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Laura R. Hadley

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independent

Serving Northeastern Illinois University for over a decade

Volume 15, issue 9

Tuesday, December 1, 1998

Chicago, Illinois

Phone scams... invading your privacy

Bill Edwards, Staff Writer

It was around 3 a.m. when NEIU student Gayle Johnson's phone started ringing. Still half asleep, Gayle answered the phone. A man's voice immediately took control of the call. "He spoke in a very stern, authoritative voice and addressed me by name," she recalls, "he said he was from the Secret Service." In her own home, and in the middle of the night, Gayle was being set up for what has become a relatively common telephone scam.

The man went on to accuse her of having made calls to countries like Saudi Arabia and Beirut on her telephone calling card. With her mind still clouded from sleep, Gayle could hardly grasp the accusations he was throwing out at her. He started blurting out phone numbers, asking if she had called them. When she denied calling them he insisted that they were on her bill. "I don't remember him coming right out and accusing me of being a terrorist," she said, "but he said that these countries were known to be homes to certain terrorist organizations." He claimed that the calls were a "breach of national security."

He asked her if anyone else had been using the card. When she answered that nobody else had, he demanded that she give him her calling card number in order to verify the bill as belonging to her. "That's when I really woke up," said Gayle, "I suddenly realized that I didn't even have a calling card." The caller hung-up the moment she

voiced her revelation.

Gayle called the Secret Service offices first thing in the morning. An employee told her that she was about the twentieth person to report such a call in the past week. The employee went on to say that the caller was trying to obtain her calling card number for their own personal use. They call late at night in hopes that the victim, with their senses dulled, will unwittingly give-up their card numbers.

This in-your-face phone scam is actually one of the less frequent types of scams being reported over the wire. One of the more popular frauds has to do with international calls. Newspaper ads, e-mail messages, and in some cases 'urgent' messages left on your answering machine direct you to dial numbers that appear to be domestic calls. In some cases these 'urgent' messages say you have won a prize or that you owe money and legal action is pending. Sometimes they may even go as far as saying that a family member has been injured, or killed.

The numbers lack the "011" prefix usually required to make an international call, therefore, resembling a domestic call. When you place this call you will generally hear someone who claims to only speak broken English, and they will try to keep you on the line as long as possible. You may also get a long recorded message. These calls are simply an off-shoot of the 900 numbers here in the states. Because they are outside the country, they are not bound by U.S. regulations that require them to warn you of the charge and rate involved. Most commonly, the area codes used in



Photo by Thomas J. Foley

He could be a student making a phone call. Or he could be trying to elicit personal phone data from you for his own purposes. Are you aware enough to prevent a phone scam from happening to you?

these scams are 809 (Dominican Republic), 758 (St. Lucia), and 664 (Montserrat).

Another scam involves callers who pose as employees of the telephone company. They instruct the person answering the phone to punch in a series of digits in an effort to test the line. In reality this enables the caller to place a long distance call at the

expense of the person answering the call.

Also beware of callers offering sweepstakes prizes that ask for money in advance to pay for shipping, taxes, or other products sold in conjunction with the offer. Stay away from the "too good to be true" offers; they probably are. Never give your credit card number to unfamiliar companies

without checking on them first.

Be educated and be smart. If you would like to learn a little more about protecting yourself, simply log on to any of the big internet search engines and run a search on "phone scams." You will get plenty of information on these and other common scams, and lots of tips on how to avoid getting ripped-off.

How to keep the doldrums at bay during the break

Jennifer Dickerson, Associate Editor

Don't have plans during the semester break? No worries, you too can have things to do and not really have to go anywhere. Well, almost.

That is, at least not very far. In order to knock the doldrums out of your vacation, check out these cool and reasonably priced outings that are not only educational, but fun. All museums here in the city have its doors open to you and your entire family.

No one should miss the Lincoln Park Zoo Christmas light special. Very bright and fun for the entire family, you can check out its spectacular display of colors at night. Starting from 5:30 p.m. and ending at 8:30 p.m. Sunday

through Thursday. Or you can catch the light show Friday or Saturday from 5:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. that will give you plenty of time to bundle up the kids. Prices are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children under 12 years of age. Kids age 3 and under are admitted free. Show times are now through January 3. For information on the Zoo, call (312)742-2000.

One of my favorites, The Shedd Aquarium is open from 9 a.m. -5 p.m. Monday through Friday and tickets are strongly advised. Adults cost \$11, kids and senior citizens get in for \$9. This fee is for the Oceanic and Aquarium viewing. If your not interested in seeing any special

see To do page 3

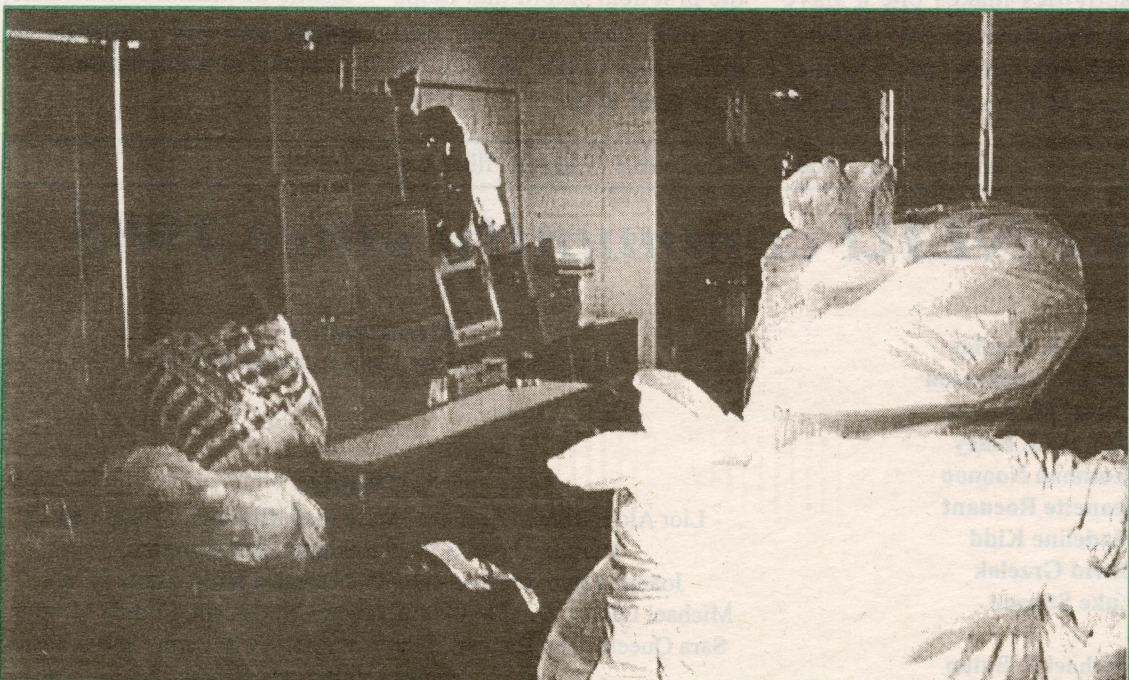


Photo by Thomas J. Foley

The Holiday Food and Clothing Drive was a huge success. Student Government and the other sponsors collected 17 extra large bags of men's, women's and children's clothing, three bags of coats, three bags of toys and two boxes of toiletries for the Cornerstone Community Outreach in Uptown, as well as six big boxes of clothing, two boxes of medication, and \$63 in cash donations for the victims of Hurricane Mitch. Thank you everyone who opened their hearts this season, and a special thanks to Beck's Bookstore for their generous donations. — Maria Gandara, SGA Vice President.

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Campus police report

For jump starts, auto lockouts, and all emergencies, please contact Public Safety at extension 200

November 24

Suspicious Person: An unknown person entered a class and claimed to be a registered student. He took a test and shortly left with the test. This person was not a student.

Theft: A student stated she left her wallet on a desk in the Science Bldg. When she returned, it was gone. A loss of \$285.

November 30

Ramadhan: A Muslim celebration of fasting

Abdul Kareem, *Special Contributor*

Muslims all over the world engage in fasting during the month of Ramadhan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Fasting in Ramadhan refers to the month-long abstinence from eating, drinking, and having sexual intercourse from dawn until dusk. One may resume those activities from dusk until the dawn nears.

Fasting is one of the five pillars on which the edifice of Islam rests. The first pillar is to bear witness that there is no deity who deserves to be worshipped except Allah, the Unique Supreme being, and that Muhammad, peace be upon him, is Allah's Messenger. The second pillar is to pray five times a day. The third pillar is to fast during Ramadhan. The fourth pillar is to pay Zakat (charity), and the fifth pillar

Accident: Two students collided on the access road. One state citation was issued. No injuries were reported. A loss of \$2,000.

Theft: A student left her cell phone in a rest room in the Classroom Bldg. When she returned, it was gone. A loss of \$250.

Criminal Damage: Graffiti was discovered in a mens room in the Classroom Bldg. A loss of \$20.

December 2

Accident: A student reported an accident which occurred on Nov. 30.

December 3

Criminal Damage: A student reported vehicle dam-

age he believes happened on campus. A loss of \$500.

Other Police: A youth was caught spray-painting the wall of a nearby business. He was transported to the 17th District.

December 4

Station Info: A student claimed to be stalked by another student. He decided to drop a class later.

Theft: A student reported leaving her purse in the F-Wing. When she returned it was gone. A loss of \$20.

Hit & Run: A student reported his auto being struck by an unknown driver while he was on the access road. A loss of \$1000.

December 8

Theft: A student reported leaving a purse in the Science Bldg. She later found out that someone had charged \$700 to her credit card.

Theft: A student reported a textbook stolen. A loss of \$60. This occurred in the Infocommons.

Medical Assist: A student was injured in the P.E. Bldg. He refused medical attention and was lent a pair of crutches from Health Services.

December 9

Theft: A student reported leaving a textbook in the Science Bldg. When she returned it was gone. A loss of \$40.

Have a
safe and
happy
Holiday
Season
from
everyone in
Public
Safety!

is to perform the Hajj, a pilgrimage to Makkah, at least once if you are able.

Fasting is an institution for purification of the soul. It is optional at other times, but is an obligatory duty on every Muslim in good health during Ramadhan. Allah said, in the Holy Quran, that He has enjoined fasting on Muslims, as it was enjoined on those before them, so that they may learn self-restraint. Fasting is common to all divine religions, but the Islamic fast is unique from other fasts in manner, time, and the number of days. Fasting begins when the new moon of the month of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is sighted. This year the month of Ramadhan is beginning on the 19 or 20 of December, depending on the observation of the new moon.

Saum (fasting), as it is stated in the Quran, is easy to

observe and has full social and spiritual benefits for the individual and the society at large. It is neither a means of self-torture nor punishment. The Islamic fast is not strenuous and it does not go beyond the human endurance. Precepts have been laid down to make the fast easier. For example, there is an insistence on taking a *Sahoor*, pre-dawn meal, before the commencement of the fast. Further, one has to hasten to break the fast as soon as the sun sets.

The advantages of fasting are numerous. Through fasting the Muslims learn self-restraint, discipline and flexibility of habits. Over indulgence in eating, drinking, smoking, or marital activities makes one a slave of his desires and habits. Through fasting one becomes free of his slavery. Fasting

helps those who are well off learn to appreciate the afflictions of the poor and become more sympathetic toward them. When a Muslim fasts, he feels he is joining the whole Muslim world in a spiritual act. This feeling increases his sense of community and brotherhood.

Fasting teaches Muslims the principal of sincere love. When a Muslim observes the fast he does it out of deep love for Allah. The man who loves Allah truly is a man who understands what it is to love.

Fasting generates patience and endurance in the Muslim society. It is strict self-training. Fasting provides the Muslim with the ability to experience the pain of deprivation and hunger. It is the practical shield that helps us not only to face the difficulties of life, but also to cope with them.

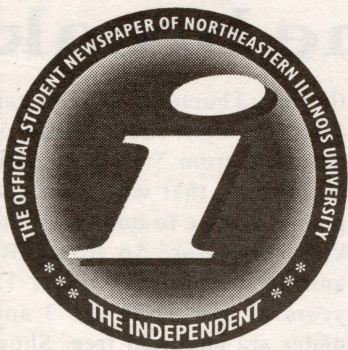
Fasting teaches all Muslims to be generous when helping others and in sharing their wealth with the less fortunate. The month of fasting is the season of charity, devotion and comfort. It is an outstanding aspect of the solidarity, unity, and the equality of the Muslim society. It emphasizes the essential equality of Muslims and as a result creates sentiments of love and brotherhood in their hearts.

It was in this blessed month of Ramadhan that the Holy Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. We Muslims thank Allah for the blessings which He has bestowed in this month of Ramadhan.

Ramadhan is also a blessing for non-Muslims. Ramadhan instills in Muslims endurance, peace and love towards all creatures in the universe.

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Polish Consul addresses NATO expansion during visit

Adeline Pierre, Special Contributor

After being approached by the Chair of the Political Science Department, the Politics Club co-sponsored the arrival of the Polish Consul, Jacek Sawicz on campus last Thursday, November 29.

Mr. Sawicz received his Master's Degree in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Warsaw. He came to address a cross-section of the NEIU students and faculty on the subject of NATO's expansion to include Poland early next year.

The address was well attended by members of the academic and the administration of the university. Among them were Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Dr. David Unumb, and Provost and vice-president for Academic Affairs,

Estella Lopez. Mostly the Political Science faculty, but also Economics and History faculties, arrived to listen to the address whose theme cuts across all of their fields.

The talk took place during Dr. Varophas' War and Peace class period from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. in room S317 of the Science Building. Mr. Sawicz spoke for about one hour after presenting the Political Science Department Chair, Dr. Charles Pastors, with a small gift. The main focus of the talk was to affirm the "rightness" of the decision to allow Poland into NATO.

After giving a brief background on NATO itself, Mr. Sawicz went on to describe some agreements already in place in Europe of which Poland is a part. He mentioned the Vienna Document of 1992, formed to create

confidence building measures in Eastern European countries. He also talked about the Partnership for Peace agreement that allows those countries to exchange diplomats, and military forces.

Mr. Sawicz also listed some requirements that Poland had to meet before its admission into NATO. Poland has already met some of those requirements, for example, their economy is stable, with inflation down to one digit. Mr. Sawicz felt that they can meet the other requirements for Poland's official admission next April. For instance, their Air Force must update and purchase new multipurpose planes. They must update their communication system, and their infrastructure.

The Consul was very optimistic

about what the expansion will mean to Poland and to the United States. The Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Polish Consuls had gone on a Public Relations campaign across America, promoting this expansion. They successfully presented their case in front of business, educational and general sectors of the population. The proposal only needed 67 of the senate's votes, but it passed with 80.

In response to audience members' questions, the Consul stressed that Poland's inclusion broadens the peace area, and this in turn is good for everyone. He asserted that in 50 years NATO countries had fought one war. He also mentioned that the admission of more countries decreases NATO dues. Dues paid by the U.S. tax payer will be spread out

among more contributors. According to the Consul, for American business people, the inclusion will mean an economically stable environment for their investments.

For Poland, the Consul said, despite the adjustment, the regular Polish citizen will feel better knowing he is safe from the threat of foreign invasions. Besides more jobs, (undoubtedly created by an economic foreign invasion) salaries and job opportunities will increase. While Mr. Sawicz did not feel that the standard of living would miraculously improve to reach the American level, he thought it should at least rise to the European Union level. However, above all, the Consul felt that regular Polish citizens will feel dignity at being part of the NATO family.

To do

continued from page 1

shows at the Aquarium, then check it out on Thursdays, which are discount days, pricing \$5 for adults and \$4 for kids and senior citizens. For more information on this museum, call (312)939-2438 or for tickets, call Ticket Master at (312)559-0200. Have your credit card ready.

The **Museum of Science and Industry**, an old favorite of both young and old alike, are having two shows that will be entertaining all by itself. The first show running at the Omni Max is *Mysteries of Egypt* which runs from Monday through Friday at 10:00 a.m., 11:40 a.m., 1:20 p.m., and 3 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at the same times during the week with an additional show time at 4:40 p.m. The second show, *Mount Everest* runs Monday through Friday at 10:50 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2:10 p.m. and Saturday at the same times with an additional showing at 3:50 p.m.

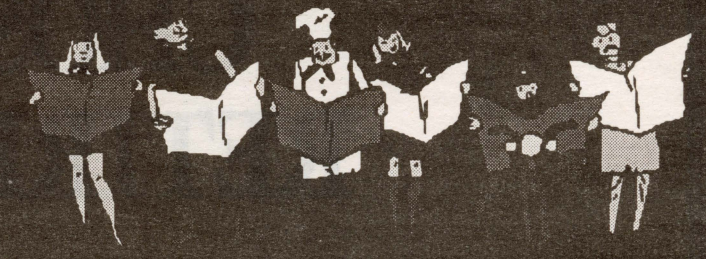
Reservations are highly recommended and tickets are priced from \$12 for adults, \$7 for kids, and \$10 for senior citizens. Or catch the show on Thursdays which are discount days with prices of \$7 adults, \$5 for kids, and \$6 for senior citizens. These shows are for the young and old alike. Entertaining and educational. Otherwise just checking out the museum itself is fun all by itself which is free for the whole family on Thursdays. General admission dates are as follows: Monday through Friday 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. For more information, call (773)684-1414.

If motorcycles are your thing, then you should check out the **Field Museum**, which is showing a truly awesome spectacular *Motorcycle Exhibit*. These babies will impress the pants off you and is a must see for the entire family. Running now through March 3 (there is no way anyone should miss this) from 9:00 a.m. through 4 p.m. Prices are \$14.50, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Wednesday is priced at \$8.50 and Friday through Sundays are priced \$15.50. Suggestion? Check them out Wednesday at \$8.50 and save! For more information call (888)474-7900.

These museums are highly entertaining and very educational. No one will go home without finding something new. It is fun for the whole family, why not bring your friends too? Otherwise you can sit home and surf the channels like a couch potato (but you wouldn't want to be caught home one night would you?)

Good Luck to all students during finals!



See you next semester. Next issue comes out January 11, 1999.

From the staff of the *Independent*.

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A Another
Perspective



Voice of the Campus

Freshman Chronicles: A thankful reflection of a first semester at NEIU

My father, the minister of our church, recently delivered a Thanksgiving sermon based on a very simple concept: gratitude. Brief and fairly straightforward, the thesis of his message was an easy charge: "In everything, give thanks."

Long after the sermon was over, that message remained in my mind and I realized there were many things I had never bothered to express gratitude for, or more disturbingly, had taken for granted. With this troubling information brought to my view, I resolved to change my ways and decided to start expressing gratitude for everything I possibly could, or at least die trying.

As I found myself being thankful for my health, my family and friends, and financial security, I realized that school had never once crossed my list. How could that be, considering I spent a significant amount of time in the halls of this institution, in an effort to pursue an education and prepare myself for an ever-changing world in which I hopefully would take a powerful, active role?

Being that I take a strong stance on education, as I value how far it has come and where it is going, I cannot express my praise of it without mentioning teachers, for they are the "Great Imparters of Knowledge", the "Grandes Mademoiselles and Monsieurs" (sorry guys, my French is rusty) the true "Divas and Heroes" and more frankly, in the words of a friend of mine, "The people handing out grades."

Although teachers have often been subject to criticism and ridicule (in high school I wondered what some of my teacher's Ph.D.'s really stood for) there are some who work diligently, genuinely care for their students, are open to new ideas, and do not act like know-it-ALLS. In all fairness, there are some who make themselves available for help outside of their classrooms, make a conscious effort to understand the style and learning pattern of each, and know within that sometimes, just sometimes, a phony excuse might need to be pardoned, especially if the student worked hard throughout the duration of the course.

I, an 18 year old freshman on the verge of completing my first semester of college, was lucky

enough to have teachers like I have mentioned above. As is to be expected, I did not always see eye to eye with my teachers, especially the time I was reprimanded for coming late for the 15th time, the time I received a "B" on a paper I should have gotten an "A" on, the time I got a F- on a paper I thought I would have least pulled a "C" on, (forget the fact that I didn't meet all of the requirements, o.k., I didn't meet any) the time I prepared an eloquent speech and was cut off for discussing the wrong topic.....

The abysmal list could go on, but, as horrific as it seems, all these events proved a valuable learning experience, and have helped me successfully participate in a not-so-simple college environment. More importantly, these "occurrences" encouraged me to become a competent student on my own, without all the sugarcoating and pampering I had received throughout my four years of high school.

Regardless of your personal feelings toward N.E.I.U., it is essential that before this semester ends, we thank all of our teachers as we tolerated them and they tolerated us. Some of my readers, just to be devil's advocates, may argue that this semester is a chapter of their life they would rather keep closed, as the only thing they can equivocate with their educational experience at N.E.I.U. consists of profanities, obscenities, and that infamous finger, which, when stuck upright, holds a message all its own.

However, as students, N.E.I.U. is where we were this semester, and whether we like it or dislike it is immaterial at this present point in time. Rather, as educated and open-minded individuals, what proves critical here is exhibiting the maturity which allows us to give this semester appropriate closure by smiling and thanking our instructors, acknowledging it as a learning experience, and then, as should be done with almost everything: moving on. (Note: If one only "dropped in" 2 or 3 times this semester this may be difficult, especially since your professor may ask if you are a student at all).

So I, in the fashion of my father, give you a simple charge: If you can read this, thank a teacher. Hmmm... the simple phrase, "Thank you." The English language has yet to see sweeter words.



JEMIMAH NOONOO

Editorial

Pull the plug on small pox

X-files fans would know the imminent danger that the public is in, from the reintroduction of small pox disease upon them. With respect to all X-"philes" as they so wittingly have coined the name for themselves, it is a show and the idea that small pox, an eradicated disease, could pose a threat to us now, is somewhat laughable. But that is just what could possibly happen.

The Centers for Disease Control, have the last remains of the disease. A committee has put off making a decision to completely get rid of it until June 1999. What could possibly cause officials of the U.S to keep around such a destructive, entity, which has no profound value? If you guessed War you get the daily double.

Can you guess what country in the 80's freeze dried tons of the stuff for longer shelf life, with the intent of spraying American cities in the event of World War Three? That's right, those bloody communists, well former communists, Russia. Now it boggles my mind when I think of the extent the world powers will go to, when dreaming up ways to kill each other. Its kinda like saving some spoiled milk in case your neighbor wants to borrow some. Don't laugh; I know people like that.

Small pox would be distributed in war by missiles. Isn't it bad enough that we have the constant worry of war in general? Peace organizations from almost every country along with the biggest peace organization, the United Nations, try to get disarmament races going. They try to impose the notion of warding away from nuclear arms, meanwhile the powers that be dream of a way to inflict one of the most horrible diseases of our time upon society once more. A disease that took years to kill off, is while we speak, being debated upon. How stupid are humans? I mean can there actually be a debate on whether to save this thing?

I think there is more than enough biological, chemical, and nuclear warfare out there that we don't really need to worry about keeping small pox on life support. Get rid of the damn thing once and for all and debate things of value, like whether Monica Lewinski's dress will ever be wearable again. Hey, but that's just my opinion.

--NIRAJ MALOTRA

Letter to the Editor

Housing the president on campus

As chairman of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University, I would like to give you a report on the status of our plan to build a president's residence on campus.

This is an initiative of the Board of Trustees and is not being undertaken at the request of President Steinberg. The trustees would like to see the president living on campus for several reasons.

First, we think it is important for the president of any university to demonstrate a commitment to the institution by living on campus.

Second, a president's residence would provide an accessible location for luncheons, dinners, and other social events with student representatives, members of the faculty, community leaders, and others. Visiting dignitaries would not only be able to enjoy a meal with the president, but could be accommodated for overnight visits.

Third, other State of Illinois Universities, including non-residential campuses such as Governors State University, provide on campus housing for the president, because experience has shown that the extensive utilization of the residence for social purposes can increase morale, improve communications, and reduce non-productive travel time for everyone involved.

As of November 19, the architectural committee, headed by trustee Edward Dykla, is working on a design. It should be noted that Dr. Steinberg

is not a member of the architectural committee and has not attended any committee meetings. This is because the Board of Trustees is planning a residence for not only the current president but all presidents to come, and must take into account a variety of family sizes and uses. However, we are a long way from finalizing plans or obtaining necessary approvals or securing funding.

Because all universities provide either a residence for the president or a housing allowance or both, the trustees believe that we can accomplish our goal in a cost justified manor while furthering our educational mission.

DANIEL L. GOODWIN
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Letter Policy

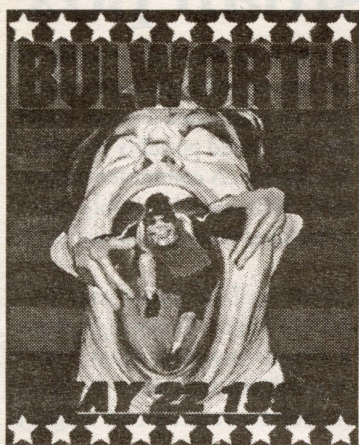
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Opinions!
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To hell with box office receipts: the best (and worst movies) of 1998



John Randall, Staff Writer

Sixty percent of the films nominated for best picture last year came out during the Christmas season, such as *Titanic*, *As Good As It Gets*, and *Good Will Hunting*. The latter two were vastly overrated and such films like *Eve's Bayou*, *The Ice Storm*, *Donnie Brasco*, and *The Wings of The Dove* were overlooked, part of the reasoning being the hype of the holiday season where the last of the movies come out for that given year.

Unlike last year, this year has more quality films that came out before the holidays, so it will be difficult for the Christmas movies to make as big of an impact. There are a few to watch for, though, like *The Thin Red Line*, a World War II epic. If done well, it could challenge *Saving Private Ryan*.

A Civil Action is a courtroom drama about a leukemia cluster in a Boston suburb. It opens on Christmas Day in Los Angeles and New York but not until January 8 in Chicago.

A Simple Plan, which opened on December 11, stars Bill Paxton and Billy Bob Thornton. It deals with two brothers who find over four million dollars on a downed airplane. The last time these two actors got together was for the incredible *One False Move*, which is the best crime film of the 90's.

Central Station, a foreign film from Brazil also opening on Christmas, is a shoe-in for a nomination for best foreign film. The rest of the field might provide good entertainment but little else in the minds of the academy, such as *Mighty Joe Young*, *You Got Mail*, *Patch Adams*, and *Step-Mom*. With that said, here are the best films of the year to date.

10. *Dark City*: This film makes the list on the merits of its technical and visionary achievement. From the



standpoint of art direction it is a marvel to watch. Alex Proyas, the director, gives us many details of this futuristic world. Usually science fiction and film noir do not mix, but here it does. This was obviously inspired by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

9. *American History X*: Edward Norton is amazing in the lead role, he brings a rare focus and intent with tons of energy. It unfolds as two parallel stories, one in which he tries to get his brother to avoid his mistakes and the other flashbacks of his transformation from being a white supremacist. Some of the material is predictable but the performances far outshine the screenplay. It has some similarities to *Menace II Society*. The use of film noir along with social commentary blends well. Academy Award prediction: Edward Norton 8-1 odds to be nominated for best actor.

8. *The Truman Show*: The first of two films on the list that deal with fantasy and television shows. This one stars Jim Carey as Truman, who does not realize he is living his entire life on live television. What an intriguing premise. It is also a social commentary on how television treats its celebrities including intruding on their private lives. What makes this story special is how Carey handles the material. He creates a character that is warm, special and one for which the viewer cares, not unlike *Forrest Gump*, which mixed comedy and drama. Jim Carey: 5-1 odds to be nominated for best actor.

7. *One True Thing*: A woman comes back home for a birthday party, learns her mother has cancer and winds up staying much longer than she ever had hoped in this emotional family drama..

The woman is played by Renee Zellweger, who idolized her father because of his career and for keeping



to a schedule each day. But when she spends much more time around him, she learns that he will keep his schedule even though his wife has cancer. Then she begins to hate him and what he stands for, and her mother because she is forced to take care of everything in the house while really she should be back working on her career. This is a story of how we view our parents in adulthood, how they may not be as idealized as first thought. Meryl Streep is wonderful as the mother and is the odds on favorite to win for best actress.

6. *The Spanish Prisoner*: The title refers to a classic con-game. It is also a manipulation of the audience. Not unlike *The Usual Suspects*, this story is full of plot where a second viewing is recommended to comprehend the whole story. The main character invents a process that will be worth millions for his company, it gets stolen and the real fun begins. David Mamet, who wrote this, plays it like a high stakes poker game, where even the ending may not be what it seems. This is like a Hitchcockian plot gone to hell.

5. *Return to Paradise*: Listen to this premise- three guys go to Malaysia for drugs, fun and women. Two of them return to America to their jobs. The third one stays behind and is caught with a ton of hashish and sentenced to death. Two years later, the other two find out he will be executed in eight days unless both go back and serve three years each for their responsibility for the drugs or one goes back and serves six years. The story plays with this dilemma throughout until two of the characters have a transformation at the end. The opening sequences are wonderfully photographed and shows the three men at their happiest. From there it is all down hill. Anne Heche and Vince Vaughn are great in this sleeper of a movie.

4. *Bulworth*: This film says more about the political climate in our society than any other in recent memory. It stars Warren Beatty as a senator who is so sick of the political process that he puts out a contract on his own life. This gives him three days to say whatever is on his mind, and there is a lot. This story makes one laugh and wince at the same time. One will either love it or hate it. It is the best comedy of the year. Beatty 10-1 odds for best actor. 5-1 odds for best screenplay.

3. *Pleasantville*: Two 90's teenagers are transported to a 50's comedy thru a television set, not unlike a *Leave It to Beaver* sitcom. It deals with the sexual revolution, riots, the issue of color and change...lots of it. These issues were brought up in the 60's, and seems to be saying that you need two present teenagers to get the 50's society to embrace change and what is about to happen in the years ahead. Of course this is open to interpretation, but that is what this critic got out of it. 3-1 odds to be nominated for best picture. 5-1 for best screenplay.

2. *Saving Private Ryan*: The first half hour is worth seeing by itself. Harrowing, realistic, shattering could be words to describe it. Spielberg's use of underwater shots are striking. The film falters in the last 20 minutes where superficial set pieces and boring action sequences take place. It was difficult to keep the momentum from the first hour but it seems Spielberg did not even try. Otherwise this would be the best film of the year. This is the favorite to win for best picture.

1. *Beloved*: What do you get when you have an incredible screenplay, even better performances, a harrowing subject and wonderful photography? You get the best film

of the year. The reference to slavery is in almost every scene, not totally implied but nevertheless more powerful and compelling this way. We see the anguish, torture, and brutality that was brought on because of slavery. There is a lot of underlying meaning here including the ghost that Oprah Winfrey must deal with, that in itself can be a metaphor for her slavery experience. Few films ever try to show the anguish that the slavery experience caused on its millions of victims. We should give this film credit for having the courage to at least try. Sad part of all of this is the film has made a little more than \$20 million at the box office. How can that be? Odds to be nominated for best picture 20-1. Winfrey also 20-1 for best actress.

Honorable Mention: *Babe: Pig In The City*, *Happiness*, *He Got Game*, *Central Station*, *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, *Clockwatchers*, *Waking Ned Devine*

Worst Movies of The Year

5. *The Waterboy*: Adam Sandler is even worse here than in *Happy Gilmore*. He seems to use every sport cliché known to man.

4. *Lost in Space*: To think this was made by the same studio that did *Dark City*. Awful acting and writing along with cheesy special effects.

3. *Armageddon*: Could the scenes on the asteroid be any more boring? Bruce Willis and Ben Affleck in the same movie, not good at all.

2. *Godzilla*: If there were decent acting and special effects and not a rip off of *Jurassic Park* this might have gotten off the worst movies list.

1. *Spice World*: Too bad they had to talk, and sing. How is this idea? A silent movie where the audience does not have to hear them sing or talk?

Dave's Rant: Light the cigars, 1998 is over!

Best Video

Ray of Light, Madonna

Best Naked Video

Thank You, Alanis Morissette

Best Barenaked Video

One Week, Barenaked Ladies

Best Barenaked Album Cover

Human Beings, Seal

Best sign that the world is coming to an end

Bertie Higgins, who had possibly the lamest song ever to hit the charts with the early 80's puke generator Key Largo is now hawking his new album of covers covering such "classics" as *Kokomo*. If you are on the ledge, you might be tempted to jump, because you can

actually order Trop Rock on line at www.BertieHiggins.com

Best new rock act name that sounds really perverted, but really isn't

Eagle-Eye Cherry

Three of the most frightening thoughts of the year

1. The Rolling Stones may be immortal.
2. Aerosmith is peaking.
3. Aerosmith's lead singer Steven Tyler has 50 year old lips.

Best ass-kicking pop single of the year

Celebrity Skin, Hole

Best non-ass-kicking single

of the year
Torn, Natalie Imbruglia

The Rick Springfield award for best single by a former soap opera star
Torn, Natalie Imbruglia

The Meredith Brooks award for best potential to be another one-hit wonder
Torn, Natalie Imbruglia

The worst gay-themed TV show cancellation of the year
Ellen

The best gay-themed TV show addition of the year
Will and Grace

Best VH-1 Behind the Music special

Studio 54: It was far more

interesting and informative than either of the movies about it.

Best boy bands
1. Backstreet Boys
2. 'N Sync
3. Five

Ugliest pretty boy in a rock band
The lead singer of Matchbox 20

Best Chicago bands you've never heard of yet
1. Simple Simon
2. Infraction
3. Nubile Thangs

Song most likely to be overplayed in 1999 and the year 2000
1999, Prince

Best new Chicago radio station
92.7, Kiss FM, a new top 40 station

Best Wrigleyville bar closing songs
Closing Time, Semisonic
Good Riddance, Green Day

Take a moment to think lyric of the year
"In the end, only kindness matters" in *Hands* by Jewel

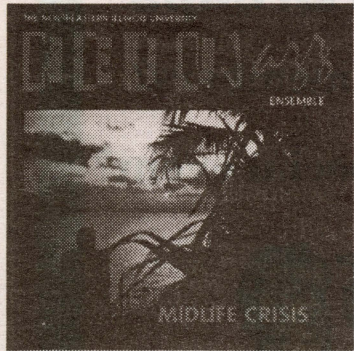
Best soap opera
The Clinton/Lewinsky affair

Best comedy
The Clinton/Lewinsky affair

Best use of a cigar since Humphrey Bogart
The Clinton/Lewinsky affair

Music quickies: reviews for the busy holiday season

all reviews by Dave Grzelak, REV Editor



NEIU Jazz Ensemble, *Midlife Crisis* (NEIU)

MUSIC: A Devastating brass section shines throughout, especially in marathon songs like *Ximeno 735* (10:29) and *Canadian Bacon* (9:25), the latter of which features a jumpy and fun guitar solo. Killer (and lengthy) bass solo in the chacha-ing of *Song #2* (no it's not a cover of Blur). Agile and staccato piano jam about a 1/3 of the way through the title track.

LYRICS: Incomplete The musicians speak through their virtuosity.

PRODUCTION: A Any studio album that keeps a live feel earns this grade. Solid layering and control of instrument tracks, especially pieces that ebb and flow as much as those in this album

OVERALL: A Great jazz covers performed by a great jazz ensemble.



The Offspring, *Americana* (Sony Records)

MUSIC: C+ The album opens fast with

Have You Ever and lead singer Dexter Holland seeming to try to catch up vocally to the breakneck pace and gets even faster with *Staring at the Sun* but takes a break from pure punk speed to the campy *Pretty Fly (For a White Guy)* and resumes to up the tempo with *The Kids Aren't Alright*...you understand. The structure of the songs are pretty pop-punk standard, similar chords and all.

LYRICS: B+ Offspring lyrics are usually fun and distinct. *Americana* adds to this catalog: "Mark still lives at home, cause he's got no job, he just plays guitar and smokes a lot of pot" in *The Kids Aren't Alright*; "It's a place...where culture's defined by the ones least refined, and you'll be left behind if you don't fit in" in the title track; the entire set of lyrics for *Pretty Fly (For a White Guy)*.

PRODUCTION: B Professional, corporate mix.

OVERALL: B More pop punk fun.



KCRW-FM, Vol. 4 *Rare on Air* (Mammoth Records)

MUSIC: A From the opening should-be funk-hop anthem *Cut Chemist Suite* by Ozomatli, the album is full of strong performances; Ani DiFranco's thumping and frantic acoustic rhythm in *Gravel*; Neil and Tim Finn give a strong pop acoustic performance in *Only Talking Sense*—their gentle harmonies rival legendary status (as in

Simon and Garfunkel good); even overkill hits such as *Sex and Candy* by Marcy Playground and *Good Enough* by Sarah MacLachlan have new life breathed into them in *Rare on Air*.

LYRICS: B Most addictive lyric line in *Cut Chemist Suite* by Ozomatli "Throw your fist in the air"; Most visual lyric: "Across the kitchen table, I fired several rounds, but you were still sitting there when the smoke cleared" in *Gravel* by Ani DiFranco

PRODUCTION: B+ The album captures all levels of energy from the brassy and frantic *El Fin de la Infancia* by Cafe Tacuba to the somber *Subterranean Homesick Alien* by Radiohead.

OVERALL: A Too many great performances to enumerate here: Soul Coughing's *Disseminated* and Ozomatli's *Cut Chemist Suite* could stand as an album unto themselves.



Pearl Jam, *Live on Two Legs* (Sony Music)

MUSIC: C Not being spectacular musicians to start, Pearl Jam doesn't take many chances live. If you're looking for a live album where the songs sound "just like the record," this is it. *Corduroy* and *Even Flow* may as well have had a live audience track dropped behind the studio album cuts.

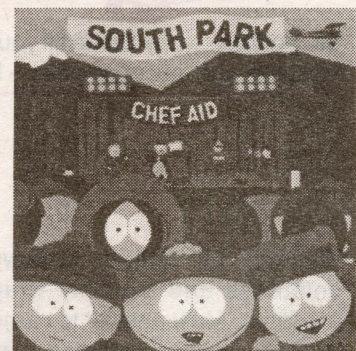
LYRICS: B- Being a greatest hits/live compilation, a grade of incomplete would probably be more appropriate.

Pearl Jam scene-setting lyrics can be compelling at times: "She lies and says she's in love with him, can't find a better man" in *Better Man*.

PRODUCTION: B- Sufficiently captures the live experience. It's no Cheap Trick *Live at Budakhan*, but for Pearl Jam fans, it should do just fine.

OVERALL: C+ A gift for fans of a band who is rapidly falling behind the times.

Hyper quickies...



Chef Aid: *The South Park Album* (American Recordings)

For South Park fans, the album has all the faves from the TV series: *Chef's Chocolate Salty Balls (P.S. I Love You)*, Cartman's hysterical cover of Styx's classic *Come Sail Away*, and of course the South Park theme by Primus. For those not enamored with the two-dimensional animation and humor, there are some really cool songs on the album, especially *Nowhere To Run* which features the eclectic hell of Ozzy Osbourne, Method Man, Big Baby Jesus (the artist formerly known as Ol' Dirty Bastard), Crystal Method, and Fuzzbubble (who added needed punch in the All About the Benjamins remix). Listening to this album surpasses almost any surrealistic experiences you can experience on this planet.

Geto Boys, *Da Good Da Bad & Da Ugly* (Rap-A-Lot Records)

Da Good: very raw, very street lyric-wise, with well-placed expletives. **Da Bad** (as in really good): well-written music offering a variety of musical textures from hip hop mixed with cutting edge production (*Livin' 4 The Moment*) to an edgy street ballad complete with synth strings (*Niggas Ain't Doin'*). **Da Ugly:** The ugly part is that the album has to end. Geto Boys capture the angst of street 'n hood issues with marked sophistication.

World Tribe, *Element* (Pinch Hit Records)

World Tribe features funk-rock with reggae-tinged vocals, sort of a latter day Fishbone-lite. Lots going on with sudden time changes mixed with excellent production and instrument layering. *My Criminal Mind* and the hopeful *You Will Find* (a live track) span the spectrum of World Tribe's style.

Whale, *All Disco Dance Must End in Broken Bones* (Virgin Records)

A big beat version of the Sneaker Pimps, Whale takes the Pimps smooth techno and adds overproduction. But the resulting cacophony offers elements of straight rock, spacy synth loops, and the 90's staple: breathy female vocals. Tracks like *Deliver The Juice* and *Puma Gym* will make you want to listen again.

James Armstrong, *Dark Night* (Hightone Records)

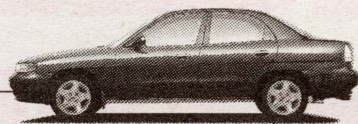
Classic post-B.B. blues is the story of *Dark Night*. Armstrong's unspectacular, earnest voice accents the solid musicianship. The lyrics are the show pony of the album with nuggets like "We had misunderstandings, miscommunications, mistakes and mistrusts, and that's too many misses for me" in *Too Many Misses for Me*.

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Personals



T.H. - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to my favorite Diva! Best wishes for a grand 1999.

Independent Staff - have a great holiday, stay in touch and good luck next semester. Thanks for everything. Jennifer



Dear L.E.: Wanted to wish you a very happy 12-month Anniversary and a Happy Chanukah! I love you, sweetie! L.P.

Wanted Santa's Helper. Petite sized cutey with mischevious grin. Must look stunning in red and be Gabby by nature. Those interested apply c/o Santa at the North Pole.



Punkin- Nuestro primer Navidad juntos. Te quiero por tu ternura y mirada picara. Estoy por los suelos. Tu enamorada

To all the women at NEIU, I wish you Merry Christmas and Love. Like I love Lady 4A. 4

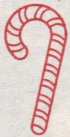


To Laura, Tina, Michael, Michelle, Joanna, Tom, Dave, and Jemimah- May Santa stay in your heart and the Spirit of Christmas remain the whole year through. Happy 1999! - C

Merry Christmas to everyone, especially everyone in the theatre. Have a safe and Happy Holiday! Joey A.



Mr. Sniffles -- may Santa fill your stocking with lots of goodies! - L



Wanted: Elf. Able to fit down chimneys and expertly wrap presents. Must answer to name of Ray. Those interested may apply c/o Santa at the North Pole.



May your holidays be bright and your New Year be healthy. Keep Writing! -- Laura



Merry Christmas Laura, Jemimah, and Carole. HO, HO, HO. -Michael

Happy Holidays from the *Independent*! See you Next Year. First issue hits stands January 11.



For the cast and crew of *Holiday*: It's been one hell of a ride! Thanks for the trip! I love you people. Carole

Help Wanted

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