

Prospectus News

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Understanding the universe:

■ Parkland hosts the "World of Science" lecture

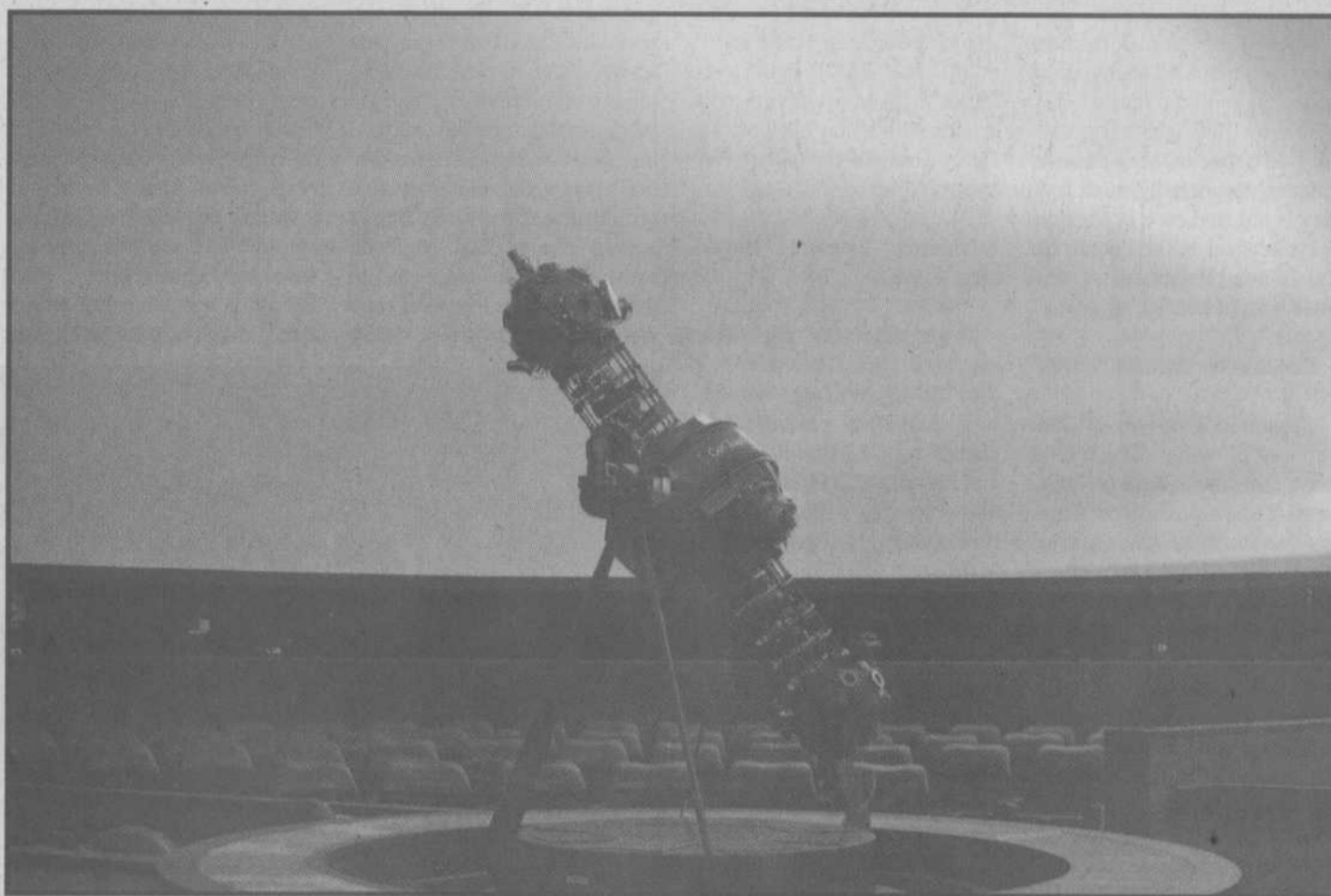
Merry THOMAS
Staff Writer

This past Friday, Parkland hosted a "World of Science" lecture about the beginning of the universe and the attempts that are being made to understand it better.

The universe is constantly changing, so it's important to understand how even the small things make it work. The two guest speakers for the lecture were U of I professors Tony Liss and Mark Neubauer, and their jobs deal directly with this concept. Both are physicists that study particles and are known for their work on the particle accelerator in Switzerland.

If you're curious about what particle scientists do, they study small things like particles and what their roles are with larger things. They use destructive imaging, which uses protons and crushes them together to see what can be created in the debris that comes out of it. In studying particles, a very obvious question arises: what exactly are particles? That's one of the reasons why the particle accelerator was created—to answer this very question.

The particle accelerator is a rather hot subject lately in the world of science, so why was this lecture hosted at Parkland? The representatives of the Planetarium at Parkland



feel that it's apart of their mission to educate the public of important astronomical news, so the "World of Science" lectures were created to do just that. The particle accelerator might very well bring about information that could change how everyone sees the universe, so it is, in fact, quite a big deal.

Every month during the school year for the past 20 years

the Planetarium has been host to "World of Science" lectures, and Dave Leake, the Planetarium Coordinator at Parkland, is the one who invites the speakers to do these lectures.

"I try to look at the hot topics in each field. The Large Hadron Collider has garnered the headlines in physics the past year or so and I was happy to hear that two local scientists had actually done some

research on the collider," said Leake.

The lecture this past Friday discussed the belief of how the universe was created in accordance to the Big Bang theory and how the particle accelerator can explain the many questions that people have about the mysteries of the universe. Something that's really an obscure topic is the concept of dark matter and dark energy.

"No one really knows what it is," said Neubauer, "but we have ideas. What we really want to accomplish is to answer how matter works."

With the help of the particle accelerator, scientists can recreate what the atmosphere was like at the creation of the universe. In doing this, scientists can use the data collected to figure out what dark matter is.

Why is dark matter impor-

tant and how does it apply to science today? Well, according to both Liss and Neubauer the universe is made up of mostly dark energy, and if they figure out what exactly dark energy is, then they can figure out how the universe ticks, which leads to answering countless amounts of other questions.

Another concept that was brought up at the lecture was the concept of dimensions. With the aid of the particle accelerator, there's research being done to show that there are more than just the traditional three dimensions. It's easy to believe that there are only three dimensions because you can see things in 3D. It's a bit harder to believe that there could be more.

However, Liss insists that there's a possibility that there could be many more. In discovering more dimensions, there's a chance to learn more about gravity and why it's so weak in comparison to other forces, like magnetism. It could very well change everything that everyone learned growing up about how the universe works.

"In a few years, we might have a drastically different view of our universe," said Liss. If you're interested in learning more about how the universe works, the particle accelerator might just have answers for you very soon.

Rising costs, less help from home hurts kids;

■ College students turn to food pantries

Patricia MONTEMURRI
Detroit Free Press

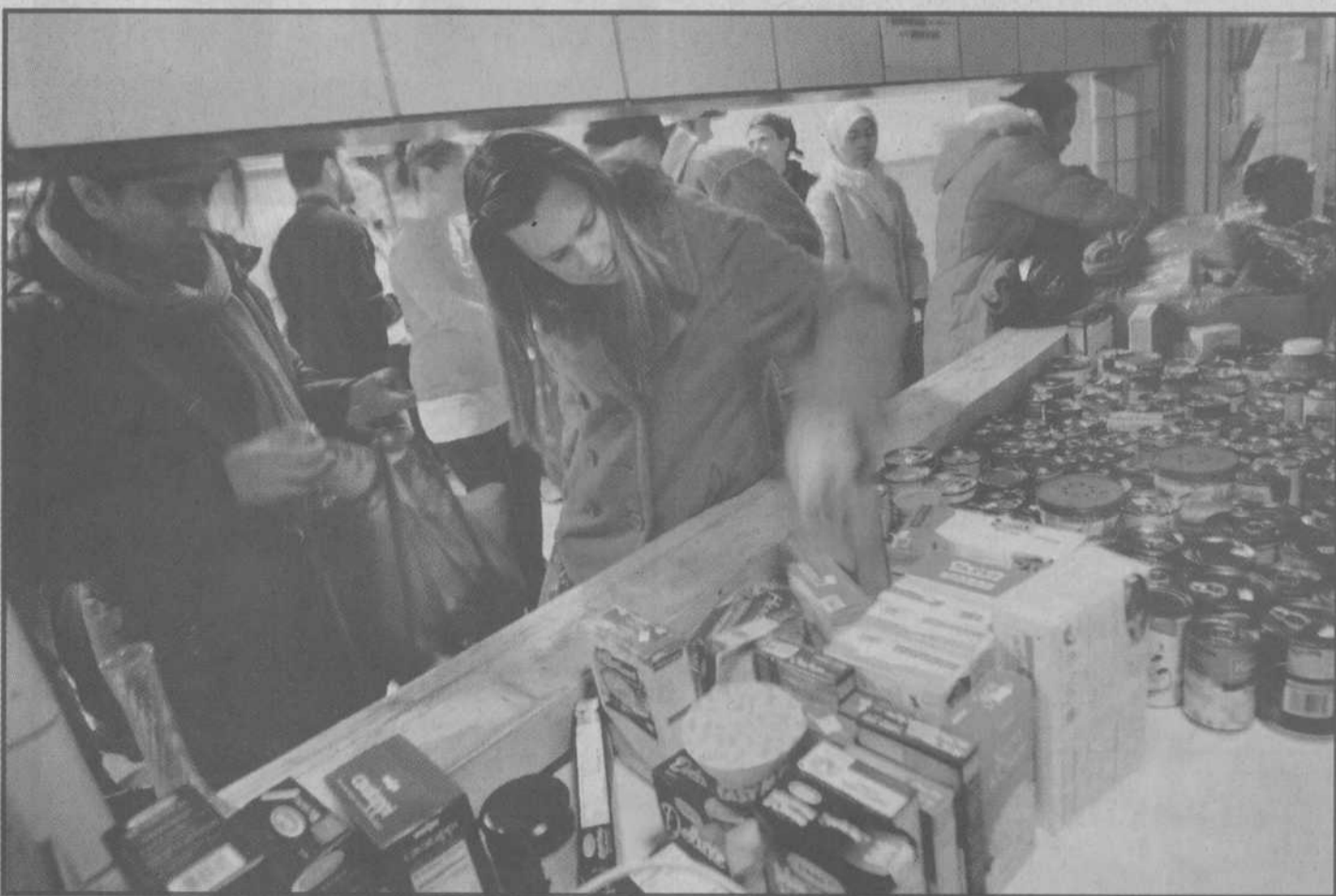
Michigan State University student Nichole Wickens never imagined standing in line to get staples from a food pantry.

But that's what the 21-year-old is doing this night at MSU's Olin Health Center, where the student-run food bank has seen a 25 percent jump in need from the 2007-08 school year.

In three bags, Wickens carries away boxes of instant mashed potatoes and dried pasta, a loaf of bakery bread, applesauce and a box of shredded wheat cereal. At retail, it's only worth about \$20 - but it makes a big difference to Wickens.

"My student account was in stocks, and stocks were hit hard," Wickens said. "And I'm the oldest of five." She has a part-time job on campus as a night receptionist, and gets some financial aid for tuition. "But I'm paying for a car, phone, computer, rent and everything else," she said, "so coming here really helps. It's a resource to students."

College campuses aren't places where you expect to find a food bank. But students are turning to college-sponsored food banks for help because of ever-increasing tuition costs, the loss of financial aid programs like state scholarships and financial support from home being cut-off or diminished because parents have lost jobs.



Nichole Wickens, 21, of Walled Lake, picks out food while waiting for her groceries that she got from the MSU food bank in the Olin Health Center cafeteria on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing, Michigan, January 13, 2010. The food pantry is run by students for students.

Kimberly P. MITCHELL/Detroit Free Press

"This perception that students, because they're going to college, have money isn't accurate and never was," said Dennis Martell, the MSU health education services coordinator and the food bank's faculty adviser.

'EAT OR PAY BILLS'
Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich., opened

a food pantry last April, following a suggestion from student Susana Villagomez-Barajas.

"One of the girls I worked with ... told me she never had food - that it was either eat or pay bills," said Villagomez-Barajas, 20, of Grand Rapids, Mich., who is majoring in clinical lab science. "I heard my friends talking about the

same thing and students in my classes, so I came up with that idea."

Villagomez-Barajas talked to the director of GVSU's Women's Center, who put together a task force of school counselors and financial aid officials, who confirmed that a food pantry would be beneficial to students.

The GVSU food pantry has

helped more than 200 students since it opened, said Rachael DeWitt, who runs the food bank while pursuing a master's degree in social work and public administration.

"Students feel the brunt of tough economic times," said DeWitt. "Their parents were able to support them before, but now their parents have lost

their jobs."

The GVSU pantry is supported by cash donations and food that's donated. DeWitt posts items she needs on an electronic bulletin board. "If I say we're in need of toilet paper and peanut butter, people respond to that," she said.

EMERGENCY FUNDS AVAILABLE

While other large Michigan schools don't operate food banks, many are reporting a surge in students asking for more financial aid.

The University of Michigan has experienced an increase in students showing demonstrated financial need, said school spokeswoman Kelly Cunningham. "We occasionally see a student who is in need of emergency funding. In those cases, we provide an emergency grant to cover immediate needs like food, money to move into an apartment, purchase medication, etc.," Cunningham said.

"If the student comes forward, we can help them. We always reserve funds for emergencies, and we can disburse emergency funds as quickly as the same day the student asks for help," Cunningham said. "Students can apply online and receive up to \$500 the next morning."

In Marquette, Mich., Salvation Army director of operations Walter Sleeter said about 100 students a month from Northern Michigan Univer-

Prospectus

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• Views expressed are opinions of staff and contributors and not necessarily that of the Prospectus or Parkland College.
 • The Prospectus welcomes letters to the editor. We accept submissions from the Parkland community and the public. The editor will also consider original works of fiction and short writings if space is available.
 • The rules of correspondence: all submissions must be signed with a phone number and address. The Prospectus staff must verify the identity of letter writers. Correspondence may be edited to accommodate the space requirements of the paper. The deadline for all submissions is 12 p.m. of the Thursday immediately before the upcoming issue.

In last week's edition of Prospectus News, an article stated that Valentines Day coincided with the Super Bowl. This was incorrect information and we apologize for the confusion.
 Prospectus



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Chuck Shepherd's 'Til Death Do Us Part

Lead Story

In January, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers confiscated a live, jeweled beetle that a woman was wearing as an "accessory" on her sweater as she crossed into Brownsville, Texas, from Mexico. Blue jewels were glued onto the beetle's back, which had been painted gold, and a gold chain attached to a safety pin tethered the mobile brooch. Even though the woman orally "declared" the animal, the beetle was confiscated because she had not completed the bureau's PPQ Form 526, which is necessary to bring insects into the country. Reportedly, such jewelry is not that rare in Mexico. A spokesperson for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals was, of course, appalled.

The Entrepreneurial Spirit

Economic Recovery in Denver: As of early January, at least 390 new Denver businesses had applied for sales-tax licenses as dispensaries for legal (medicinal) marijuana. By comparison, Starbucks coffee shops number 208 in the entire state of Colorado. Among the first cannabis-centered businesses to open, in December, was the Ganja Gourmet on South Broadway, featuring lasagna, pizza, jambalaya, paella, flavored cheesecakes and other delicacies, all "spiced" appropriately for customers with doctors' prescriptions.

Jeweler Colin Burn, of Broome, Australia, announced in October at the Asia Adult Expo in Macau that he would make the world's most expensive "personal vibrator," in 10 limited editions, out of smooth platinum, each with 1,500 white diamonds. He said he planned to shoot for a price of \$1 million (U.S.) and noted that he currently offers a similar sex toy with only 450 diamonds (but with a handle made of rare conkerberry wood) that he sells for \$38,000.

Professor Yevgeny Moskalev of Russia's St. Petersburg Technological University announced in November that he had perfected a somewhat-useful powdered version of Russia's favorite drink (vodka). However, after much experimentation, he had found that the only way to preserve the alcohol was by mixing the liquid vodka into a special wax and letting it harden. According to a November report in the English language version of Pravda, the resulting shaved chips could then be flavored to counteract the wax's insipidness, and might be used for cooking or medicine. "Instant vodka" mix for straight drinking does not appear to be in professor Moskalev's plans.

In 2008, Sweden, one of only seven countries with embassies in North Korea, began try-

ing to coax that country into the global economy by encouraging the manufacture of jeans, which Sweden in turn would arrange for sale in high-end stores. After a series of awkward missteps (e.g., a textile manufacturer, unfamiliar with the concept of "jeans," said no, but the director of a mining company decided to accept the project), 1,100 pairs were finally shipped and priced at the equivalent of about \$215 a pair, according to a December Reuters dispatch from Stockholm. (The "NoKo" jeans were initially given shelf space in at least one store, but now are offered only on the store's Web site.)

Leading Economic Indicators

After the New York Post reported in December on the 175-square-foot Manhattan apartment recently purchased by Christopher Prokop and his wife (for \$150,000, with \$800 monthly in maintenance fees), residents of even smaller Manhattan digs told the Post they were unimpressed. For instance, Felice Cohen, 39, rents a 90-square-foot apartment (\$700) with a loft bed, but admits that she must sit sideways on the toilet. Freelance event planner Eddie Rabon rents a 55-square-foot palace for \$800 a month (closer to midtown than Cohen's). He can almost touch both sidewalls simultaneously and cannot easily turn around while showering. Commented the residents, respectively: "We love it," "I love it," and "It's fantastic."

He's a man of distinction, but that is of little comfort in the tight economy. Actor Jonah Falcon, 39, is out of work and living once again with his parents in New York City, according to a January report on AOL News. A 1999 HBO documentary touted Falcon as possessor of the world's longest penis (13 1/2 inches, aroused). He has appeared in mainstream film and TV roles ("Law and Order," "Melrose Place," "The Sopranos"), but has refused to do pornography. "If I did porn, nobody would take me seriously." However, he added, "I wouldn't be opposed to doing a nude scene (in a mainstream film) if I got the right part."

The recent Christmas bonus season was rough at the RF Brookes pizza-ingredient factory in Wigston, England. Workers received only gift containers of pudding ("plum duffs") with a use-by date of March 2009, but accompanied by a letter from management assuring them that food technicians had certified the product as safe to eat in January 2010. (After numerous employee complaints, the company apologized and offered fresh plum duffs.)

Tara MOON CHRISTOPHER
 Music Columnist

Also, how does their death alter our opinions of them and their music?

The instant a celebrity dies we become fascinated, addicted to the deceased individual. No matter what we thought of them pre-death, we become their biggest fans, no questions asked. The first celebrity death I remember was that of musician Jerry Garcia from the Grateful Dead. I was sitting on the floor of my Colorado living room as the news flashed images of guitars and deadheads. My mother, who was devastated, sat behind me on the couch crying. It was as though something had shifted in the atmosphere and changed the future of my life, and of her life. Although I was only five at the time, I truly felt how it was to lose an icon, someone who you felt so connected to that you felt the loss as if they were family. In a way, Jerry

When Kurt Cobain died a shockingly large demographic of individuals found themselves mourning the loss of one of Grunge music's greats. People found themselves bonding over Nirvana's music overwhelmed with tragedy. In the years since, the fame of Nirvana has never dwindled and I question the reason. Don't get me wrong here, I am an avid Nirvana fan, I just wonder if Kurt where to have lived how their fame would have continued, or would it continue at all? Would the Foo Fighters even exist or would Dave Grohl have faded into non-existence as many over played celebrities have? Also I wonder if a musician who reportedly committed suicide is someone we should obsess over? Kurt Cobain is a musician of which fame didn't agree with and

one of music's best, his album sales and popularity have skyrocketed since he was pronounced dead on June 25, 2009. Before his untimely death, the popularity of Michael Jackson was limited. Sure we appreciated his music genius but his fame was fading. According to CNN.com, Michael Jackson's record sales increased greatly in the weeks after his death. Play.com reported that Jackson's album sales went up by 7,860 percent on their website alone. Searches on Michael Jackson also dramatically increased by 8,900 percent. According to MTV.com, a spokesperson for Amazon.com reported that in the first 24 hours following the death of Michael Jackson, more albums and singles were ordered than in the 11 years of Amazon.com's existence. This data is undeniably shocking. Sure Michael's songs would always play at middle school dances



Michael Jackson's fans attend a celebration of Jackson's life at Steelyard Stadium in Gary, Indiana, on Friday, July 10, 2009.

Warren SKALSKI/Chicago Tribune

Garcia was family. Even my name Tara Moon is proof of my childhood spent in parking lots of Dead shows and Rainbow gatherings. Since this moment the death of celebrities, specifically musicians, has fascinated me. What is it about these lives lost that affect us so deeply?

choose to escape this obsession we've never stopped. It is these questions that make me wonder if death makes one popular, or even stay in the spotlight longer than one deserves.

Proof of this comes in the form of the recent passing of Michael Jackson. Although

and Thriller ruled the airwaves over Halloween, but apparently our sudden love and obsession didn't really occur until after he died.

When looking at this data it becomes obvious that so many individuals who claim that they were life long fans only really became fans once the musician was no longer among us. This growth in obsession also depicts just how fascinated we are with death. Is the death of someone famous enough to make mediocre music suddenly become perfection and priceless? It is because of this that I have begun to question whom the real fans of the deceased musicians are. We, as humans tend to want that which we cannot have, so are we exaggerating our love of these so called amazing musicians? From this point on I intend to reevaluate my obsession with the 'greats' and in the months to come I will touch back on this subject and share my findings. I ask of you to do the same. Many inspiring musicians are still among us and are out shadowed by the industry's past, compared to legends who where really not that great. I think we should start a revolution, depicting musicians for who they really are, who really had a future in the industry, and who really left at the right time for their career, and not those who have passed away aimlessly without much of a dent in music's great big pool of talent.

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Save energy, reap rewards?

Diane MASTRULL
The Philadelphia Inquirer

You maneuver the controls on your thermostat, hoping for a few more degrees of warmth.

But wait! What if there was a reward for leaving the setting right where it is - or, better yet, for lowering it?

What if putting up with a little chill got you a price break on a butter pound cake split three ways and filled with lemon curd and blackberry and raspberry puree from a local bakery?

Or maybe a \$10 coupon for native plants or artisanal goat-milk cheeses from your local farm? Or even a bed-and-breakfast package at the Four Seasons Hotel?

Perks like those are part of a growing list from businesses in the Philadelphia area hoping to improve their bottom lines by promoting a greener lifestyle.

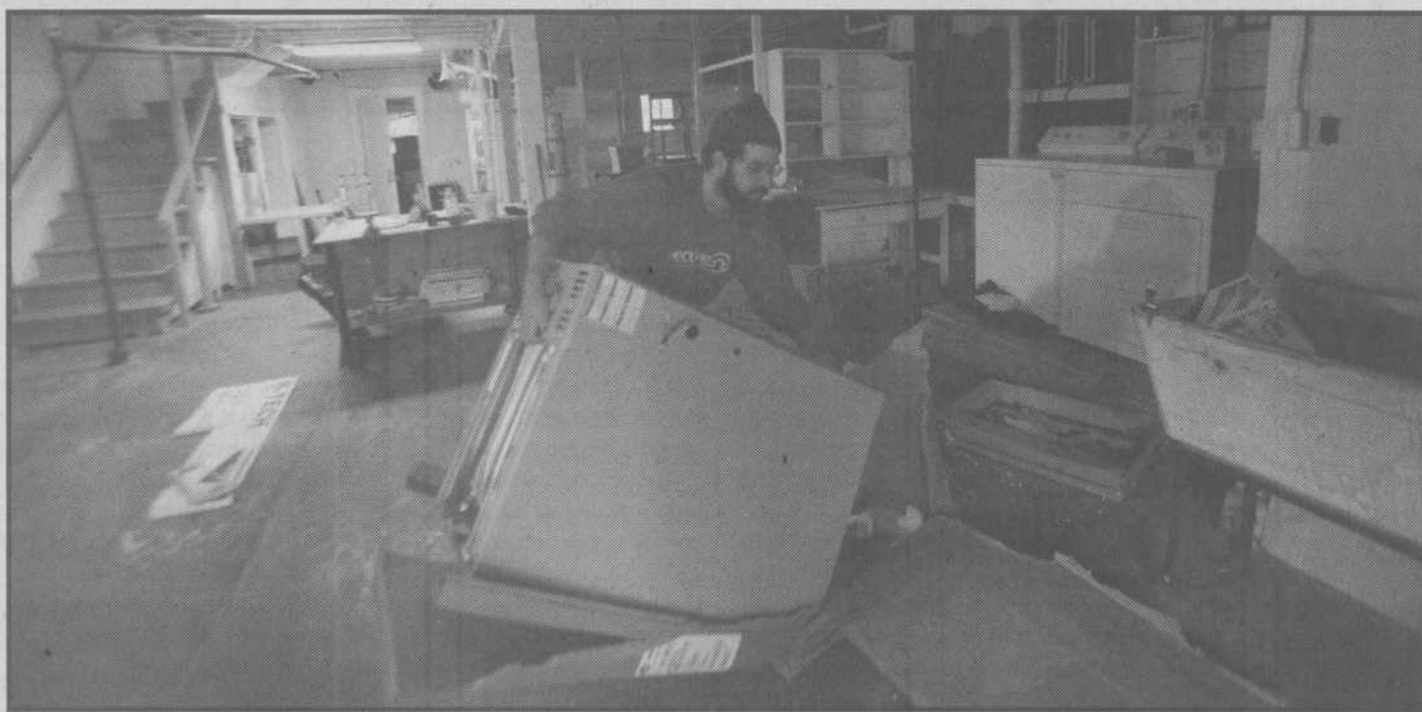
Rewards for households that recycle through RecycleBank (www.recyclebank.com), which got its start in the city in 2005, are already well known and popular in the area.

Now comes what is believed to be a first: a rewards program for saving energy.

Earth Aid, a Washington, D.C., start-up, enables U.S. residents to track their electric, gas and water usage online and, by cutting back on it, earn points that can be redeemed at local businesses.

Launched in September, Earth Aid (www.earthaid.net) will not disclose how many members it has or the company's financials. Ben Bixby, its cofounder and chief executive officer, said membership was "in the thousands and our rate of growth is doubling monthly."

Though the program has not yet had a formal introduction in Philadelphia, the city is home to some of its largest



Lukas Havlicek works on installing a new furnace in a San Francisco, California home during a green energy remodel. Many businesses are now offering rewards for those who "green" their homes.

Maria J. AVILA LOPEZ/San Jose Mercury News

reward partners, Bixby said: Of the more than 100 businesses that have signed on, 25 are from Philadelphia or its suburbs, "with many more on the way."

That could be a barometer of not only the growing influence of the sustainability movement, but of just how eager recession-impaired businesses are for a chance to boost sales, said Maria Cain, sales manager at Bredenbeck's Bakery in Philadelphia, where a few more sugar addicts would be welcome.

Linking with Earth Aid, Cain said, "really puts our name out there to the entire Philadelphia region."

Said Stephen Falvo at Philadelphia's Manayunk's Art+Science Salon & Spa, where Earth Aid participants can redeem 300 points for a 60-minute massage: "I think people need to realize that just by supporting local business,

they are helping to reduce their carbon footprint and, in turn, keeping the supply chain local."

Earth Aid has developed proprietary software that makes it possible, with consumer permission, to retrieve household utility data everywhere in the country, Bixby said. Once people sign up, their energy use is reviewed and a baseline established. Then the company provides customized advice on how to become more energy-efficient and which rebates and tax credits are available to make the changes.

Participants receive monthly statements from Earth Aid showing how much energy they used and how that com-

pared with the same month in the previous year. Reward points are based on reductions achieved.

"We just want to make it easier for people to save energy, and information does that," said David Burd, Earth Aid's vice president of business development.

Sign-up for households are free "and will forever be," Bixby said. There is also no charge "at this time" for small and regional businesses to offer one reward, he said. Larger rewards-program participants must pay a promotional fee, depending on their size.

Earth Aid also makes money from sales it helps arrange

between members and providers of energy-conservation services and products, such as oxygenating showerheads and programmable thermostats.

RecycleBank, the incentive-based recycling initiative now providing services to more than one million members in 20 states and the United Kingdom, was an inspiration for Earth Aid, Bixby said.

One of RecycleBank's founders, Ron Gonen, now a resident of New York, said he was flattered.

Though calling Earth Aid's energy-use tracking program a good idea, Gonen said he was not convinced the business discounts would be as effective a recruiting tool as they have

been for RecycleBank. Last year, RecycleBank members redeemed and used more than \$1 million in reward points, he said.

Without incentives, people who recycle were getting no benefit from the act other than "feeling you were doing something good" for the environment, he said. Energy savers, on the other hand, can see the benefits of that in cheaper energy bills.

"I'm not sure that you need additional incentives beyond reducing your monthly energy bill," Gonen said.

At Yellow Springs Farm in Chester Springs, Pa., co-owner Catherine Renzi lauded the idea of rewards - such as the \$10 coupon she is offering toward the purchase of at least \$50 in goods.

"It's much easier to make (conservation) attractive for people," she said, "when you have a carrot."

Or a free overnight stay at one of Philadelphia's premier hotels.

The Four Seasons, considered a sustainability leader in part because it composts, recycles and has microturbines on its roof, is offering one bed-and-breakfast package for two, including breakfast in its acclaimed Fountain Restaurant.

To win it, you must assemble the group of friends or family on Earth Aid that collectively saves the most energy through April 30.

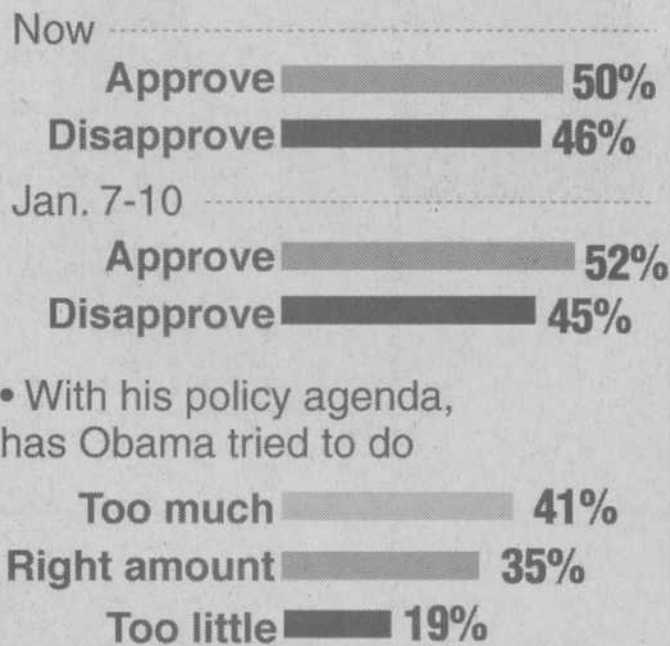
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The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Did Obama take on too much?

How Americans feel about President Barack Obama's first year in office:

- Job approval



Of those who think Obama did too much

57% Say health care was where he overreached

Of those who think Obama did too little

42% Say economy and jobs were where he did too little

Source: Ipsos-McClatchy poll of 1,127 adults, Jan. 28-31, 2010; margin of error: +/-2.92 percentage points
Graphic: Judy Treible

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Fresh housemade tuna, mixed with celery, onions, and our tasty sauce, then topped with alfalfa sprouts, cucumber, lettuce, and tomato. (My tuna rocks!)
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Fresh sliced turkey breast, topped with lettuce, tomato, alfalfa sprouts, and mayo. (The original)
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- #9 ITALIAN NIGHT CLUB**
Real genoa salami, Italian capicola, smoked ham, and provolone cheese all topped with lettuce, tomato, onion, mayo, and our homemade Italian vinaigrette. (You hav'ta order hot peppers, just ask!)
- #10 HUNTER'S CLUB**
A full 1/4 pound of fresh sliced medium rare roast beef, provolone, lettuce, tomato, & mayo.
- #11 COUNTRY CLUB**
Fresh sliced turkey breast, applewood smoked ham, provolone, and tons of lettuce, tomato, and mayo! (A very traditional, yet always exceptional classic!)
- #12 BEACH CLUB**
Fresh baked turkey breast, provolone cheese, avocado spread, sliced cucumber, sprouts, lettuce, tomato, and mayo! (It's the real deal, and it ain't even California.)
- #13 GOURMET VEGGIE CLUB**
Double provolone, real avocado spread, sliced cucumber, alfalfa sprouts, lettuce, tomato, & mayo. (Try it on my 7-grain whole wheat bread. This veggie sandwich is world class!)
- #14 BOOTLEGGERS CLUB**
Roast beef, turkey breast, lettuce, tomato, & mayo. An American classic, certainly not invented by J.J. but definitely tweaked and fine-tuned to perfection!
- #15 CLUB TUNA**
The same as our #3 Totally Tuna except this one has a lot more. Fresh housemade tuna salad, provolone, sprouts, cucumber, lettuce, & tomato.
- #16 CLUB LULU**
Fresh sliced turkey breast, bacon, lettuce, tomato, & mayo. (JJ's original turkey & bacon club)
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OPINIONS

Americans' distrust of government has deep roots

Gregory RODRIGUEZ
Los Angeles Times

Let me get straight to the point: Americans' profound distrust of government is neurotic-irrational, defensive and born of emotional trauma.

That doesn't mean I discount other sources of our disabling distrust of Washington. I believe the scholars who cite watershed events like Watergate and Vietnam as having undermined our belief in governing institutions.

But such recent-history rationales for our distrust don't fully explain the emotional depth of our disaffection. They don't properly take into account how these events triggered the anti-government strain already in our national DNA, in the same way that, say, environmental factors can trigger a genetic predisposition or a childhood trauma can

create anxiety in an adult.

If Americans were to seek help for their neurosis, any good therapist would try to dig down to the root of the out-sized distrust. Maybe he or she would let us beat around the bush for a few sessions. We'd recount incidents of government corruption, overreach. Then there was slavery, Jim Crow, internment camps and poorly planned wars. But eventually, we'd have to discuss our national birth trauma, our violent revolt against our "father," King George III, which gave us our independence in the first place.

It's no secret that the founders infused this mistrust into the design of our government, or that the Constitution was deliberately written to prevent another King George from trampling on our liberty again. Just pick up Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" to remind

yourself that government is "but a necessary evil."

Still, a legacy of articulate stances against tyranny doesn't explain our anti-government emotionalism. Last week, members of the sprawling, fractious "tea party" movement gathered in Nashville. As with most naysayers, their fundamental conundrum is how to harness an essentially negative impulse into a positive, constructive force.

The movement's very name has a lot to say about how emotional such discontent is. Think back to your grade school lessons about the Boston Tea Party and remember its carnivalesque aspects. The conspirators that night painted their faces and dressed up as Mohawk Indians. As University of Michigan historian Philip J. Deloria points out in his book, "Playing Indian," the dress-up part of the party

wasn't only about masking identities; it was about exercising New World liberty, which would become a fundamental part of forging a new collective identity as Americans.

The Tea Party wasn't the only instance in which colonial whites acted out in Indian disguise. To these revolutionaries, Deloria writes, "Indianness lay at the heart of American uniqueness." Donning feathers and darkening their faces, they symbolically proclaimed their separation from the mother country. And what did they think the Indian costume meant to the representatives of King George? Unconstrained, even aboriginal, freedom.

That would be a breakthrough on a therapist's couch. From the very beginning, to go with our legitimate fear of tyranny, we've idealized an end to all authority.

In a 1923 essay on U.S. liter-

ature, British novelist and poet D.H. Lawrence ridiculed the American fetishization of liberty as a source of perennial tantrums. "Somewhere deep in every American heart," he wrote, "lies a rebellion against the old parenthood of Europe. Yet no American feels he has completely escaped its mastery." To Americans, he went on, liberty means "the breaking of all dominion."

In other words, the American passion for absolute liberty isn't too far removed from heedless adolescent rebellion. The "tea party" faithful might as well be Marlon Brando in his black leather jacket in "The Wild One." "What are you rebelling against," a girl asks the smoldering Brando. "What've you got?" he replies.

So, yes, there are reasons to be suspicious of government, and yes, our yearning to be "master less" has created a

culture that sends adventurers on the open road and pioneers looking for the next frontier. But it's also making it increasingly difficult for government to function.

I'm not unsympathetic to the argument that vigilance-protest, activism, anger-is the price of freedom. But with the national government in gridlock, I'm beginning to worry that our "don't tread on me" birthright has a deeper and darker cost.

It's not a matter of left or right. In my mind the only difference between 1960s leftist radicals and new millennium right-wing refuseniks is the length of their hair. They both have showed a desperate need to work through their issues with old King George.

(c) 2010
Los Angeles Times.

FOOD

continued from page 1

sity pick up donated boxes of food, and four or five come to a weekday free lunch program. On Saturday, its Salvation Army Thrift Store offers a 20 percent discount to college students.

Diane Anderson, Western Michigan University's vice president for student affairs, said WMU explored the notion of opening a food bank, but decided that it duplicated

resources that already exist in the Kalamazoo area. The school offers short-term emergency loans to help with living expenses, she said.

At Wayne State University of Detroit, there are no food banks specifically for students. But there are safety nets and food programs throughout the city, offered by nonprofits and church groups, said Kami Pothukuchi, a Wayne State associate professor of urban planning.

PEANUT BUTTER, TOMATOES, CORN

Earlier this month, 256 people lined up at MSU's Olin Health Center, where the food bank operates biweekly, to haul away bags filled with peanut butter, canned tomatoes and corn. Michigan State University students have run a program for needy students, fueled by cash and food donations, since 1993.

On this pick up day at MSU, about 30 student volunteers packaged food, stocked shelves and served customers, who range from undergrads to students pursuing gradu-

ate degrees while raising families. Many of those in line were international students.

Kateryna Ananyeva, 28, from Kiev, Ukraine, is a doctoral student in crop and soil sciences. She picked up a box of Cocoa Pebbles cereal, a favorite of her 1-year-old son, Mark. Her husband, Dmytro, also is a graduate student.

"If you're totally alone, or if you have a child or dependents, it's really tight," Ananyeva said.

Lauren Jones, 21, of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, is a

senior studying communications and hospitality. She has a part-time job on campus and said the food bank "helps you get from one paycheck to the next." Her father, who works in a business clearing land for construction, has seen his hours cut, and "you don't want to ask them for money."

Director Kristin Moretto said the MSU food bank's budget is about \$40,000. The food bank purchases items in bulk from the Mid-Michigan Food Bank, which is operated by the American Red Cross. Retailers

sometimes donate perishable items, such as milk or baked goods.

"This is a grass-roots student-run organization," Moretto said. "The food isn't being taken away from anyone else who needs it." Students need only prove that they're enrolled at MSU and haven't purchased a university food plan.

(c) 2010
Detroit Free Press.

Great and nutritional breakfast ideas for students on the go

Prospectus STAFF

The life of a college student is often more chaotic than that of a full time mother of three who. Despite the stereotypes of sleeping in until noon and wearing dirty clothes, most college students have little time for sleeping or housekeeping between classes, doing homework, and working a job. If there were a stereotypical day for a student, it would be some-

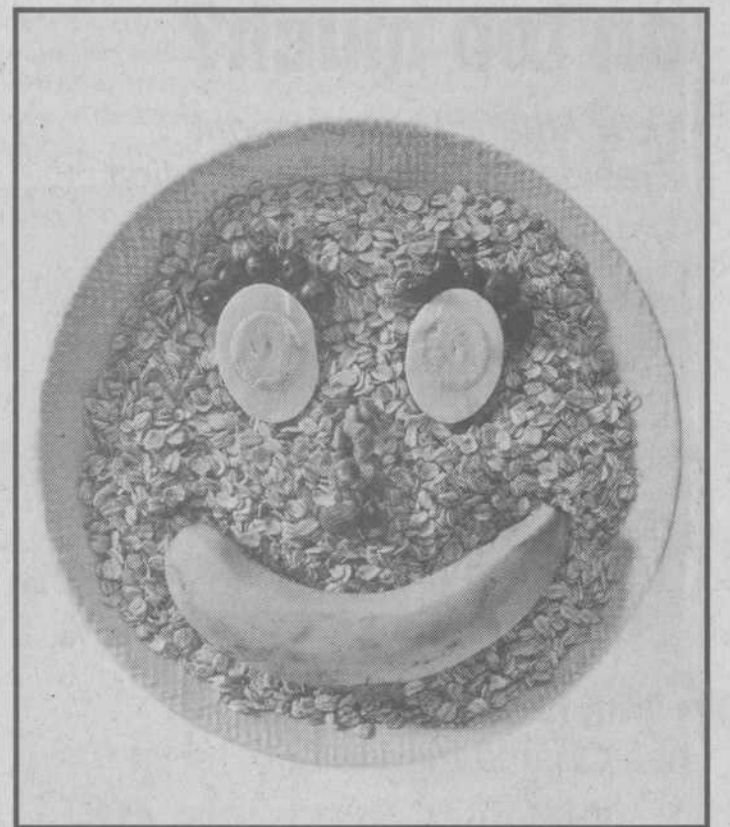
thing to the effect of: wake up 45 minutes before class, get dressed, rush out the door, stop at a fast food restaurant for breakfast and coffee, be in class for most of the day, grab fast food on the way to work, work late into the evening and getting home after ten PM, studying, sleeping, and then start all over again.

This lifestyle is undeniably hectic, but one of the most important things to do when having a very challenging time

is to make sure that you are eating healthy. Eating healthy is not only a good way to prevent illness, but also a way to help the mind function. A recent study done at MIT Medical shows that eating B-Vitamins and antioxidants before going to class will improve energy, boost immune system health, and increase concentration. Where do B-vitamins and antioxidants come from? Some of the best ways to get these are by eating bananas (B-vita-

mins), almonds or natural peanut butter (B-vitamins), dark chocolate (antioxidants), and/or drinking green tea (antioxidants).

There are many great recipes, which include ingredients such as these that can be eaten as an on-the-go breakfast and prepared in advance to prevent the morning rush and keep the body and mind at its best.



Peanut Butter Banana Smoothie

- 1 small ripe banana sliced
- 2 tbsp natural peanut butter
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 cup cold milk

- is smooth.
- 3. Add milk and blend until foamy.

- 1. Combine banana, peanut butter, and honey in a blender.
- 2. Blend until the consistency

Smoothies are perfect to drink en route to class. It is as filling as a meal, and has many health benefits that a trip to the drive-thru lack.

S'mores Breakfast Sandwich:

- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 1 tbsp natural peanut butter
- 4 squares of dark chocolate (concentration of cacao of 65% or more)
- 1 tbsp marshmallow fluff

- fluff on the other
- 4. Insert dark chocolate in the middle and put slices together

- 1. Toast the bread in the toaster
- 2. Spread the natural peanut butter on one slice of bread.
- 3. Spread the marshmallow

This easy, delicious recipe will keep you full well past lunch time, with the whole grains and peanut butter. It can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

English Muffin Breakfast Sandwiches

- 2 English muffins
- 2 large pieces of bacon (or pre-cooked sausage patties)
- 2 large eggs
- kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste
- 2 slices American cheese

plates. Divide the egg mixture between the two English muffin halves. Place a slice of cheese and a slice of bacon on top. Top with other English muffin half.

- 1. Split English muffins in half and toast
- 2. Heat a medium skillet over medium heat. Add bacon and cook until crispy
- 3. Remove bacon to paper towel to cool. Keep pan on medium heat.
- 4. Crack eggs in medium bowl and whisk. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- 5. Pour eggs into pan and continue scrambling until thoroughly cooked.
- 6. Place the bottom half of each English muffin on two

Sandwiches can be kept in the refrigerator for roughly a week. To heat these up after they have been prepared and refrigerated, simply microwave on high for 45 seconds-1 minute. This is a great recipe for those who enjoy having a little meat with every meal, and can be eaten, on the way to class. Making these at home will save you a trip to the drive thru and a lot of money.

Yogurt Parfait

- 1 cup low-fat or non-fat vanilla or strawberry yogurt
- ½ cup granola
- 1 cup sliced strawberries (or blueberries, raspberries, or other fruit that you enjoy)
- 1 tbsp maple syrup

The best part is that a week's worth of these can be made on Sunday night and then eaten throughout the week. Parfaits are another good food to eat on the go, and these delicious dessert-like treats are a lot healthier than they may appear at first glance. Fruits, especially darker berries such as blueberries, contain antioxidants, and granola is a good, filling source of healthy carbohydrates.

- 1. Place ½ cup of yogurt in the bottom of your chosen container
- 2. Top with 2 tbsp granola
- 3. Top with ½ cup of strawberries (or whatever fruit you may be using)
- 4. Repeat layers and top with maple syrup

Under Pressure: lower stress to get higher grades

Maura JUDKIS
Student Health 101

While a little tension can drive you through finals time, too much can make you lose concentration and break down your health.

Too much stress can slam a student with emotional problems, mental foginess, high blood pressure, insomnia, headaches, depression, and frequent colds.

More than 90% of about 900 students polled by Student Health 101 said they feel extra stress during finals, and 56% said they have had so much tension that it ruined their academic performance.

When you're in a stressful situation like cramming, your body actually releases a hormone called cortisol, which can chemically block your ability to recall information, according to a study in *Prevention* magazine. Too much stress can also slam a student with emotional problems, mental foginess, high blood pressure, insomnia, headaches, depression, and frequent colds.

Still, some pressure can be positive. Dr. Lynne Tan, a psychiatrist at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, claims that moderate stress can give you a burst of energy and motivate you to finish a project. About 86% of those polled agreed that some stress can be a good thing and push them on to study and finish projects.

One of the biggest perpetrators of stress is cognitive distortion, an intense form of worrying that makes a situation seem drastically worse than it is, says Dr. Debra Davis, a staff psychologist at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

"Many people can think themselves into a depression," says Dr. Davis. "They need to realize that there is a connection between how you think and how you're feeling. They

need the power of positive thinking."

Thinking positive is a technique that Ervand Kristosturyan knows well. "You have to always stay in the right state of mind. It is very easy, amidst the tons of paperwork, to give up and say, 'this is not for me.'"

Take Control with Time Management

Kristosturyan relies on time management to get everything done and reduce his panic. About 96% of those surveyed by Student Health 101 said that time-management skills help keep stressful situations under control. Cal Newport, author of *How to Win at College and How to Become a Straight-A Student*, says that the best way to prevent finals stress is to plan ahead.

"Determine what work you are going to accomplish on what days during the finals period," he says. "Once you start this planning, you may discover that you have to start earlier than you expected. But it will prevent the late night scrambles that produce high stress and low grades."

Stress Busters

While time management and a study plan can help you master your stress, you will probably still need to unwind at some point.

Dr. Davis recommends exercise, yoga, meditation, wholesome snacks, and frequent study breaks. Though some students rely on cigarettes, alcohol, and energy drinks to plow through the stressful times, these substances can actually make a person more nervous.

A hobby or sport can also lift you up emotionally because the active body releases chemicals in the brain called endorphins, which produce a sense of well-being. Nearly 20% of respondents in a Student Health 101 survey said that exercise is their favorite stress-busting activity, while 33% chose hanging out with friends, 14%

chose sleep, and 10% chose TV as their preferred means of stress reduction.

Melissa Gottron, a student at Duke University in Durham, NC, says that when the notoriously tense, competitive environment gets overwhelming, she goes to the pottery studio or takes a spin around the dance floor as a member of the school's ballroom dance society.

Also, watch out for procrastination. Sarah Myers, a senior at University of Virginia in Charlottesville, says that she battles her procrastinating ways by listing everything that she has to do during finals week.

"As I do things on my list, I cross them out," she says. "That's the only thing that really keeps me going."

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MAURA JUDKIS

3 Tips to Reduce Study Stress Study earlier in the day, in small chunks, when your energy is high.

Never study by rote review. Instead, attempt to describe the concepts, out loud, as if talking to an imaginary class. Do this without looking at your notes. One out loud explanation of an idea is more effective than a dozen silent reviews.

Always go to class. If you don't understand something, as a question either in class, after class, or at the next office hours. A huge chunk of your time is filling in gaps in your knowledge. If you do this on the fly, you'll significantly reduce the time spent reviewing when the exam rolls around.

Suspected culprit in Texas woman's debilitating disorder: denture cream

Jan JARVIS
McClatchy Newspapers

It began with a tingling sensation, as if her foot was going to sleep.

Then numbness set in. It crept up to Elizabeth Gilley's calf and onto her thigh.

Over the next six months, the Mineral Wells, Texas, woman grew weaker, her skin turned pale, and she could barely walk across the room without gasping for breath.

When she collapsed in 2007, Gilley was taken to a hospital.

"The doctor didn't know how I was still conscious," Gilley said.

At first, doctors told her that she had leukemia, but tests didn't confirm cancer. CT scans, MRIs and blood tests followed. Still Gilley was no closer to a diagnosis.

notes that small amounts swallowed during normal use are not harmful and that consumers should not apply the product more than once a day.

In addition, the Food and Drug Administration classifies the creams as medical devices and does not require zinc to be listed as an ingredient.

But dozens of people have been permanently disabled after using the cream for years, and at least one person has died, said Ed Blizzard of Houston, Gilley's attorney.

"I believe this is just the tip of the iceberg," he said. "I think a lot of people out there have neuropathy and don't know it could be connected to their dentures."

An estimated 35 million Americans use adhesives to secure their dentures, and most have no health problems

denture creams are safe and adverse effects are very rare, according to the Consumer Healthcare Products Association, which represents the makers of over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and other products.

It is expected that consumers would ingest some zinc from denture cream, but the amounts would be small, the association said in a statement.

The amounts ingested would be no more than the amount in 6 ounces of ground beef, six oysters or a vitamin, according to Procter & Gamble.

Blizzard said denture wearers had no reason to cut back on denture cream because until recently there was no warning against using as much as they needed.

"In fact, on the box, it said that if the amount you're using



Elizabeth Gilley, posing with husband James Gilley, February 1, 2010, at their home in Mineral Wells, Texas, had used denture cream since she was 15. Then her legs went completely numb and she couldn't walk. The problem was traced to zinc in the denture cream she used.

Paul MOSELEY/Fort Worth Star-Telegram

After a year of seeing doctor after doctor, she finally found out what was causing the symptoms, but she could hardly believe what the physician was telling her.

"Within five minutes of seeing him, he asked me if I wore denture cream," said Gilley, 26, who was forced to get dentures as a teenager after a genetic condition ruined her teeth. "I handed him the tube; he told me to stop using it."

But by then the damage was done. Gilley could no longer walk, drive a car or get around without a wheelchair. Once an active young woman who had recently gotten married, she was rarely able to leave her home.

Gilley joined a growing number of people nationwide who have filed lawsuits alleging that the makers of some denture creams knew about the health risks associated with high levels of zinc in their products and did nothing about it. Fixodent and Super Poligrip are named in class-action lawsuits filed in Tennessee last year.

Gilley's suit against GlaxoSmithKline was recently filed in Philadelphia, where the manufacturer is located. About 20 other claimants have also filed suits in mass tort court in Pennsylvania.

GlaxoSmithKline declined to comment on the litigation. But on the Web site for Super Poligrip, the manufacturer addresses issues surrounding zinc.

Both GlaxoSmithKline, the maker of Poligrip and Super Poligrip, and Procter & Gamble, the maker of Fixodent, have said that their products contain zinc at levels recognized as safe. GlaxoSmithKline's label now states that there have been reports of serious health effects from increased zinc intake over a long period. But the company

associated with the creams. But some have developed severe neurological problems, they say, caused by ingesting dangerously high levels of zinc. Gilley developed neuropathy, which causes numbness, tingling and pain.

For years, the source of high zinc levels was a mystery. But recently researchers have observed a link between neurological problems and the use of denture cream, which contains zinc.

In 2008, researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center reported on four young to middle-age patients who developed numbness, weakness and difficulty walking after ingesting high levels of zinc.

It's well documented that too much zinc interferes with the absorption of copper into the bloodstream and can lead to neuropathy, said Dr. Sharon Nations, an associate professor of neurology at UT Southwestern.

The question was, where was the zinc was coming from?

Nations suspected that denture cream might be the source after discovering that one of her patients had used the product a lot. When she learned that another had also used denture cream in large amounts, she tested a tube for zinc.

"We found it contained significant amounts," she said.

Since the patients were not getting zinc from vitamins, food or other sources, the researchers were left with one conclusion.

"The patients had no other source of the zinc," Nations said.

Those involved in the study were using on average two tubes of denture cream a week compared with the one tube every month to six weeks that dentists recommend.

When used as directed,

doesn't work, use more," he said.

Gilley, who was not part of the study, did exactly that.

She used the cream as often as every two hours to keep the poorly fitted dentures in her mouth. Then 15 years old and a freshman in high school, she was embarrassed by the dentures, which became necessary after a genetic disorder damaged the enamel on her teeth. She was terrified that the dentures would fall out while she was eating in the school cafeteria.

She never imagined that the denture cream would lead to health problems a few years later.

Since learning about the link between her health problems and zinc, Gilley has stopped using the cream and gotten better-fitting dentures that stay in place without adhesives.

She has gradually regained some strength and moved from a wheelchair to a walker. But the numbness still makes it difficult to walk, and she rarely leaves the apartment she shares with her husband.

In general, patients who developed neurological problems after being exposed to excessive zinc have not shown dramatic improvements, Nations said.

"Their neurological problems don't improve; they just stop progressing," she said.

Gilley, who spends her time playing with her new puppy and watching television, is still optimistic despite waves of depression.

"I do hope I get full function back," she said. "That would be so great to live life again the way I used to."

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Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

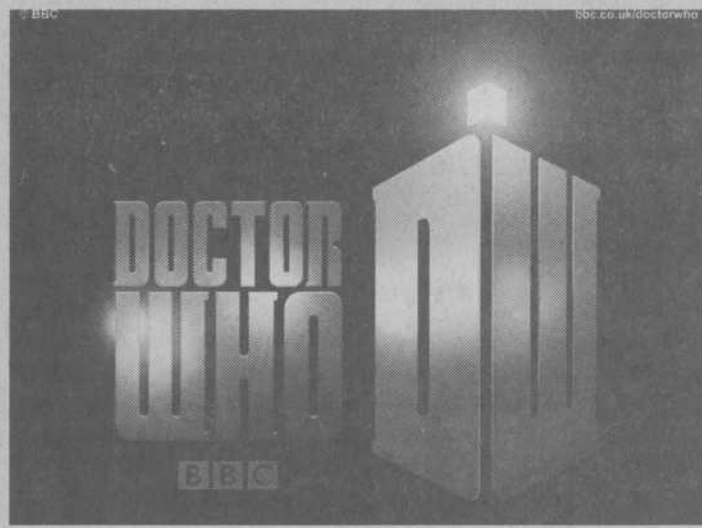
Prospectus Pick: Doctor Who

Merry THOMAS
Staff Writer

Is there a show out there that you absolutely cannot live without? We'll, British TV show *Doctor Who* is mine. I've been watching it ever since I was a little kid, and it's become a part of who I am for a long time.

Doctor Who is a science fiction show that's been on the air since 1963, with a short break from 1989 to 2005. It's in the Guinness World Records for being the longest running science fiction show in the World.

Doctor Who is about the travels of an alien who simply goes by the name "Doctor." He's apart of an ancient race called the "Time Lords" who walled the "Time Lords" who called over the Universe. The "Time Lords" have a lot of responsibility, and instead of sharing the load, the Doctor chooses a life without responsibility. He steals a spaceship called the TARDIS (Time and Relative Dimensions In Space), which looks like a blue police box, and spends his time going through one adventure to another. As the name of his ship implies, the Doctor can travel through time and space, and he normally travels with a companion of sorts.



Along the way, the Doctor and his companion(s) encounter many different types of creatures both good and bad. He has many recurring enemies, such as the Cybermen (a race of metal men), the Daleks (mutant aliens who have armor to protect their weak bodies), and probably the most important, the Master, who is an evil Time Lord. The rivalry of the Master and the Doctor is woven throughout the series, and their meetings never disappoint, meaning that they often lead to an end of the world situation.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the show is the fact that Doctor can regenerate. When his body begins to die, he can repair himself. This means two things: that there's always a chance for the show

to take a new direction, and that the show can go on running forever. This also gives the watchers of the show a chance to pick their favorite Doctor. Normally it's your first Doctor that becomes your favorite, but my favorite just happens to be the most recent Doctor, David Tennant. He recently left after the fourth season, and I await the newest Doctor with the greatest anticipation.

Doctor Who is a great show for everyone, and you can watch it on PBS on Sundays at 6. You can also buy the seasons at a store or online, which I personally recommend. It's something that you'll want to have for the rest of your life.

A Super day for the Big Ten too

Teddy GREENSTEIN
Chicago Tribune

A flip of the calendar has been most kind to Big Ten football.

New Year's Day brought an Ohio State romp in Pasadena and a Northwestern bowl game that had everything but a Gatorade shower for Pat Fitzgerald. Then Iowa carried the league banner against Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl.

On Super Bowl Sunday, a Purdue grad (Drew Brees) was MVP, an Illinois alum (Pierre Thomas) turned a dinky screen pass into a 16-yard touchdown and a Hoosier (Tracy Porter) sealed the Saints' victory with

a 74-yard interception return to the pail.

Porter signed with Indiana largely because he had no other viable options. His best sports at Port Allen High School near Baton Rouge, La., were basketball and track, but Indiana coach Gerry DiNardo got word of Porter because of his ties to the area. DiNardo had coached at LSU.

Porter signed late with Indiana and was the only player in its 26-man recruiting class not to merit any stars from Rivals.com.

"Did I think he'd start for us for four years and win the Super Bowl?" said DiNardo, an analyst for the Big Ten Net-

work. "No, but we liked him and thought he was a good athlete. We had only about 45 on scholarship then, so it was pretty easy to give 'em out."

Brees had a phenomenal career at Purdue, twice being named the league's Offensive Player of the Year while earning Academic All-America honors.

Thomas flourished in Champaign, first for Ron Turner and then Ron Zook, who even started him over future first-round pick Rashard Mendenhall.

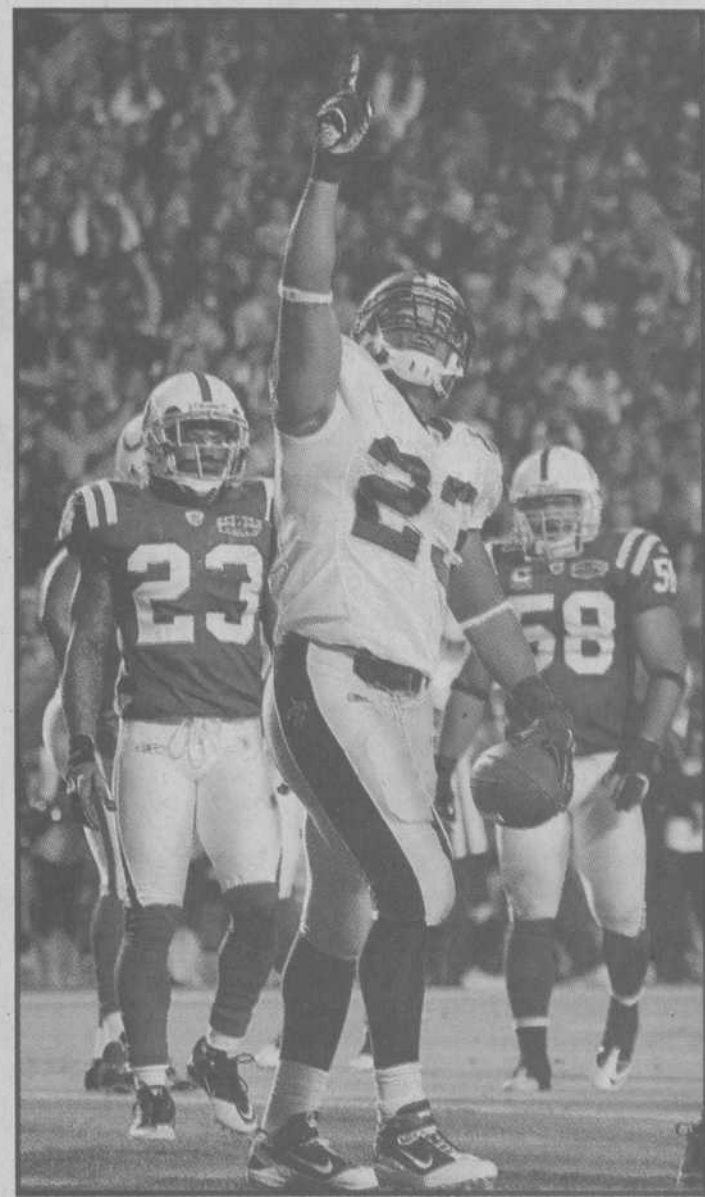
"He was the whole package," Zook said. "I'm sure Rashard learned an awful lot from him - toughness and hard work. And

Pierre always had a smile on his face."

Zook, a New Orleans Saints assistant from 2000-2001, watched the Super Bowl with youngest daughter Casey, who graduated from Illinois last May.

"Casey was jumping up and down and hooting and hollering," Zook said. "We're so happy for Pierre, and I can't imagine what's going on in New Orleans."

(c) 2010
Chicago Tribune.



New Orleans Saints (and former Illini) running back Pierre Thomas (23) points to the sky after scoring a touchdown on a 16 yard pass from former Purdue quarterback Drew Brees early in the third quarter as the New Orleans Saints beat the Indianapolis Colts 31-17, Sunday, February 7, 2010 in Super Bowl XLIV at Sun Life Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida.

Al DIAZ/Miami Herald

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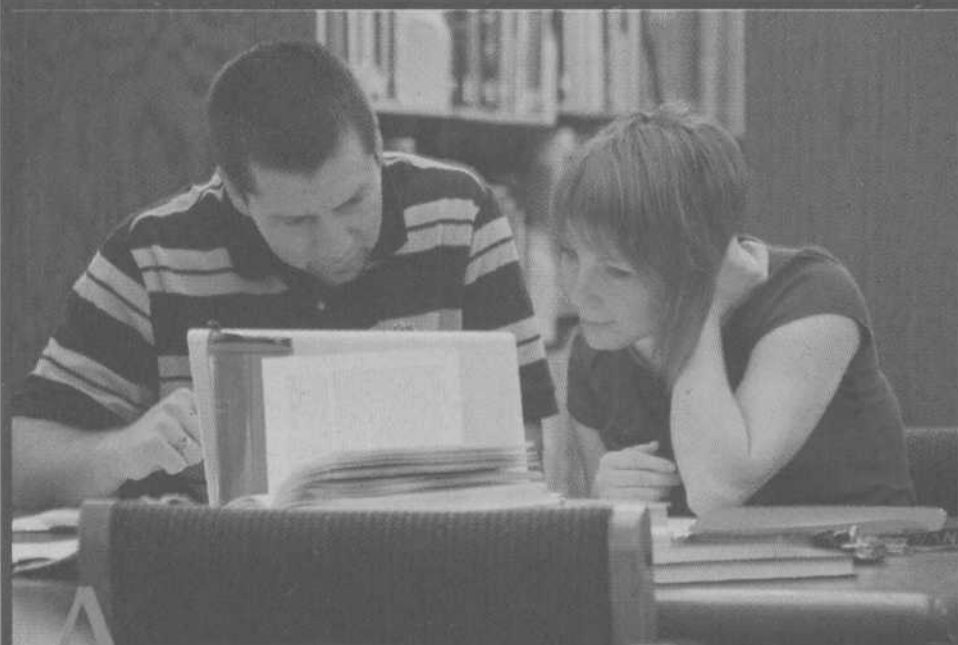
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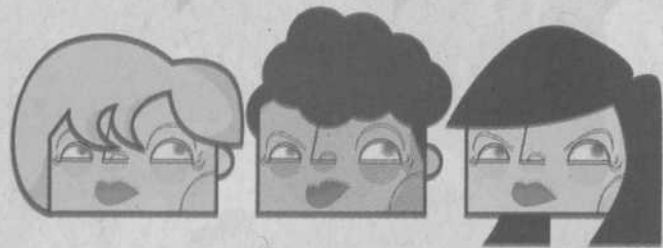
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Forget you, Cupid!



While people stalk Cupid's arrow this Feb. 14, join us in celebrating Valentine's Day Singles Awareness Day

By SALLY DADISMAN
McClatchy-Tribune

Awareness days may conjure up images of diseases or natural disasters — and some may feel that's what being single is like. But on Feb. 14, we'll happily be celebrating "Singles Awareness Day."

There's some hubbub on whether it's a replacement for the greeting-card holiday, or its own entity on Feb. 15, but we say, byones!

To convince you to join us on the day of your choosing, we've answered your most common queries (as assumed by us) and offered our advice on places to avoid, things to do and reasons to celebrate your singledom.

Dear Sally: I don't mind being single on a regular basis, but Valentine's Day is awful. It's like one big make-out session out there. Is there any way to avoid this?

—Wish I Were Blind

Dear Wish I Were Blind: You could treat it like a tornado and crawl into the darkest, windowless room in your home, or you could just face the PDA head on — armed with a Nerf gun. Or water balloons. Either one will make the kissing creatures stop in their tracks. If you want a more passive approach, stay away from the honey-filled hotspots. No movies — especially romantic comedies that are sure to remind those "better halves" just how much they "wub" each other, how it's kismet they met, how they're sure to be together forever and ever, and how their love too could be told so perfectly in 90 minutes or less. No restaurants — especially ones that offer you chicken and steaks in the shape of hearts while sipping red and pink cocktails. No roller rinks where a DJ comes on and forces all you single ladies (and gentlemen) off of the rink to make way for the couples skate. (Excuse our sixth-grade flashback.)

Dear Sally: Even though the next big Rom-Com is shockingly coming out in theaters Valentine's Day weekend, there's no way I'm stepping foot in a theater crawling with couples. No matter how saccharinely sweet, incredibly predictable, and tall, dark and handsome man-filled it is! So now that that's off the table, whatever am I to do?

—Mrs. Patrick Dempsey

Dear Mrs. Patrick Dempsey: First of all, what a handsome (hypothetical) husband you have! While we too wouldn't suggest movie theaters as good single "V-day" hangouts, there are other things to do in the world! Our picks: Treat yourself to some spa care. Massages, haircuts, facials — all will put you in a relaxed, carefree mindset. Perfect to

attack a night out with friends for classy cosmos and (Jimmy) Choos, a la "Sex and the City," or dude drinks and debauchery a la "Swingers." Speaking of, bars are a decent choice for singles only because they're too casual for love-struck couples — unless they'll be meeting single friends there later. In which case, you're likely in the majority and have every right to pelt them with peanuts right out of the place if their hands start traveling quick and loose by the pool table.

However, if you're looking for a more low-key night in with friends, your couch is much



SAM GRANADO/
THE DALLAS
MORNING NEWS/MCT

Me + Jimmy (Choo):
Nirvana!

less couple-infested for a movie marathon. Or how about a dance party to your favorite girl anthems — "I Will Survive," "Respect," anyone? Same goes for poker night with the guys. Cause if you don't have a nagging nancy to complain about the cigar smoke, crude conversations and crumbly behavior, you'd be wise to take full advantage of it.

Dear Sally: I have so many friends who are single, so we want to stay in and celebrate together. How can we make like Miley Cyrus and properly "Party in the USA" like the bright, funny single people we are?

—Hands Up, They're Playing My Song



Dear Hands Up: We think a party is a great idea — that way you have full control of who comes (or doesn't). You can have the standard parties: spa, fondue, crafting, video-gaming, poker. Or here's our idea for a killer singles-only mixer:

■ **Theme:** Celebrity breakups. No one suffers from being single more than celebrities with US Weekly reminding us every time they get dumped (Jennifer Aniston, we're looking at you). So take advantage of someone more publicly single than you are! Have everyone come dressed as their favorite infamously single celebrity — Aniston, Jessica Simpson or Rihanna, or lotharios like John Mayer, George Clooney and Jon Gosselin (you may commence the egg-throwing when he walks in the door).

■ **Food:** While it may not be the most economical option, serve all food in single servings. Get some small plates and ration everything out. You could also opt for foods-for-one, like Betty Crocker Warm Delights, Ben and Jerry's minis or personal-sized pizzas (a make-your-own-personal-pizza "bar" would be fun for this).

■ **Activity:** Instead of having your own ball and chain, make a chain together. Each person creates a link out of construction paper and writes a quote (real or invented) from their celeb on it. Quotes can be inspirational or humorous ... or both!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARTIN GEE/SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS/MCT

Dear Sally: My life reads like an episode of "Jerry Springer." My boyfriend dumped me for my best friend, and now I'm alone and afraid. I'm not used to this single life. How am I supposed to get through the day without having someone to cook for, clean up after and share my twin-size bed with at night? Wait a minute ...

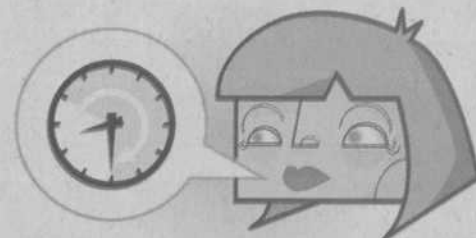
—Epiphany

Dear Epiphany: How appropriately named you are, because with that last sentence we hope you see where we're going with this answer. Yes, having someone around who loves you, has your back and can give you affection can be nice. But it's not everything! Here's our list of just a few reasons to celebrate being single:

1. You make the financial rules. All of them. That Kate Spade handbag you want? Buy it! That 52-inch flat screen plasma TV? It's yours! A yacht filled with bathing beauties, a staff at your beck and call and your best bud P. Diddy shooting his latest music video? OK, maybe in your dreams ... And P. Diddy? Really?

2. You make all the time-managing rules. It's time to take that trip to Europe. When? Whenever you want! Want to spend a weekend in Vegas gambling with the guys, but it happens to be your girlfriend's grandmother's 80th birthday and her family would be really disappointed if you bailed? Oh wait, you don't have a girlfriend! Gamble away!

3. Selfishness is acceptable. Forget living for someone else. You can focus your energy on things that make you happy. You'll never have to sacrifice girls' weekends, new nightclub openings, happy hour specials, all because a night in on the couch with your honeybunch seems more appealing (or a requirement). It's a big world out there — go conquer it.



You're not alone

If nothing else, take a cue from these pop-culture jams — being single isn't all the bad stuff it's made out to be. Use these songs and movies as centerpieces for a karaoke session or movie night in with friends.



GINA FERAZZI/
LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Mary J. Blige

SING IT, SISTAH

■ **"Just Fine"**

by Mary J. Blige:

Feels so good, when you're doing all the things that you want to do
Get the best out of life, treat yourself to something new
It's a really-good thing to say
That I won't change my life, my life's just fine

■ **"Single"** by Natasha Bedingfield:

Everything in its right time, everything in its right place
I know I'll settle down one day
But 'til then I like it this way, it's my way
Eh I like it this way

■ **"Girls Just Wanna Have Fun"** by Cyndi Lauper:

Some boys take a beautiful girl
And hide her away from the rest of the world
I want to be the one to walk in the sun
Oh girls, they want to have fun

■ **"I Don't Wanna Be In Love"** by Good Charlotte:

You've got a reason to live
Say I don't wanna be in love
I don't wanna be in love



MIRAMAX

Renée Zellweger stars in "Bridget Jones's Diary."

CINEMA FOR SINGLES

■ **"Bridget Jones's Diary":** While Bridget does fall in love, it's her trials and tribulations as a single girl in London that keep us laughing and relating all the same.

■ **"Singles":** Cameron Crowe's 1992 aptly titled drama is about a group of twentysomethings living in an apartment complex in Seattle. Most appropriate if you find yourself drawn to flannel, overalls and Nirvana music videos.

■ **"Fatal Attraction":** How fatal single you may be, at least you're not being stalked by a former one-night stand. Or are stalking someone with whom you formerly had a one-night-stand.

■ Try action movies like James Bond or anything starring Sylvester Stallone or Arnold Schwarzenegger (except for "Jingle All the Way," which shouldn't be consumed by singles or spoke-fors, alike).