam 101, where we talked about what Islam was, what we practiced, what we believed in. I believe we had a segment on misconceptions. There are quite a few of people who believe that Muslims worship a moon god," Molly Smith, sophomore, biology, MSA secretary, said. "Honor killings are not a part of Islam. It is a cultural aspect that most conservative Mus-

lims do not agree with and do not support in any way."

Also, throughout the week, the association asked for volunteers from female student body to sport the traditional hijab in their everyday lives. All participants were asked to meet at Muslim Marriage 101 to express their thoughts and reactions to the experiment.

As a handful of Muslim and non-Muslim students walked into the Century Room, the men gravitated toward the front of the room, while the woman gathered at the tables in the back to discuss the wearing of the hijab. There were a couple of women who decided to shy away from the discussion table, but there were enough willing participants that it was hardly noticeable. Smith got the conversation started try-

ing to make the interaction as comfortable as possible.

"I found that people spoke to me more respectfully throughout the day. I got less nonsense from people and I felt more comfortable. I did not feel the need to cover up," Kelly Brewer, senior, anthropology, said.

"I am a member of a Jewish family, so members of my family already wear something similar to this. They were thrilled because they thought that I had gone back to being orthodox. I was actually more comfortable in it, and my kids were better behaved. I work at a school and the class just seemed calmer today. I don't know if it was just one of those days or if they saw what I was doing and decided to be more respectful," Amanda Thomas, senior,

education, said.

By participating in the experiment, Thomas realized that children are more open and willing to learn while adults had problems inquiring about the difference.

As the female students wrapped up their conversation on perception, the speaker for the night, Faizan Syed, executive director of Care St. Louis, was ready to present his PowerPoint on marriage within the Islamic community. He centered his presentation on how an animated character on the PowerPoint found a significant other, stating that in Islamic culture it is believed that when one finds their significant other, they have completed half of their religion. Syed said that it is an obligation in the community to get married and if one is not married, they

should get married fast.

He walked the audience through the characteristics that a significant other should possess, such as excellent moral character, loving attitude, contentment, naivete, internal beauty and fertility in women. Syed stressed the amount of time that it takes to find the "right one." He discussed the dos and don'ts of introduction between the opposite sexes. If a man is interested in a woman, then it is considered proper to confide in her friends or her family and courting is suggested before the proposal. In Islamic culture, a proposal of marriage is made indirectly, through a friend or a woman can pop the question. During the proposal process, a man will literally take a long look at his love interest to make sure

that she is what he wants.

Syed also revealed that many men secretly dream of being proposed to by a woman as he looked over to the female side of the room. "Ladies, do the right thing," Syed said. The room filled with laughter.

The presentation came to a close with free Pizza Hut and beverages for all participants in the experiment and lecture. Those in attendance left the event with new connections as well as a new look on life. Islamic Awareness Week has been promoted by the association which operates throughout the United States and Canada since the early 1990s. The idea behind the weeklong event is to create a better understanding of the principles and lifestyle of the Islamic culture and help abolish stereotypes.

University Program Board hosts tea time of international tastes

MAVIS HOLLIS

Staff Writer

Last week, the University Program Board hosted an open tea party in the Millennium Student Center on the University of Missouri - St. Louis' North Campus. Modeled after the traditional practices regarding tea time in the United Kingdom, this open event took place between the hours of 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. UPB members stationed their tea tables on the second floor rotunda of the MSC, making the event accessible to any student or member of the faculty who happened to be passing by that evening.

Students were offered ten different types of tea from around the world, each of which came with their own individual flyer expressing their specific countries of origin, steeping processes and ingredients, along with any traditions regarding the teas in their homelands. The flyers also expressed how each tea was capable of contributing to the health of those who drank it.

"We were coming up with ideas for events to do for the semester and we decided that most of the members love tea,"

Erin Potts, junior, finance, UPB member, said. A tea drinker herself, Potts was impressed by the crowd that the event was able to draw. As students graced the proximity of the tables, they indulged in the variety of teas, along with such traditional tea additions as lemons and the variety of sweeteners that were provided. The organization was also able to provide its guests with a little snack which complimented the particular tea that each guest had chosen, often following traditional customs for the particular tea

in question.

"I like trying new, different teas. I like trying what I will or will not like," Dorian Hall, graduate, business administration, said. Hall is a regular tea drinker and had decided to come to the event when he saw the setup engulfing the MSC's rotunda space. The event had gained so much attention from the student body that it managed to attract the likes of even the most committed coffee drinkers, dragging them away from their traditional haunt near the Einstein Bros.

Cafe.

During the event, students took the time to interact with each other. Not only did they pay compliments to the goodies that were provided, but they also used the time to discuss the teas that they were already familiar with.

"We heard about the event from a member of UPB," Damiana McGraw, freshman, English, said. "I enjoy tea, so when I heard about this event, I had to attend." McGraw is familiar with UPB events, having attended every single one since the begin-

ning of the semester. She did not hesitate to express her future involvement in the organization.

As the event came to a close, UPB asked their guests to comment on what they thought about the event. Guests were also given an opportunity to have their name entered in a raffle for a Kindle Fire. UPB were pleased with the turnout that they had gotten for their first UMMSL tea party. The party was an interesting twist on college life at UMMSL and gave attendees a needed break from daily stresses.

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Sports

Conference plays opens well for Tritons men's basketball

OWEN SHROYER
Sports Editor

It has been a long road for the University of Missouri - St. Louis men's basketball team, one that has tested them throughout and has certainly been good experience for this young team full of transfers. After splitting their games at the Owensboro Classic, the team was ready to embark on a stretch of two conference road games, the first conference games of the season, at Drury and at Missouri S&T. Drury was 4-2 heading into the matchup, averaging nearly 90 points per game, while Missouri S&T struggled at points per game.

Head Coach Steve Tappmeyer had the Tritons ready to go against Drury, riding a wave of momentum after a large defeat of Clark Atlanta, as well

as maintaining progress every game. The game started slow with both teams showing signs of rust, not having played in a week. Turnovers and missed layups kept the scoring low early in the game. Troy Long, senior, liberal studies, a transfer student from Southern Illinois University who has emerged as a team leader, was ready to go at tip, hitting two three-pointers as well as getting an assist and a steal early in the first half. The bucket seemed to open up a bit after the game was tied at 15 with eight minutes left. The Tritons then gained the biggest edge of the game after an 11 to 3 run, capped off by a block by Zach Redel, senior, business administration, then a fast break by Joshua McCoy, junior, communications, who

dished it to Redel, the big man running the floor for the layup. Drury added four free-throws before the end of the half to cut UMSL's lead to five.

The second half featured much better shooting. It was Long who again came out hot with an early steal, as well as two more three-pointers and a rebound. UMSL opened the half on a 10 to 3 run, setting the pace for the second half. The Tritons continued to add to their lead down the stretch, and never trailed at any point. Long went four for four from the charity stripe in the closing minutes of the game, a good thing for the Tritons to know they can rely on him for clutch free throws if needed at the end of a close game. The final score was 78-61 UMSL. Long

lead all scorers with twenty nine points. He has been on fire lately and is averaging over seventeen points per game this year.

The Tritons ended their road trip against Missouri S&T, and carried much momentum with a two game winning streak and going against a struggling opponent. With ten minutes left in the half, UMSL found themselves up by five. They would extend their lead after a quick seven to two run, including five points, a rebound and an assist from Long. UMSL would gain more momentum heading into the break after a dunk by Charlie Woods, junior, psychology, on a dish from McCoy.

UMSL would continue to lead for most of the second

half, but Missouri S&T never let up, and tied the game with just under ten minutes left, and then took their first lead since early in the game. With just under seven minutes left S&T took a two-point lead. In response, McCoy hit a three-pointer to regain the lead and start a game changing run. UMSL went on an 18-3 run, and never looked back en route to a 79-70 victory.

A lot of questions have been answered since the start of the season and roles are more clearly defined now on a team that was basically new at the start. Coach Tappmeyer has done an excellent job with the group and has them rolling now. The team has scored 80, 78 and 79 points consecutively. The arrival and emergence of

transfer students Long, McCoy and Woods has played a major role, as the team is forming chemistry every game. McCoy has shown his versatility, leading the team in steals and assists, while he is second in scoring and third in rebounds. Woods is leading the team in rebounds and Long has emerged as the team's leader playing the most minutes so far and scoring the most, while facilitating as well with twenty assists.

The team now comes home for three non-conference games. They have won their only game at home so far this year. The team needs to take advantage of these three games, and gain as much momentum and chemistry as possible before the true brute of the conference schedule hits.

Tritons cruise in improving to three to one with 40 minutes of hell

LEON DEVANCE
Staff Writer

If the University of Missouri - St. Louis Tritons women's basketball team is to improve on last season's 10-17 record and win the Great Lakes Valley Conference Western Division then its version of 40 minutes of hell has to play a prominent role.

The losses of last season seem to have a carry-over effect as UMSL finished the exhibition season at 0-2 losing 92-52 to Illinois State, Missouri State 62-48. They also lost the season opener at the St. Edward's Classic 88-79. But then the Tritons defeated Southeast Oklahoma St. 85-76, and McKendree College 70-62.

Now add Christian Brothers University from

Tennessee to the hit list as the Tritons pressured the Lady Buccaneers to shoot 40 percent from the field. The Lady Buccaneers connected on eight of 20 attempts and knocked down one free throw on five attempts in the first half on the way to a 55-37 victory on the Chuck Smith Court before a holiday home crowd of 212 cheering spectators.

The win had two key aspects: it lifted UMSL to a 3-1 record on the season and the Lady Buccaneers to drop to 1-3, with UMSL leading their rivalry, winning last year in Memphis 63-58 and 86-54 in the 2009 to 2010 season. The Tritons have five straight non-conference home victories since the

2009 to 2010 season. The three-game winning streak is the Tritons first since beginning last season on a three-game winning streak.

To get the victory over the Lady Buccaneers, the Tritons rode the combination of power forward Devonna Smith's, junior, sociology, double-double, 14 points and 12 rebounds, two blocks and one steal in 27 minutes and guard/forward Caitlyn Moody, senior, physical education, 14 points, two assists and two steals in 26 minutes and Alexis Lawrence's, freshmen, undecided, timely 3-point shooting. The Lady Buccaneers leading scorer, Jessica Green, went into the contest averaging 14 points and 5 rebounds and finished

with three points and two rebounds in 30 minutes.

Head Coach Lisa Taylor-Curliss attributed the win to limiting easy scores for the Lady Buccaneers in the second half.

"The first half we were not solid and were almost out-rebounded 19-16. We had too many turnovers and they were able to score in the lane. Once we shut down the lane, we were able to run away with it," Curliss-Taylor said.

The Tritons limited the Lady Buccaneers to a 28 shooting percentage, as they connected on eight shots out of the 28 attempts in the second half and hit one of six 3-point shots for 16 percent. They then went to the

free-throw line six times and connected on three attempts for 50 percent accuracy. This allowed the Tritons to open with a 16-4 run beginning the second half and stretch a 23-17 half-time lead to a 39-21 lead on a jumper in the paint by Kiki Robertson, senior, criminal justice, as they connected on six out 10 shots and held the Lady Buccaneers to one field goal during the run.

Curliss-Taylor insisted that Lawrence's ability to shoot 3-pointers helped.

"We got a key contribution from Alexis. She was pretty steady and that allowed us to play better, calm down and focus. Then the shots started falling," Curliss-Taylor said.

"I was able to hit the open shot, but I was in rhythm today. Ever since the fifth grade, in the parks and recreation leagues, I have been a shooter. I have a quick release and I always come off screens looking at the defense to looking to hit the open shot," Lawrence said.

With Lawrence hitting the open shot to keep the Lady Buccaneers at bay, Smith noted that it was easy to concentrate on crashing the boards.

"I like to fight for rebounds and trash points. I feel that rebound is mine. This is girls basketball. Most of the time, the referee will call foul. But we have got to do a better job in the first half," Smith said.

Are you this cute?

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Point/Counterpoint



Should retail employees be forced to work on Thanksgiving Day?

Thanksgiving store openings an exhibit of selfish consumerism at its worst

Next holiday season, shoppers should think about something other than saving money when they decide whether or not to visit stores that open on Thanksgiving. At first glance, all of the “door buster” deals and bargains may seem attractive but both retailers and shoppers need to take a moment to consider the cost of what they’re doing. Many employees of the stores that choose to open on Thanksgiving have to miss out on spending valuable time with their families because they have to prepare to work the entire night. The importance of a holiday that is dedicated to family should be respected by all parties.

Some would say that the employees have a choice to work on Thanksgiving Day. How much of a choice do workers really have when they are in a financial situation where they can’t risk losing their job or say no to any extra hours? It is fair and honorable to give employees time off for holidays whenever possible. Some places, such as hospitals and gas stations, are open on holidays for valid reasons. It is not essential for Target to encroach upon

someone’s holiday so they can open the night before Black Friday and the company can make more money off of crazed bargain hunters who get into fistfights over two dollar waffle irons.

While it’s true that companies should seek to serve their shoppers, they also owe some level of understanding to their employees, who are the cogs in the machine that allow the company to make any money at all. It’s unlikely that the big decision-makers will have to sacrifice any time spent with their own families on Thanksgiving; it’s also likely that they can afford to pass on extra hours. It’s times like these that the average person should be considered, not the bottom line. People are going to go shopping around the holidays; it is not essential that they be able to do so on Thanksgiving night.

Shoppers are also responsible for showing sensitivity to employees. Their need to get the cheapest Xbox possible is taking people away from their families, and just because they are willing to sacrifice their holidays in order to gain material things doesn’t mean everyone

else should have to follow suit. Unfortunately, consumers are the ones with the power; if they decide to spend their money on Thanksgiving, stores are going to open to accommodate them and their wallets.

Some traditions should be observed, lest we lose our collective humanity and descend even further into money-grubbing drones dedicated to the chase of the almighty dollar. By “saving Thanksgiving,” retailers can also save the sanity of their employees and in the process perhaps even aid in subverting the increasingly consumerism-fueled spirit of the holidays.

Thanksgiving is about spending time with family, not pepper-spraying strangers in a crowd so that you can get your hands on more (ultimately meaningless) things. When it comes down to it, it’s just stuff being bought, be it a waffle iron or a big screen TV. Those same people who will rush the doors of Toys R Us would show up to shop even if the store chose to have their sales on a day that isn’t a national holiday. It’s not really worth ruining someone’s Thanksgiving just to make or save a little extra money.

In retail, working on Black Friday and Thanksgiving goes along with the job

Employees should expect their bosses to want them to come in earlier and earlier for Black Friday. Black Friday shopping has always been a tradition for great early morning deals as hordes of maniacal customers rush, claw and tear for the one little item that is usually the only thing they are able to get. It may be upsetting for some, but people are still going to go out into the night to get that 46 inch television on sale, or get the toys their kids have been wanting on their Christmas list.

Employees should expect the possibility of having to work on Thanksgiving Day, considering the fact that traditionally companies usually treat it as a paid vacation. People might see it as wrong for companies to make employees work on such a holiday that is for family bonding, but at same time, the companies are gaining business and money from Black Friday shopping addicts and the employees are getting paid for their work; in many cases employees even receive bonus pay for

working shifts on holidays.

Employees should have the choice to choose to work Black Friday as overtime, or have the choice not to work. Companies usually hire more employees to help with the rush every year; it would give more temporary jobs for people looking for employment and could mean possibly becoming a permanent employee. Thanksgiving will always be the holiday for spending time with your family, but slowly the holiday sales will take over in the night, so employees shouldn’t be surprised that once in a while they may end up working a holiday, especially Thanksgiving, since Black Friday is the next morning. Is it better to work on Thanksgiving Day than Christmas Day? A lot of people actually work on Thanksgiving Day and not for Black Friday at all. For example, some stores have workers working at least some hours on any holiday ranging from Christmas to Easter. If the employee didn’t want to work on holidays, it would have been best for

them to get a job that doesn’t have that in their schedule.

The employees have the right to complain, but in choosing a job that does Black Friday sales every year, they give up the right to get upset over the possibility of having to work on Thanksgiving night or going into Black Friday morning. Even if they are upset, there’s the positive outcome of extra cash for the holidays for them to spend on presents for their families. So should it be such a big deal? It is understandable why some might be upset, but most employees don’t have to go into work for the Black Friday sales till at least past 7 p.m., though most families do spend their Thanksgiving time together past even 10 p.m. or later. This could also become a new family event though, where families bond by going Thanksgiving shopping early with the working family member. It is the first year that Black Friday sales have started as early as 8 p.m., but only time will tell what is in store for Black Friday workers.

Opinions

OUR OPINION

Wealth blurs the lines when it comes to criminal sentencing

Even here in America, the original land of opportunity, there is a double standard for the haves and the have-nots. This is made painfully obvious every time there is a celebrity trial; more often than not, wealthy celebrities and white-collar criminals tend to get as much slack afforded them as the law will allow (how many times has Lindsay Lohan been arrested again?), while your average lower-class citizen needs a combination of luck and a merciful judge in order to receive the same kind of leniency.

A Mississippi woman named Anita McLemore found out about that double standard firsthand. She found herself facing a three-year prison sentence for the absolutely unforgivable crime of lying on her federal aid application in order to ensure she would receive food stamps to feed her children. Heinous, no?

Under the law, a person is not allowed to receive food stamps or other federal aid if they have been convicted of a felony. McLemore has four such convictions on her record, all felony drug offenses, in addition to a single misdemeanor conviction. However, like so many in the current economic climate, she was having difficulty keeping her head above water financially, so she needed some sort of help in order to keep feeding her family.

Over a period of four years, from 2006-2010, McLemore received a grand total of \$4,367 in federal aid money. That money

has, however, all been paid back, according to news sources. Despite that, the judge in her case wasted no time in making an example of her, castigating her for her “simply abominable” criminal record and her exploitation of “government generosity.” McLemore was sentenced to three years in a federal prison.

A person’s crime should be judged independently of any previous crime, especially if the crime being committed is, like McLemore’s, inconsistent with that record. Now, she obviously has made some very poor decisions in her life, and is now paying for them. But does that mean her children have to pay as well? What is to become of them while their mother is languishing in jail for the next three years?

This is, simply put, an instance of the punishment not fitting the crime. In sentencing McLemore, the judge far surpassed the recommended punishment for her offense; the prosecution recommended a sentence of two to eight months, which would have allowed for the possibility of probation after her release. Her three-year sentence removes that possibility, and to add insult to injury, the judge also levied a \$250 fine.

Again, this is not to say that the punishment was unjust in and of itself. Given her earlier criminal record, it could be argued that the judge was perfectly justified in giving her more than the minimum sentence. What raises eyebrows in this situation is the comparison between it

and other cases.

For example, several parallels have been drawn between this case and the case of James Arthur Ray, an Oprah-endorsed self-help guru. Ray operated a sweatlodge as part of his operation, three people died, and he was convicted of three counts of negligent homicide. His sentence? Two years.

At the same time McLemore was being tried, two people were simultaneously in court facing charges over a multimillion-dollar mortgage scam. They defrauded several different mortgage lenders to the tune of millions of dollars. Their sentences? One man received 30 months in federal prison followed by three years of supervised release; his accomplice was sentenced to five months in prison and three years of supervised release. All that, for millions of dollars as opposed to thousands, millions whose original owners are likely never to see that money again.

Remember the example of Lindsay Lohan? Even after repeated offenses and probation violations, it was like pulling teeth just to find a judge that would give her jail time. Compare that to how McLemore’s case turned out, and you have an idea of just how loudly money talks in this country.

Unsigned editorials reflect the majority viewpoint of The Current’s Editorial Board: Matthew Poposky, Minho Jung, Ashley Atkins, Cate Marquis, Jennifer Meaban, Jeremy Zschau and Janaca Scherer.

OUT OF LEFT FIELD

Political entanglements foul up even the noblest of causes

Every generation is the one that “ruins politics”, at least according to the generation that came before. This is hardly a recent phenomenon, either; it stands to reason that people said the same things during the bloody political fight over FDR’s New Deal in the 1930s, or in 1856 when South Carolina congressional representative Preston Brooks nearly caned a senator named Charles Sumner to death over a perceived insult to his state and his family.

Thankfully, actual physical altercations between politicians in chambers are a thing of the past in this country. Nevertheless, many of the so-called statesmen of today seem to be doing their very best to cement their reputations alongside the famous dunderheads and partisan incompetents of the past with their antics.

One thing that can be said about the politics of today is that although the politicians themselves aren’t truly all that much worse than their predecessors, the process of politics itself has certainly become more polarized. Depending on with whom one is speaking, bipartisanship is either a dirty word or a lofty concept that often doesn’t work in reality. In the political arena that is Washington D.C., even the most trivial issue can be turned into fodder for a battle royale between left and right, and that brings us to the most recent salvo in the ongoing ideological struggle.

You might have heard something recently about how Congress “declared pizza a vegetable.” That’s not entirely

true. What actually happened was that instead of supporting new USDA guidelines for fruits and vegetables in school lunches, they declared that the tomato paste in pizza qualified as a vegetable. That is bad enough in and of itself, but it only becomes more appalling when one looks at the political subplot involved.

Child obesity has been one of Michelle Obama’s key issues ever since her husband won the presidency. Since coming to the White House, she has become involved in various initiatives aimed at improving the diet and exercise of the nation’s children. It’s a laudable goal, especially when one considers the fact that child obesity is a major problem for this country.

But since Mrs. Obama is the wife of a liberal president, her motives have bizarrely come under flak from various right-wing figures. Sarah Palin started it all back during the 2008 campaign, with her snide and backhanded comments about Mrs. Obama. Palin’s monologue about how the government should not be telling parents how to feed their children caught on among conservatives, and now it’s turned into a phrase that conservative talking heads and politicians like to parrot every time the subject of our nation’s collective health comes up.

It’s utterly despicable, not to mention baffling. Obesity is a nightmare for a child; the effects it can have on their health, their social relations with their peers and their self-image are troubling to say the least. Yet Republican politi-



Jeremy Zschau

cians seem opposed to any effort to curb this condition. Is it simply a knee-jerk reaction to anything that stinks even slightly of liberalism, or something more?

I am reminded of a photograph of a morbidly obese child sitting in a McDonald’s. His fingers were reminiscent of fat little cocktail sausages as he continued to shovel fast food down his throat with a vapid, contented expression on his face. Frankly, it is an image that should embarrass anyone who finds any pride whatsoever in calling themselves an American, just as the tomato paste decision should.

Is this really what Republicans want, a nation of fat, mindless little consumers? It says a sad thing about our country when that is even a legitimate question. Nevertheless, that is how they’re acting: they’d rather trifle with the health of the nation’s children and look out for the future of their corporate buddies than take some common-sense advice on health from a liberal. This mindset, more than anything else, is truly what is poisoning today’s America.

Jeremy Zschau is the Opinions Editor and a columnist for The Current.

What do you think?
www.thecurrent-online.com.

SCIENCE MATTERS

St. Louis Zoo breakthrough may mean comeback for hellbenders

A few years back when this university was searching for a mascot to replace the Rivermen, there was one name with a loyal following: the Hellbenders.

Not only is the Hellbenders a cool name for a sports team, but the hellbender is a native Missouri species, one of only three types of giant salamander in the world. The hellbender was once common, but its numbers are dwindling.

Hellbenders are shy creatures and, despite their name and fierce appearance, are mostly harmless. Their bite is not venomous, but they do have skin secretions that are toxic to other animals. Those secretions only produce skin irritation in humans, although you probably should not to eat one.

The hellbender is an entirely aquatic amphibian, although it can occasionally be found on land during heavy rains. It breathes through its skin, although it has lungs that can be used to gulp air at the water's surface. The folds of its skin undulate in the water, and capillaries near the skin capture oxygen from the flowing water. Hence, clean water is essential for hellbenders.

Hellbenders are covered with folds of dark, reddish-brown skin, and often are mottled or spotted on their backs, although the undersides are a uniform color. They have flat bodies and heads, with small eyes and heavy, large tails with keels for easy maneuvering. Hellbenders are covered with a slimy coating that may help protect them from parasites or infections and make it easier for them to slip through the water as they swim. The hellbender's favorite food is crayfish but they also eat worms, small fish and snails.

They are nocturnal and you will rarely see one even where they are plentiful.

Hellbenders were once common in Missouri's cold, fast-flowing streams, but in recent years, their numbers have declined. The reason for that decline is not clear and could be part of the global pattern of decline for all species of amphibian. The amphibians did not seem to be reproducing in the wild and no one had been able to breed them in captivity... until now. The St. Louis Zoo has successfully hatched baby hellbenders.

The zoo has been part of a multi-agency program in Missouri working to unravel the reason for the hellbender's decline and to attempt to breed them in captivity. The zoo has been working for 10 years to try to breed the Ozark hellbender and on November 15, they achieved success. As of December 1, they had hatched 63 young hellbenders with another 120 eggs due to hatch soon.

The plan is to release the young hellbenders into the wild in about three to eight years, when they are mature. The captive breeding program not only aims to re-establish hellbender populations but to preserve genetic diversity for the declining species.

One of the things the zoo researchers discovered is that hellbenders need lots of space to breed. The zoo simulated a 32-foot Ozark stream in the lab, with tightly controlled temperature, lighting and water conditions. The breeding area even had its own air supply. Staff working with hellbenders do not work with the building's other amphibians and reptiles to avoid potential contamination.

Worldwide, amphib-



Cate Marquis

ians have been declining in numbers, while there has been an alarming rise in the number of deformities. Hellbender deformities have also been on the rise as their numbers decline. Both the Ozark hellbender and the eastern subspecies were added to the Missouri state endangered species list in 2003.

As many as 8,000 hellbenders once lived in the Ozarks of Missouri and Arkansas, but now only about 600 are believed to remain. Not only are there fewer hellbenders overall, but there are proportionally fewer young hellbenders than there were 20 years ago.

Overall habitat decline, associated with development and overuse of streams for recreation, is thought to play some role in hellbender declines. There is also a direct human threat associated with people accidentally or deliberately killing hellbenders. However, hellbender numbers are declining even in places far from development, places that seem to retain good habitat.

Hopefully, the zoo's breeding breakthrough will put the hellbender on the road to recovery and have the colorfully named amphibians once again plentiful in Missouri streams, even if we do not have a team named after them.

Cate Marquis is Arts and Entertainment Editor and a columnist for The Current.

MAD WORLD

Women in comedy not immune to same tired double standards

GQ Magazine recently named actress and comedian Kristen Wiig as its "Bro of the Year." The magazine's glowing feature on Wiig applauds her comedic talent and skill and her methods as a performer. In the accompanying photos, Wiig is wearing lacy black underwear and the kind of pout most commonly seen between the pages of that legendary tome of feminist reading material, "Cosmopolitan."

It's always pleasing to see women being recognized in print for their contributions to comedy – but is it too much to ask that they be able to keep their clothes on in the accompanying photos? When being presented to a mainstream audience, talented women are constantly reduced to the same sort of simpering, pouting pin-ups whose primary purpose is to titillate. That's all well and good and perhaps even has its place, but it's frustrating to see women who do not make their living off of being sexy being forced into what appears to be the only role society is able to view famous women as: sexy, sexy sex symbols of sex.

It's long been a trend that talented women have to consider removing a few articles of clothing to be seen as worthy of mainstream attention (for evidence of that, pick up any magazine on the newsstand). This is seen most often in the case of actresses and musicians, where the av-

erage media consumer would be hard pressed to find an example of a wildly successful stage or screen performer that hasn't been lauded for their sex appeal at some point by some major media outlet or another. Predictably, this gets in the way of being taken seriously for many performers who possess a deep love for their craft.

It may be seen as a necessary evil a woman must accept in order to get to where she wants to be, but it's high time we as a society question the standards that we hold our female performers to. We're content to spend a half hour being entertained by an actor on a sitcom (while never really taking note of his level of physical attractiveness). Shouldn't actresses be afforded the same opportunity: the chance to make us laugh without having to arouse anyone in the process?

It's been a long hard road for women in comedy, with many comedians who don't fit the mold of a conventionally attractive female not making it very far, at least in terms of mainstream success. It's no secret that in almost any field a woman chooses to pursue a career in, her perceived level of physical attractiveness will play some role in her success, or lack thereof. This goes double for those interested in "show biz" careers. One area of the business where it's safe to say that sex appeal matters a little less, however, is comedy, if the



Sharon Pruitt

amount of unconventional-looking men who succeed in the realm of comedy is anything to go by. This isn't really the case for female performers, however, and many female comedians who make it to mainstream success are more attractive than funny (Whitney Cummings being the most relevant example, as anyone who has ever sat through the predictable punch lines and ill-placed laugh tracks of "Whitney" can attest).

Be it sports, acting or comedy, anyone who is a professional at what they do wants to be recognized and praised for their talent and the skill they've honed through passion and hard work. The most many female performers can hope for is that even though the accompanying pictures are sexy, the article will at least touch on the topics of talent, and despite how long this has been the case for, it's still disheartening to witness.

Sharon Pruitt is a columnist and staff writer for The Current.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
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Horoscopes

CURRENT HOROSCOPES by The Inane Collective altered by: Actual Thoughts on Life the Intern



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)

You spend your life attempting to salvage the worlds of others and constantly find yourself short up for your own needs. A recent change will help remedy this: stay strong.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)

Christmas is just around the corner and all you can think about is whether Santa thinks you've been a good child this year. Call the cops: Santa is not the one stomping around on your roof.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

Recent changes in your life have left you wondering just how those from your past would view you. Remember that their wishes are simply that you enjoy life and stay safe.



PISCES
(FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)

Take some time this week to really review that heavy lab material which will be covered on the test in the coming weeks. You've been slacking all semester and need to focus a bit more closely.



ARIES
(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Do not hit brick walls this week. Do not slam doors on your hands this week. These are not intelligent actions. Take a break from anger and eat a popsicle. Who cares about the snow?



TAURUS
(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

That flying monkey may seem a rather enticing gift choice for your three year-old nephew this holiday season. However, keep in mind that those things poop on the go.



GEMINI
(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Take the road less traveled and do not join a cult this week. It is becoming far too mainstream to do so and the world really does not need any more sacrifices at this point.



CANCER
(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Life is tough sometimes. It will sometimes seem the whole world is against you. Just remember: things work out in the end, one way or the other. You will find happiness, so try to be happy day-to-day.



LEO
(JULY 23 - AUG. 21)

You've reached a major turning point in your life with the past few months and it seems that, despite the challenges which are unstoppably approaching, you will manage to stand tall all the same.



VIRGO
(AUG. 22 - SEPT. 23)

You've spent so much time fighting to be properly respected by those who show interest in being with you that you have forgotten how to trust potential suitors. Give that sweetie a chance.



LIBRA
(SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

Life is good right now, so keep on trucking on as you have. Just remember to keep an eye out for potholes. They can appear out of nowhere and all of this rain certainly diminishes your vision a bit.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)

You miss the love of your life. This is a challenging time, but remember that your family and friends are always there for you. Take a step back, evaluate the challenges ahead and fight back.

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