

10-27-2010

Banner News

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Recommended Citation

Sandrock, Tanner; Leeds, Austin; Kramer, Josie; and Robson, Robert, "Banner News" (2010). *Banner News*. 72.
https://openspace.dmacc.edu/banner_news/72

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Banner News

Des Moines Area Community College Boone Campus

Wednesday, October 27, 2010, Vol. 10, No. 4

Happy Halloween

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Photo by Eden Hinrichs

Artist finds refuge in Iowa

By **Tanner Sandrock**
Editor-in-Chief

Iraqi artist and refugee Amer Alobaidi exhibited some of his work in the DMACC Boone Campus Theatre last week.

Alobaidi and his family became refugees in America in 2008 after fleeing their home in Iraq after the initial invasions of 2003. Alobaidi was the former director of the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad, and his work can be found in nearly every major museum of modern art in the Middle East. Alobaidi's son was killed and wife wounded in a car bombing.

Alobaidi and his daughter, Bedor, fled to Syria in 2006, where he began to work on his art once more. However, Syria was still unsafe for him and his daughter, so he applied to the United Nations to become a refugee. Eventually his request was accepted and Alobaidi and his daughter were placed in Des Moines, Iowa to seek refuge. Six months after living state side he created an exhibition at Drake University.

Alobaidi's visit to DMACC was sponsored by DMACC's Diversity Commission and was free

and open to the public. Bedor helped present and translated for her father.

Since living in Iowa in 2008 Alobaidi says his art has changed. He says a lot of change can be seen with the colors he uses. Once, mostly using reds and yellows, now a lot of greens and blues are seen. This, he says, comes somewhat from the new environment around him. Also many of his pieces now illustrate the struggles of a refugee as well as other immigrants.

While fleeing from Bagdad Alobaidi was unable to secure his artwork, and this became main concerns. He did not worry so much for his property back in Iraq but for his paintings. Fortunately, a family member was able to remove the painting from his home and secure it in a safe location.

Alobaidi brought a few pieces with him to the showing. The pieces were from his newest collection and are entitled; "Refugee in Iowa," "Suffering of the Immigrant," "Wounds of the Immigrant." Each, he says, represent the struggles experienced of those in positions familiar to his own.

Bedor, his daughter, is now a DMACC student at the Urban

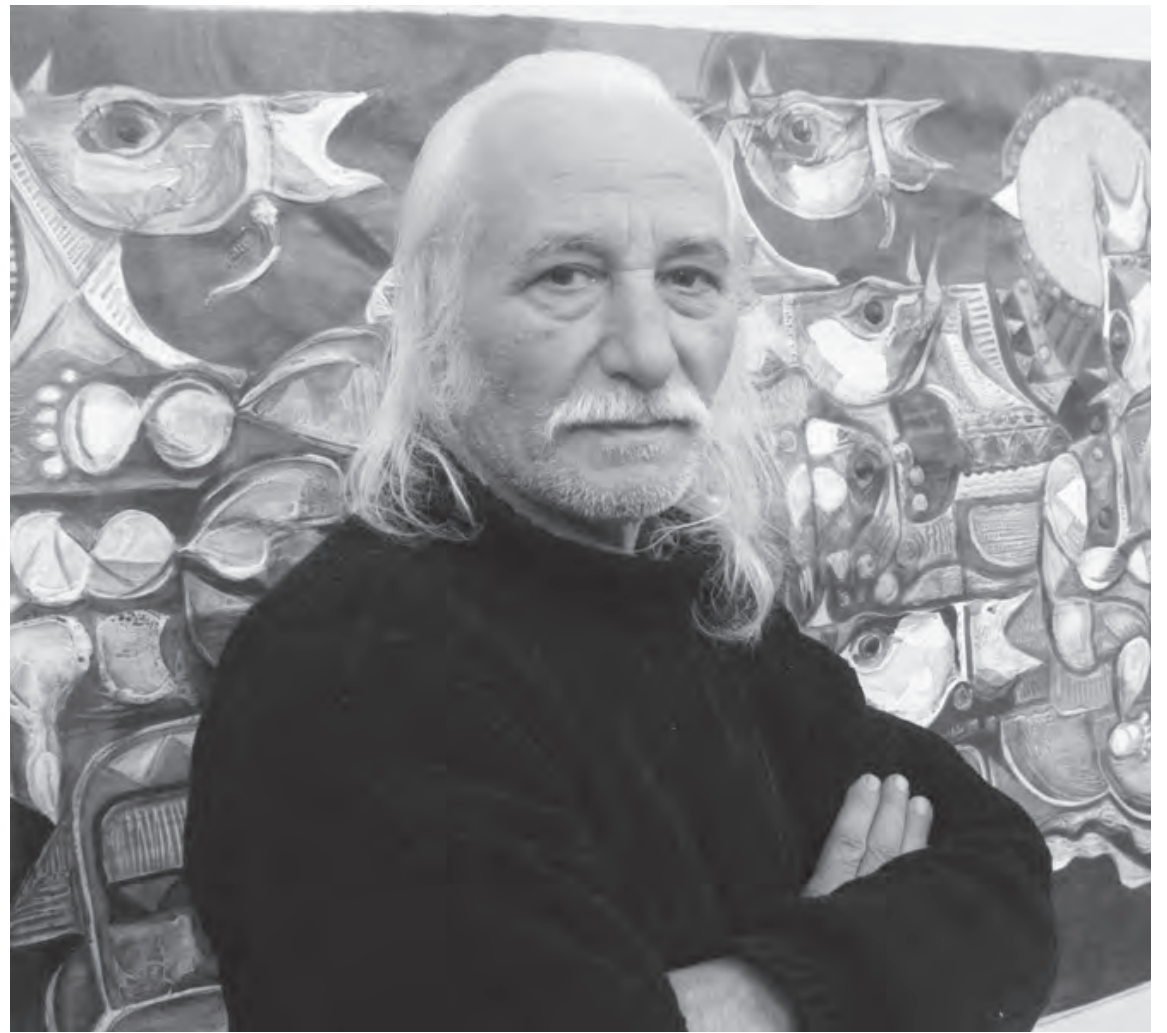


Photo from www.ameralobaidi.com

Amer Alobaidi

Campus. She is twenty years old and is majoring in International Relations. She says she doesn't share the talents her father has; however, she does enjoy dancing ballet. She hopes to continue

dancing as a hobby someday. After DMACC she plans on transferring to Iowa State.

As of right now Alobaidi has no exhibits planned for the future but remains active with his work.

Him and his daughter say that once another exhibit is planned, word will be spread through DMACC with information about the time and place.

DMACC recognizes 'China Year' with presentation

By **Austin Leeds**
Staff Writer

Every year, DMACC selects a country to focus on, and the 2010-2011 school year is China Year for DMACC, marking the third China year in the college's history. As a part of this event, Ankeny Campus' Dr. Will Zhang gave a presentation at Boone Campus called "Telling You a Real China," Wednesday, Oct. 20.

Dr. Zhang began by comparing the United States and China, pointing out the similar size and shape of the two countries, excluding Alaska and Hawaii. Just like in the U.S., a large portion of the population is distributed on the coastline.

"On the east coast," said Zhang, "there are over two-thirds of the Chinese."

To demonstrate the number of people living on the east coast, Zhang showed some pictures of Beijing, displaying massive skyscrapers and hundreds of cars traveling along seemingly endless roads.

"You may wonder if this is only a part of Beijing," Zhang said, noting that small areas of Des Moines look similar to the pictures he was showing. However, he added, "This is everywhere. Beijing is 14 million people."

One important difference he noted is the ratio of population to agricultural area. With a population of 1.3 billion people, the People's Republic of China is roughly four times as populous as the United States of America. Yet, as Zhang explained, "The agricultural area of China is only



Photo by Austin Leeds

Dr. Will Zhang

one-fourth that of the U.S." This means that the ratio of population versus agricultural area is one-sixteenth that of the U.S.

Another difference is air quality. With that many people clustered along the east coast, China has poor air quality, worse than the larger U.S. cities.

"They [Americans] asked me what the difference was between China and the U.S.," Zhang told the audience, "and I said, 'Well, when I came back to Beijing, it was hard to breathe.'"

Zhang then compared two aspects of Chinese social structure – the prosperous and the poor. Similar to the U.S., there are multiple social strata; however, these are much less likely to intermix than those in the U.S. According to Zhang, "The rich Chinese like to show off, like to treat the poor people like dirt."

Migrant workers are also an issue in China, as in the U.S., with a few differences. The Chinese

migrant workers are generally legal, native-born Chinese, who have grown up in the countryside and travel to the cities for work. "They become the construction workers, just like the Mexicans in Iowa," said Zhang. "Their welfare is not guaranteed... Sometimes the city-dwellers accuse them of bringing crime to the cities."

Times are changing in China, however. Dr. Zhang kept coming back to the year 1978, stating that, "1978 was a dividing line for China. Before 1978, China still closed its doors. After 1978, China gradually opened its doors to the world."

Life expectancy is climbing with new advances in medicine and increased availability of medical care. Dr. Zhang used the example of his mother, who is currently 91 years of age. He did note, however, that none of his other relatives have lived to 75 years of age.

Many American products

are manufactured in China, from clothes to computers. While not the most numerous product China manufactures, Apple's iPod line is no doubt the most visible. With that in mind, Dr. Zhang gave the audience an idea of the profit margins that Chinese companies operate around: "Apple sells iPods for \$200 – China makes 5 percent, or \$10."

On a more positive note, Dr. Zhang expressed his hope for China, which is gradually coming out after decades of political oppression:

"32 years ago, there was a crime called Anti-Revolution. If you showed a sign like 'Down with Mao,' you'd be in trouble... if you were Anti-Communist, you would be put to death."

"The Chinese have more freedom now than before. And if you say something bad, you can find a way to get away from the government, especially the local government."

In Dr. Zhang's words, China "is moving in the right direction."

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BEAR BRIEFS

Dropping Classes

Last day to drop regular term classes will be Nov. 5. Tuition refund deadlines are different from drop deadlines. For information on refunds go to www.dmacc.edu/refund.asp.

DMACC China Year Activities

China Year activities are under way across all DMACC campuses with several presentations and events.

Boone Campus

Tuesday, Nov. 2, 9:40 a.m. to 10:40 a.m., Boone Campus Theatre

Dr. Aili Mu, Associate Professor in the World Languages and Cultures Department at Iowa State University, will speak on "Chinese Language and Chinese Language Learning."

Thursday, Nov. 4, 9:40 a.m. to 10:40 a.m., Boone Campus Theatre

Kirk Martin, Director of the Chinese Cultural Exchange Program at Drake University, will speak on "China Then, Now and Looking Forward: How to Consider our Most Important International Partner."

Scholarship Deadlines

Last day to submit an Alumni Association scholarship application will be Oct. 29 at 4 p.m.

Last day to submit a DMACC Pioneer STAR Scholarship application will be Nov. 12 at 4 p.m.

Scholarship Assistance

DMACC students who are looking for assistance with their tuition for the Spring 2011 semester can apply for scholarship assistance online from the DMACC Foundation at www.dmacc.edu/foundation.

Happy Birthday

Capt. Sean Taylor, DMACC Assoc. Psychology & Sociology professor, will be celebrating his birthday Oct. 27. The Banner News staff wishes him the best.

Coat Drive

The Coat Drive has been extended through Oct. 30. Boxes are placed all over the campus for donations.

DMACC'S DIVERSITY COMMISSION presents

Ariel Luckey's FREE LAND HIP HOP Theater Experience

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27

BOONE CAMPUS
9:05am, Theatre

ANKENY CAMPUS
12:20pm, Bldg. 6, Auditorium

URBAN CAMPUS
2:30pm, Rm. 124-126

WEBCAST
12:20pm
<http://stream.dmacc.edu>

Ariel Luckey is a nationally acclaimed poet, actor and playwright whose community and performance work dances in the crossroads of education, art and activism.

Named a "Visionary" by *Utne Reader*, Ariel weaves storytelling, spoken word poetry, dance, acting and hip hop music into compelling narratives of personal and political transformation. He has been featured at the North Bay Hip Hop Theater Festival, Café Cantante in Havana, Cuba, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York City and the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity.

Ariel's hip hop theater show, *Free Land*, has inspired and informed audiences at theaters, conferences, community centers and classrooms across the country.

For more information, contact Rita Davenport, 515-433-5030 rdavenport@dmacc.edu

Cafe Hours Mon-Thurs: 7:30-6:00 & Friday: 7:30-2:00

Campus Cafe

Come try our homemade meals!
Godfather's Pizza and sub sandwiches daily!

Enjoy Lunch at DMACC!



Photo by Austin Leeds

Dressing in the spirit of Halloween

By Josie Kramer
Copy Editor

Halloween is an annual holiday celebrated Oct. 31. This secular holiday is celebrated in many ways, by every age group.

Some activities include scary or horror movie night, telling ghost stories or other scary stories, costumes and costume parties, apple bobbing, pranks, trick-or-treating, and haunted attractions.

On DMACC Boone Campus there will be a costume contest for the best costume. The Student Activities Council will host the contest in the Courter Center at 12 p.m. Oct. 29. There will be three categories, faculty and staff, male student and female student. Contest winners will receive \$25 gift card.

Following the costume contest there will be two item-eating contests. The caramel apples and pumpkin pie slices must be consumed without drinking anything while remaining seated. The winner will have to eat both items the fastest to win a \$25 gift card.

Students prepare for fall production ‘Invitation to Murder’

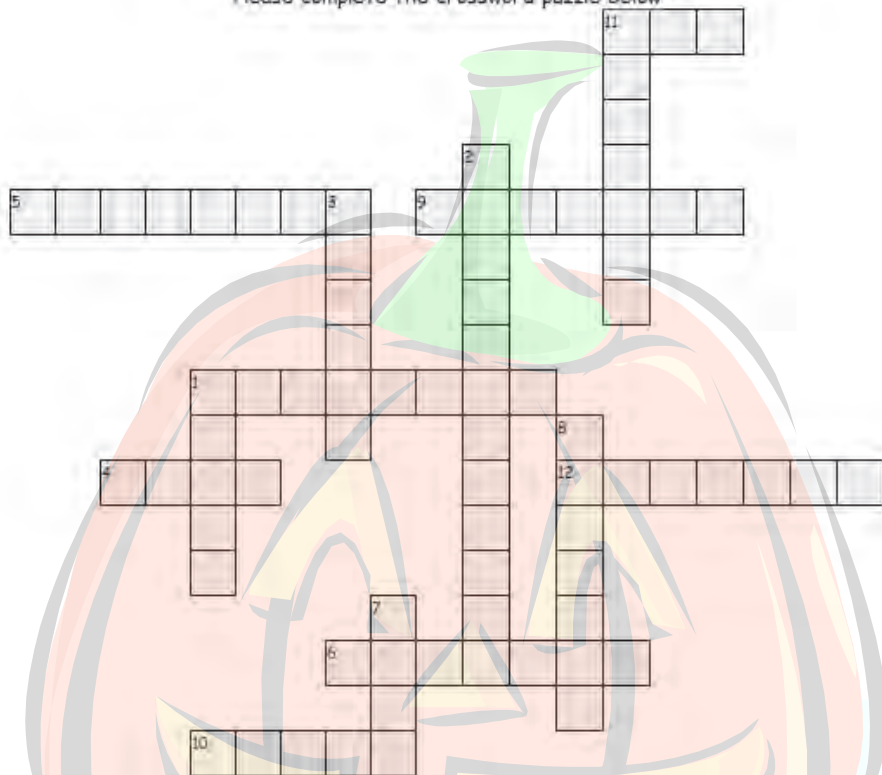
The cast of the upcoming DMACC play, “Invitation to Murder”, poses during a dramatic scene. Cast members are, from left to right: Kevin Langel as Dr. Trent, Jessica Phillip as Lady Lexington, Seygbai Kai as Madge, (seated) Nathan Anderson as Lord Lexington,

Alex Reimann as Kevin, Rachel Davis as Carlotta, and Kate Sandquist as Leslie. “Invitation to Murder” will be showing in the Boone Campus auditorium Friday, Nov. 12 and Saturday, Nov. 13. DMACC students with ID get in free, and anyone else can purchase a ticket for \$5.

Provided By: www.TheTeachersCorner.net

Halloween Crossword

Please complete the crossword puzzle below



Across:

- 1. Human that transforms into a wolf
- 4. Night flying mammals
- 5. Scary creatures, or _____, Inc.
- 6. A house where ghosts live is considered _____
- 9. Dracula is a _____?
- 10. _____ or Treat!
- 11. Ghostly Talk
- 12. Disguise

Down:

- 2. Carved pumpkin
- 1. Stirs potions in a cauldron
- 3. Web creator
- 7. Placed over your face
- 8. Halloween month
- 11. apple _____



Halloween Crossword KEY

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✓ Talk ✓ Text

\$50/mo UNLIMITED PLAN
✓ Talk ✓ Text ✓ Web
✓ Picture Messaging

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Photo by Robert Robson

Pictured above are the alumni players who assembled for the game: (Front left to right) Mark Schroeder, Jamie Schleifer, Tanner Adam, Nic Obey, Kyle Hanna, Ben Richardson, Drake Austin, (Second Row) Steve Lawler, Kirk Keneally, Paul Brown, Mike Smith, Dave Kempin, David Conrad, Steve Stats, Peter Kelly, Nick Anderson, (Back Row) Aaron Boyer, Austin Howry, Trevor Sorensen, Brett Swim, Neal Nerem, Chad Gubbles, Cole Nelson, Dylan Olson, George Jensen, and Mitch Mormann

Former players return to DMACC for first alumni game

By Robert Robson
Sports Editor

The baseball team wrapped up fall baseball this past weekend in a different way than in the past. This year marked the first alumni game played in Boone on the home field. It showcased the men's team against former DMACC players.

While the morning saw some scattered showers, the first pitch was met with sunshine and cool low 70's degree weather.

The game started at 2 p.m. and the two teams played a full 9 innings that saw the current players come away with a victory with a final score of 6-5. The home-plate umpire was an official umpire; however, the field umpires were current players.

It was apparent early that the game for the alumni would be one that wasn't as soundly played as it was for the current players. The alumni team had multiple passed balls, hit batsmen, as well as a few errors in the field. All that aside, they were able to put together strings of hits in multiple innings and, at one point midway through the game, they were in fact winning.

After the 7th inning stretch, pitching became an issue. The later innings were when most of the errors occurred for the alumni.

The current players were able to take the lead late in the game with great base running and multiple hits with runners in scoring position. It eventually came down to the last inning when the

alumni trailed by one run. Down to their last out, the current players were able to get a strikeout to end the game that saw multiple lead changes.

After the game the alumni got together for a group photo and some spent time afterwards talking with old teammates and coaches.

The Bears are now done through the winter until they start up again spring term.



The X-Factor Dazed and confused

By Robert Robson
Sports Editor

There have been some real problems over the past couple weeks in the NFL concerning head injuries, mainly concussions. Since the arrival of Roger Goodell in 2006 more concerted effort has been made to better treat and protect the athletes from these types of injuries. But recently with bad press really getting to the NFL they have begun to penalize players for doing the things we love about the game.

Basketball is a contact sport, baseball is a contact sport, hockey is a contact sport, but not football. Football is a collision sport; a completely different breed of game, and in most cases the reason why people are drawn to it. The NFL dominates the sporting world in the United States by standards that other leagues can only dream of. Fast paced, high scoring, and big hits all make up this incredible game. Cutting out one piece takes away one-third of the magic football brings.

However, we are not Rome in the Colosseum watching gladiators battle to the death. There absolutely needs to be some protections and rules to keep players from suffering from major head or even spinal injuries from some of these hits that they take. Some players in the NFL can be asked, "How many concussions have you had in your career?" and they honestly have no idea, which is part of the problem. These players often will suffer a minor concussion but never admit to medical staff because they want to play. Even worse are the players on special

teams that don't necessarily get a lot of playing time, because any time they sit out is allowing another player to take their spot for the time being. In those scenarios the injured special teams player may never say anything, for fear of losing their job on the field.

The league has decided this past week that they would start suspending players for illegal and malicious hits. That's all good to try and protect players, but it's unfair that while the NFL will suspend and fine a player thousands of dollars for these hits, they'll turn around and sell a DVD on the NFL Web site for \$20, offering a collection of "Big Hits."

So you're going to take money from players rather than make more money off the player by glorifying them? Yea, that seems to be quite hypocritical. By all means, please do more to protect the athletes because while I do love watching big hits, the second I see a player stop moving I am as concerned as everyone else. Look back on the 60's and 70's. The players during that time had equipment that was unquestionably inferior to today's. Players back then were hitting each other high and were even allowed to do things then that are now illegal.

Football is a violent game there is no debate there. Although we aren't in the Colosseum, maybe there is that distant connection between the fans in Rome and the fans of the NFL. The violent nature of NFL is what draws a lot of people and because of that, you can't take it away. It'd be like gladiators having a pillow fight. Safety should be a priority but be weary that it'll cost you what so many people have come to love.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Women's x-country

On October 9 the women's cross country team competed in the Dan Houston Invitational. The race took place in Waverly. Katie Clark led the Bears finishing 116 and set a new school record in the 6K with a time of 26 minutes and 51 seconds.

Also, the women competed at Graceland College in a 5K race that featured 16 colleges. Clark again leading the way for the Bears finished 76 of more than 130 runners.

Men's Golf

Last week the men's golf team traveled to Pella to compete in the American Institute of Business Invite at Bos Laden Golf Club. Sophomore Collin Hackett was the top finisher in the individual competition for the Bears coming in 8 place. This was the last event for the Men's Golf team until the spring.

Women's Volleyball

In the women's final home game of the season, the team faced off against Indian Hills. The Bears needed 4 games in order to take down their opponent winning 3 games to 1. The Bears won in the first two and were serving to win the match in the third game but couldn't close out until winning 25-17 in the fourth game. Katie Vondrak led the way for the Bears with 18 kills.

Wednesday, Oct. 27 at 6:30 p.m. the team will be hosting their last home game of the season against NIACC.

Men's Basketball

The men's basketball team will be hosting a home game against Grand View JV on Thursday, Nov. 4 at 5 p.m. this will be the second home game hosted by the Bears who hosted Iowa West on Monday, Nov. 1.

Women's Basketball

The women will have their home opener on Friday, Nov. 5 when they host the DMACC Classic that will feature William Penn JV, Ellsworth, and Souix Falls JV.



Photo by Robert Robson

Mike Smith, alumni player

The meaning of the season

Editorial

It's a holiday that has a little bit for everyone. Children get to dress in costume while their neighbors shovel sweets into their "trick-or-treat" bags. For those of us deemed a little old to masquerade the evening streets in search of sugary morsels, we get costume parties, hunted houses, horror movies, hayrides, and much more. The holiday is a great past time that really spans from the first day of October and reaches out until that haunted eve.

But what is it that makes this time of the year so great? Is it the candy? The costumes? Or the opportunity to be scared out of our minds? Or is it the holiday's ability to connect us with our youth? No other holiday is able to carry over the same feelings that we had when we were children to us now as adults quite like Halloween.

I know many of you will be saying, "What about Christmas?" but we all have to admit once the belief in Santa goes out the window, the childhood feeling of the season goes with it. Halloween is unlike that in the sense that we are never really asked to put those childhood beliefs behind us. So many out there are still a little shaken by the thought of ghosts, ghouls, and things that bump in the night. It's these fears that are able to keep us children, and it's these fears that we celebrate.

It's really an odd holiday in the sense that we celebrate our own fears and mortality. We dress up as those things that scare us most, we go out and actively seek experiences that make us realize our fragileness, and by doing this we embrace and make these fears something we can live with. We may never be completely okay with the thought of one day passing on from this world, but at least with Halloween we are given a chance to face these fears.

Over the years people have debated where this day came from, what it means to us now, and if it is something important or just a device that keeps the candy-producing industry afloat. Well, it is an important holiday for many reasons, it's simple, it's practical, it allows us to feel young, and once every year it helps us deal with the tenuous state of our human existence. Remember this Halloween while you are basking in the eerie joy that comes with the festival what it is that this holiday means to you and to all of us who celebrate.

Dear Editor,

For 30 years, I put tractors together for the Case/New Holland factory in Burlington. Now I'm a state senator, and I want you to know that your state senator, Herman Quirmbach, is a great ally for hard-working Iowa families.

In this tough economy, Herman worked to streamline state government, saving a quarter of a billion dollars. Thanks to him, the state budget is balanced, and there is more than \$400 million in the state's savings accounts. Plus we didn't raise taxes, and these savings helped us protect education dollars essential to our children's classrooms and the regents universities at the same time.

It is a darn shame that many Iowans work 40 hours a week or more and still need help to get by. Herman's votes helped boost Iowa's minimum wage for the first time in 10 years and increased Iowa's Earned Income Tax Credit for working families. Together, we expanded health care to 30,000 previously uninsured Iowa kids, so their families will no longer have to choose between bankruptcy and caring for a sick child.

Herman is helping working families get back on their feet. He's expanded affordable preschool and strong community college job training programs. And he voted to extend benefits for unemployed workers studying to improve their skills.

What we really need now in Iowa are more good jobs. Herman is a strong supporter of Iowa's clean energy industry. He helped create the Power Fund that is expanding research and production so that Iowa can invest in the types of good-paying jobs that can't be outsourced to other countries. He championed important long-term investments in ISU's research facilities, like the new Biorenewables Research Laboratory

These are difficult times for people who get up and go to work every day. I appreciate serving in the Iowa Senate alongside Herman Quirmbach, a legislator who works hard for Iowa's working families.

Yours truly,

Tom Courtney

Senator Tom Courtney

**Banner News received several political letters to the editor but were only able to print one. The other letters will be posted online at www.bannernews.com. We appreciate all those who submitted letters.*

**To submit a letter to the editor please e-mail Banner News at bannernews@dmacc.edu.*

Survivor - Old School Tech edition

By Austin Leeds

Staff Writer



Having the latest tech seems to be a requirement for college students nowadays. After all, the quality of education is directly correlated to the amount of money spent per student, right? Actually, no – that's a long-standing myth that many scientific studies have already dispelled. If anything, having the latest tech actually decreases

academic performance.

With this in mind, I decided to pull out an old Mac laptop I had and bring it to DMACC for a few days, just to see how well it (and I) would work. Although, I didn't have the hardware to connect it to the Internet, this old laptop could have sufficed for everything but Blackboard. But what have it and I been up to? That's a funny story...

Man, that's old school!

If my knowledge of popular culture is current, then "old school" would be a semi-respectful reference to something that is old enough to be interesting again. "Ancient" or "dinosaur," on the other hand, would be less respectful. That said, the usual remark made about my eighteen-year-old PowerBook 180 was, "That thing is so old school."

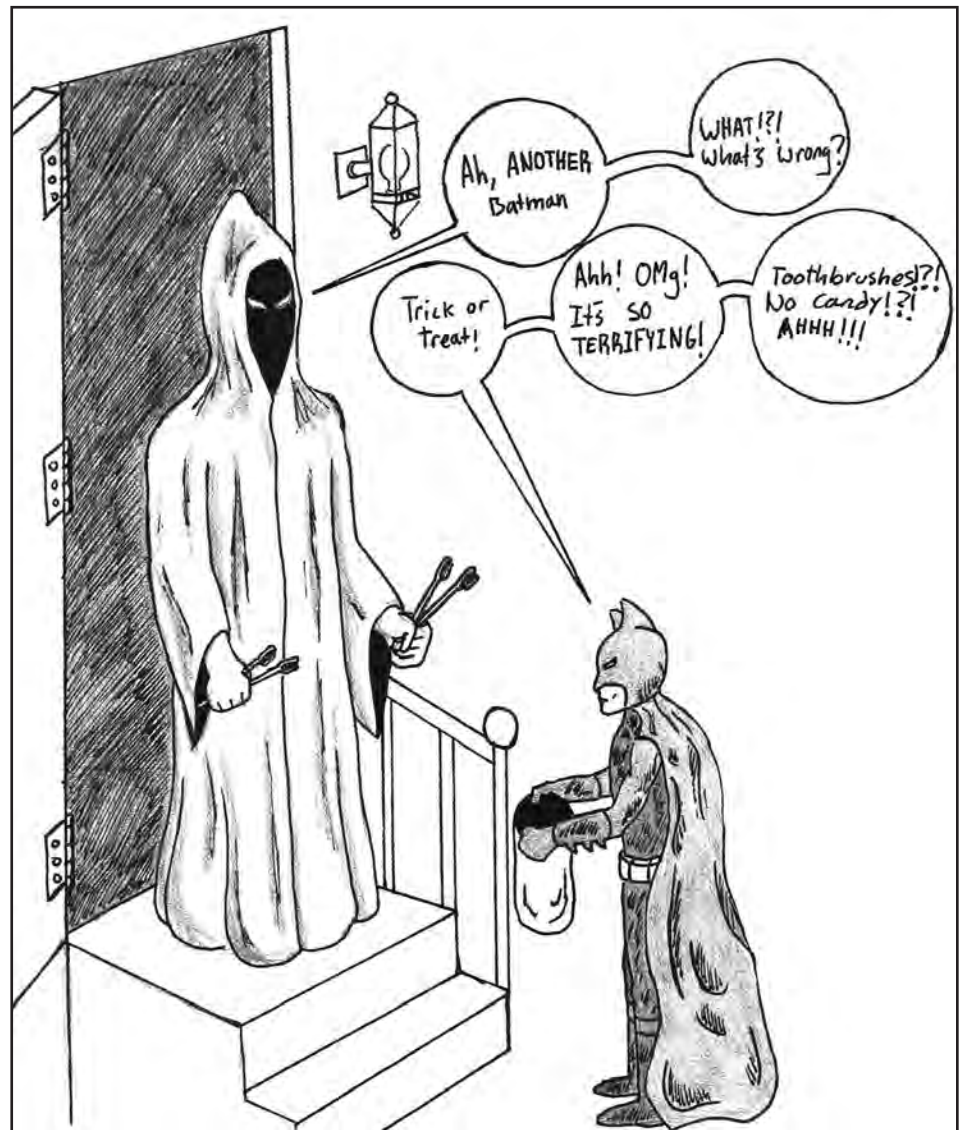
Sitting out in the Courter Center, its grayscale LCD screen showing up perfectly in the bright midday light, my PowerBook "ran with the big dogs," so to speak. A side-by-side comparison between it and several \$500+ gaming PCs left my PowerBook as the clear winner in broad daylight – the PCs all suffered from eyestrain-inducing glare.

Despite wanting to use my PowerBook as a serious tool, I couldn't resist the urge to install MacInTalk – Apple's built-in speech synthesis software, featured prominently as the voice of Auto in "WALL-E." Unlike Auto, however, my PowerBook sounds decidedly less sinister, even playful at times (as did the people who decided to talk back to it).

Microsoft Word 5.1a works decently well – with modern Macs, its documents are still readable. With modern PCs... not so much. I've used MS Word 5.1a for note-taking, writing, and with the backlight turned off, the screen is still visible in moderate to bright lighting, somewhat like the Kindle, so I am able to save a lot of battery life while typing notes.

Awesome thus far

While my PowerBook has a few weaknesses as far as speed and looks, it definitely makes an impression and is still useful to get my work done. I'll be using this thing for a long time yet.



Cartoon by former DMACC student, Josh Schmidt

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'LET ME IN' ~ FRIENDSHIP HAS ITS COST

By Tanner Sandrock
Editor-in-Chief

As Halloween approaches the box office fills with films depicting gore and images of the grotesque. Audiences begin seeking out that film that will make their stomachs turn and their bodies cover into their theater seats. It's also a time that every horror film that ever saw positive returns, will be preparing to spit out another unwanted sequel; "SAW," and "Paranormal Activity."

This is also a time that good directors will come forth and try to give us something that will truly frighten us. It just becomes the job of people, like myself, to wade through all the pilotless gore-fests and find the gems in the waste pool that has become the horror genre.

One film that caught my attention was "Let Me In," a film based on a fantastic Swedish film from 2008, "Let The Right One In." This movie demanded my focus for a few reasons; one, it was another attempt to make vampires something other than glittering Abercrombie models that attend the local high school; two, it starred Chloe Moretz, Hit Girl from "Kick Ass," as the pint size blood sucker; and three, Matt Reeves directed it and as he showed in "Cloverfield" he's not afraid to experiment with camera style.

The film follows a boy on the cusp of adolescence, Owen. (Kodi Smit-McPhee, "The Road") His parents are going through a messy divorce. His mother is an apparent alcoholic. His father is absent the entire film besides a few brief few moments on the phone. Along with Owen's feeling of abandonment in his home life, he is also sadistically abused by a kid at school, Kenny (Dylan Minnette).

Owen spends most of his free time by himself in the snow filled courtyard of the apartment complex where he and his mother reside, often times plotting his revenge against his schoolmate. It's during this time when he first meets Abby (Chloe Motets) who states, "I can't be your friend." Rejected again Owen replies, "Whoever said I wanted to be your friend anyway?" as he returns to his solitude. However, Abby's friendship embargo is short lived,



as meetings in the courtyard continue and Abby begins to show interest in Owen, and he returns her interest with kindness.

For Owen, Abby is a hard person to understand. As any of us would notice, she is a little off, but for Owen, Abby is the only form of companionship he has, so he tries not to question. He struggles with this the entire film, he knows she is different, and at times fears her, but is unable to walk away from the only person

who seems to care about him. The entire time my logical side, which would have told Owen to turn and run, is overshadowed and instead I sympathize and understand his reasons for staying. Not only that but I realize I want him to stay.

Reeves, the director, does a great job of setting the stage for this feeling of sympathy. The entire film we never get to see his father, and ever time you see his mother her face is out of frame

or out of focus. The only people who talk to Owen at school are his abusers, and by the time Abby walks into his life the feeling of abandonment is overpowering. She is the first person we ever see talk to Owen like he is a person and for that we instantly invite her in despite our knowledge of what she is.

It also becomes obvious that Abby herself isn't entirely sure of what she is. She knows she's not the average twelve-year-old girl

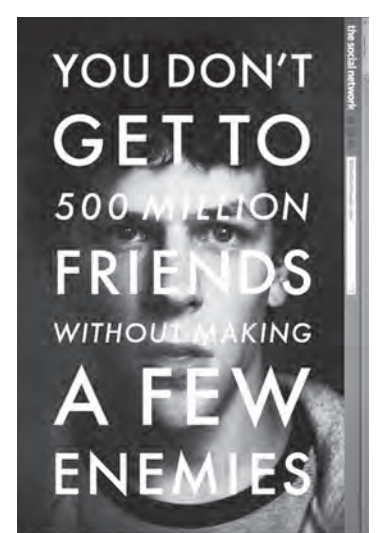
and she knows the certain rules that restrain her life, but to answer the question of "what she is?" seem to escape her. She tries to keep the extent of her abnormality a secret from Owen while, at the same time doesn't want him to think that she is normal. She tries to keep Owen at a distance and is unsuccessful as his kindness towards her strike that need for companionship she also craves.

Another very interesting character is "Abby's Father" (Richard Jenkins, "Step Brothers"). This character brings a lot of different emotions and tiers to the overall story. I don't really want to give any of it away, just know that when the story finally wraps up and the credits are rolling go back over this character in your mind. Think about what he means to the story and how his fate relates to Owen's. These realizations add an entire new light to the film.

Unlike other horror films, "Let Me In" doesn't have mindless killing for mindless killing's sake. Instead every death means something to the end product. Much like a intricate piece to the overall puzzle, every death is used to create a more complicated emotional struggle for the viewer. Those the viewer has deemed as innocent or guilty, die at the hands of Abby, and in the end it's hard to get a feeling of justification for all the deaths.

As viewers, we often want things to be cut and dried, good and bad, if someone dies we want to know if we should relish in their demise or mourn their passing. We also want to be able to judge the killer as a righteous avenger, or a cold-blooded murderer. By the time everything is said and done, good and bad are blurred together.

It's all these parts that come together to make a great film. The complexity of all the different characters working together allows this movie to hit the viewer on many different levels. The same time that you feel horror, you experience joy, and by the end the feeling of happiness and tragedy creep their way in. This going hand in hand with the artful cinematography, creates a horror film that should not be passed by. "Let Me In" scores big on every level and receives my first 5 out of 5 stars.





RICHARD JOHNSON/MCT

Zombies vs. vampires in a fight for pop-culture horror supremacy

BY AARON SAGERS
McClatchy-Tribune Information Services

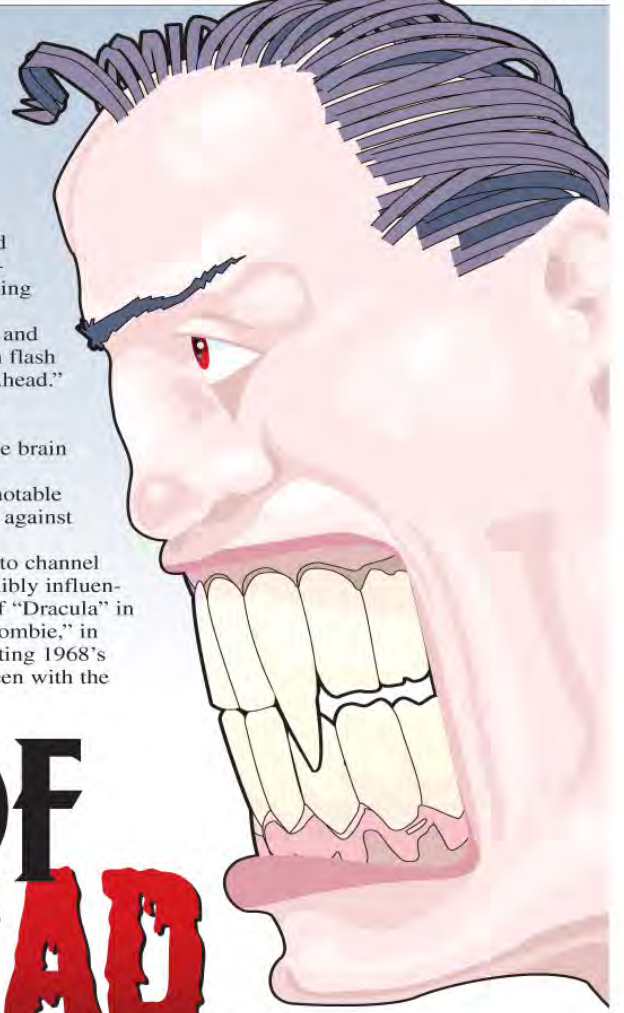
Within pop-culture, there are a lot of monsters, ghouls and maniacs out there that want to terrify us. But for the true masters of horror pop, you need look no further than the two reigning champs of chomps: zombies and vampires.

More than any other, these creatures capture the imagination and inspire ferocious loyalty. Zombie lovers corpse-up, congregate in flash mobs and hijack constructions signs to read "Caution: Zombies Ahead." Vamp fans wear molded ceramic fangs, make pilgrimages to New Orleans and Transylvania, and drink Tru Blood.

But really, which beast is best? The walking dead or undead? The brain eater or blood sucker?

In order to settle the zombie vs. vampire debate, we've collected notable films of both genres from the last 25 years, and pitted their characters against each other for a celebrity undead death match.

Although judgments on winners are completely subjective, we tried to channel George A. Romero and Bela Lugosi for guidance since they were incredibly influential in both genres. Lugosi starred as the count in the definitive version of "Dracula" in 1931 and gave the world the grandfather of the zombie movies, "White Zombie," in 1932. Romero remains the reigning genius of the zombie genre after directing 1968's "Night of the Living Dead," and he contributed heavily to vampires on screen with the underrated deconstruction "Martin" (1978).



BATTLE OF THE UNDEAD



DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT
Ash Williams
(Bruce Campbell)



NEW LINE CINEMA
Blade
(Wesley Snipes)

Supernatural slayer, male Ash vs. Blade

From the Sam Raimi-directed "Evil Dead" franchise (1981, 1987, 1992), Ashley J. "Ash" Williams (Bruce Campbell) is a wisecracking, S-Mart housewares employee who uses a chainsaw attachment for his missing hand and double-barreled, 12-gauge "boomstick" to fight zombie (ahem, Deadite) hoardes. Ash is a good fighter and inventive, but pretty dim-witted. The title character of his own film series (1998, 2002, 2004), Blade (Wesley Snipes) is a half-vampire "daywalker" who possesses speed, strength, healing powers and basically all the powers of a vampire — including blood thirst — but none of the weaknesses. Being half-supernatural and completely tough, Blade has the clear advantage and could kick Ash's ash.

WINNER: Vampires

Supernatural slayer, female Alice vs. Buffy

Alice (Milla Jovovich) is a rugged, super-human zombie-killer in the post-apocalyptic world of the "Resident Evil" quadrilogy (2002, 2004, 2007, 2010); she combines occasional telepathic and telekinetic powers with martial arts skills, munitions and a curved "kukri" knife to dispatch enemies. Buffy "The Vampire Slayer" Summers of the 1992 film is a cheerleader — with valley girl slang and wooden stakes. Not to be confused with the TV Sunnydale version, this Buffy was played by Kristy Swanson, and although she eventually saves the day, Alice could have done it in half the time with far more bloodletting.

WINNER: Zombies



Milla Jovovich as Alice in "Resident Evil: Afterlife."
SCREEN GEMS

Rodriguez/Tarantino Terrors "From Dusk Till Dawn" vs. "Grindhouse"

Filmmakers Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez have collaborated on six films together, but the most well known are the duo's work on the 1996 vampire flick "Dawn" (written by and starring Tarantino, and directed by Rodriguez) and 2007's double-feature, "Grindhouse." In the latter, Rodriguez directed the "Planet Terror" zombie segment, which includes Tarantino as zombified "Rapist No. 1." Both films sport over-the-top action, plenty of bared flesh — as well as gory flesh-eating. "Terror" features a stripper who kills zombies with a prosthetic machine-gun leg; "Dawn" has mutated vampire strippers. As an unapologetic popcorn bloodsucker movie, "From Dusk Till Dawn" takes the win.

WINNER: Vampires

Classic remakes of classics "Bram Stoker's Dracula" vs. "Zack Snyder's Dawn of the Dead"

In 1992, Francis Ford Coppola's contributed his take on Bram Stoker's 1897 tale. The result had some problems (Keanu Reeves' English accent, anyone?) but was so visually arresting that it is one of the great "Dracula" films. Gary Oldman's portrayal of the count as both an old and young man stands out. Meanwhile, Zack Snyder's 2004 remake of George A. Romero's 1978 celebrated zombies-in-mall sequel solidified the transition from the walking dead into the sprinting dead, which began with "28 Days Later." Snyder's version starts fast and stays fast, gives excellent gore and a zombie birth. Because the first 20 minutes borders on brilliance and the ending is so open-ended, Snyder narrowly snatches victory from the dude that gave us "The Godfather."

WINNER: Zombies

Forget the future "Land of the Dead" vs. "Daybreakers"

When it comes to vampire and zombie movies, the future



UNIVERSAL PICTURES
Self-aware zombies in "Land of the Dead."



LIONSGATE
Vampire society in "Daybreakers."

looks pretty bleak. In the 2005 George A. Romero film "Land of the Dead," it's the "not too distant future" and humans are outnumbered by zombies and forced to live in an extremely gated community. The rich live inside a modern skyscraper, the poor must fend on the street, and the zombies outside are becoming self-aware and evolving. In the equally bleak 2010 film "Daybreakers," vampires outnumber humans in the near future, and blood supplies are running low. Ethan Hawke plays a vampire scientist trying to create synthetic blood while the remaining humans are hunted and harvested in blood banks. "Daybreakers" possesses a nifty concept with futuristic aesthetics similar to "The Matrix," but it never captures the attention like "Land of the Dead." In "Land," Romero returned to form in a big-budget way, and the audience is actually inspired when the dead begin to use tools and decide to work together.

WINNER: Zombies

Man-made monsters "28 Days Later" vs. "I Am Legend"

Before he was the Oscar-winning director of "Slumdog Millionaire," Danny Boyle was the man who popularized the fast-moving zombie in "28 Days Later" (2002). Along with the first "Resident Evil," the film helped change movie zombies from reanimated corpses to humans infected with a virus. As soon as the character of Jim (Cillian Murphy) wakes from a coma to find London emptied of humans, the film is an unsettling and unrelenting drama that helped redefine the zombie genre — and make it cool again. With its eerie scenes of an abandoned Manhattan, "I Am Legend" is the 2007 Will Smith film about viral vampires and a scientist who may be the last living human. "Legend" could have been great if it remained focused on Smith's character surviving and combating loneliness, but the CGI virals look cheesy and the film flounders when more humans arrive.

WINNER: Zombies

ZOMBIES VS. VAMPIRES: WHERE DO CELEBRITIES OF THE SUPERNATURAL STAND?

“They’re both great. Vampires go way back to when I was a little kid. And back even more to my parent’s generation — and back even before them. The zombies are a little more recent. One of my favorite directors and close friends is George Romero, and I think he transformed the horror genre with ‘Night of the Living Dead.’”

— **John Carpenter**, director, "Halloween," "Vampires," "Big Trouble in Little China"

“I’m not particularly fascinated about zombies. I sort of backed into it. I didn’t even call them zombies in the first film; I called them ‘flesh eaters.’ I just wanted some sort of game-changing event that my human

characters could ignore in favor of petty bickering.”

— **George A. Romero**, director, "Night of the Living Dead," "Dawn of the Dead"

“Of course, I have a soft spot in my heart for vampires, because they are dark and sexy like myself. But lately zombies are taking over, man. I love zombies. ... There’s been so many great zombie films out recently.”

— **Elvira**, mistress of the dark/host, "Elvira's Movie Macabre"

“Well, I’m kind of partial to some of the Hammer vampire films. Because I saw those when I was a teenager at the



BY GIULIO MARCOCCI/ABACA PRESS/MCT

Elvira, host of "Elvira's Movie Macabre," has a soft spot for vampires.

drive-in movie. So they were all wrapped up in my memory with making out in the back seat with a surfer girl.”

— **Robert Englund**, actor, "Nightmare on Elm Street," "Zombie Strippers!"

“I think vampires are my favorite because vampires are a little more textured with a little more depth than zombies ... Zombies are difficult to make sustainable because they are trained not to have much of a personality.

There’s not much you can do with them ... On the vampire front, I actually like the smarter vampire films. ‘Interview with a Vampire’ is one of my favorites — anything that gets you to think a little more deeply about the whole vampire phenomenon as opposed to just the purely you know, visceral or women being bitten by vampires.”

— **Dave Howe**, president, Syfy channel

“Vampires can be elegant and sophisticated, beautiful ... but zombies are ugly, dead people that (continue) to be dead and rot.”

— **Tom Savini**, makeup artist, director, actor, "Dawn of the Dead," "Night of the Living Dead," "From Dusk Till Dawn"