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INDEPENDENT

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

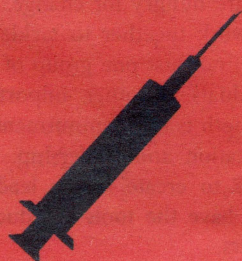


Tuesday, January 22, 2013

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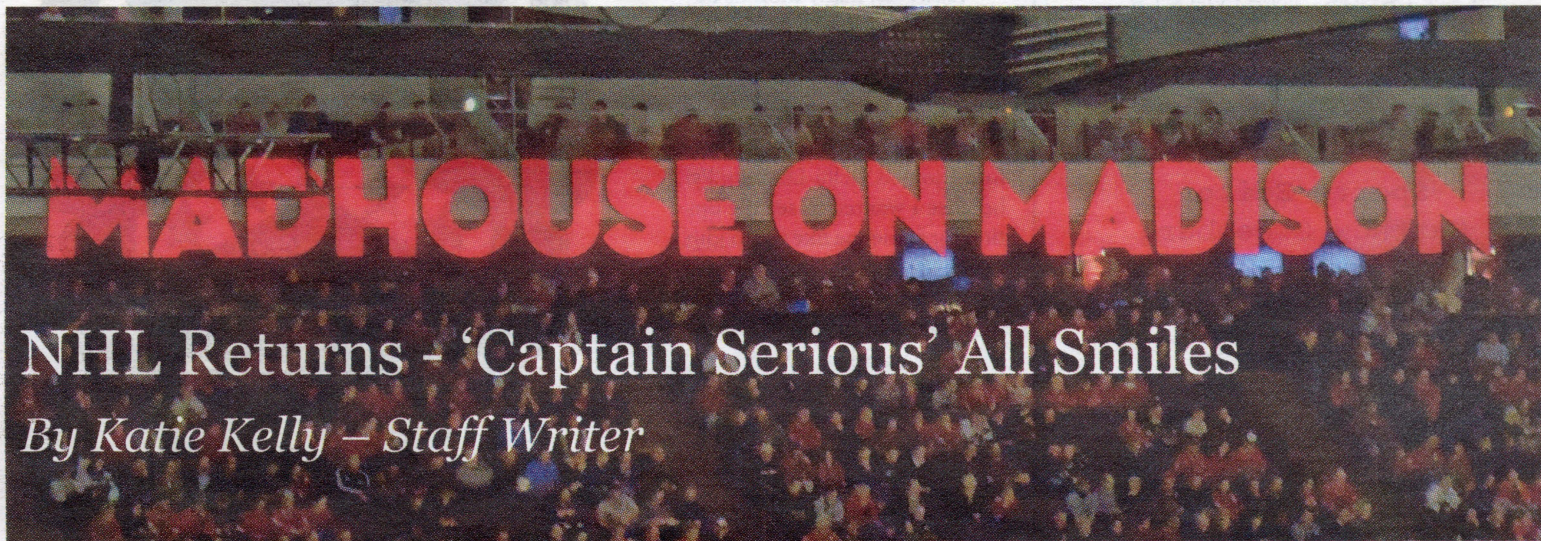
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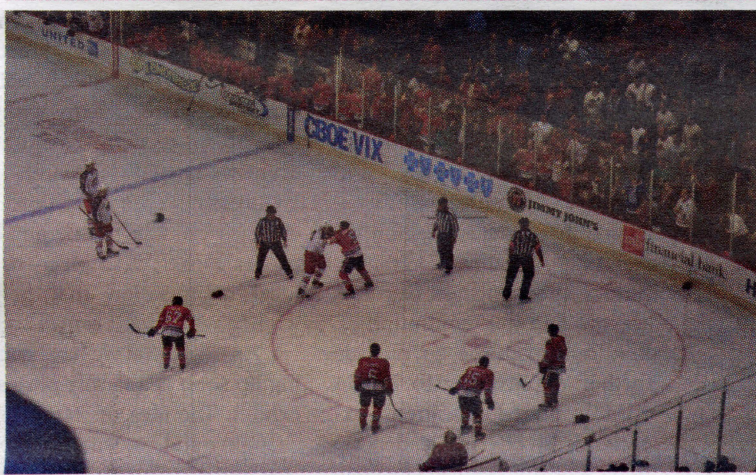


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NHL Returns - 'Captain Serious' All Smiles

By Katie Kelly - Staff Writer



Over 20,000 fans standing on their feet cheering and clapping in unison to the simplest yet most symbolic song that has taken over the United Center will finally take place once again this hockey season. Chelsea's Dagger blares over the PA system as Chicago Blackhawks fans rise to their feet to greet the Hawks after what seemed like an eternity apart. Tonight, Tuesday January 22, is the home opener, and the Hawks are anticipated to give the St. Louis Blues a ride.

After 113 days on strike, both the players and the owners were ready to move on. Members of the

National Hockey League (NHL) and National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA) were able to ratify an agreement to let the season take to the ice. They were able to end the labor strike before eating up more of their season. With a new shortened schedule set and abbreviated training camp behind them, the Hawks are ready.

The offseason may have lasted longer than hoped for, but it gave these guys a chance to sharpen their skills. Corey Crawford, Hawks No. 1 goalie, is quoted in the Chicago Sun Times saying, "It is something that's going to motivate me. I'm a competitive guy. I'm confident right

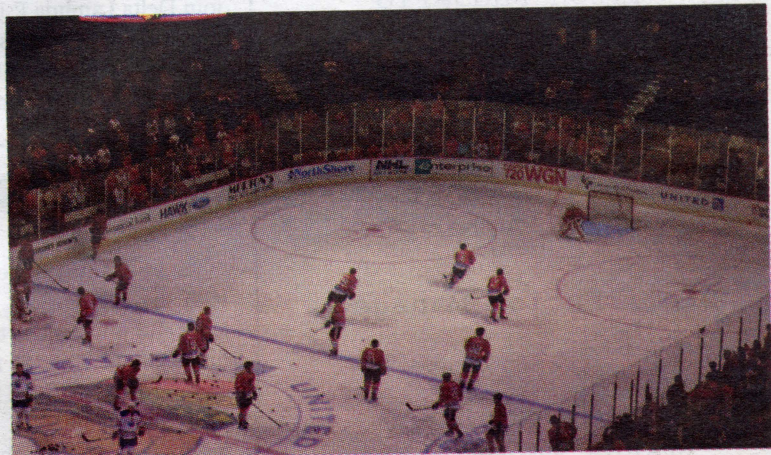
now and I want to do the job." His motivation: letting two pucks get past him in last season's playoff series against the Phoenix Coyotes.

As Crawford gets ready to make saves at the net, his teammate Marian Hossa is ready to score at the net. Hossa, coming back after a severe concussion during the same set of playoff games in April, has reportedly made a full recovery. As part of the Hawks top-line left wing Hossa's recovery came at the perfect time.

In seasons past, Dave Bolland focused on defense. He will now try his hand at center. Bolland, a Canadian. Back in the minors he shelled

out an impressive number of goals that makes him and his coaches confident he can do it again.

The Hawks opener is the 3rd game they will play in four days. As they prepare to go on the road again after tonight, the Hawks will be back in Chicago on January 27 to face their rivals, the Detroit Red Wings. With the season crunched into only three and a half months there is little room for error. All of those unofficial practices during the lockout will be a testament to how hard the Hawks truly conditioned. Let's hope for the best as the 2012-



Photos by Katie Kelly

Student Loan Tax Increase Looms Ahead

By Gary Soriano - Arts and Life Editor

Students seeking to pay back their loans after graduating will have higher taxes attached to their repayment plans. A new change to repayment plans seeks to reduce the high number of defaults on student loans but also comes with a tax increase.

Although this affects monthly payments, the apparent lump sum due when forgiveness is granted (after about 10- 25 years) also rightfully increases. Taxes on the remaining funds owed must be paid in full.

Income-Based Repayment Plan (IBR) helps students manage their finances by placing a cap or limit on student monthly payments. The plan also forgives any remaining debt after about 10 but typically 25 years.

This plan sounds feasible but according to a New York Times article, after forgiveness, the remain-

ing taxes will be required to be paid in full. A graduate student with a six-figure debt will pay taxes in the five figures.

Teachers or those who work for the government can apply for public service loan forgiveness (PSLF). This service decreases the amount of time before forgiveness can occur. According to ibrinfo.org, "after 10 years of eligible payments and employment," teachers and government workers would be eligible for the PSLF. Taxes for the eligible participants are also forgiven.

"It was necessary for the President to use his Executive Order privileges to get these measures implemented in light of the economy and college graduates not being able to be placed in fields of their interest at the rates that they should," said NEIU Financial Aid Office Director, Maureen Amos.

Besides the nation's economic

state, this tax increase may largely contribute to the increase in payment defaults. The slowly increasing default rates at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) reflect a trend in the nation.

Although default rates in 2008 and 2009 seem steady, 7.4 and 7.2 respectively, the number increased by 1.1 in 2010, a 3.2 rate increase since 2006.

Considering these numbers and the current state of the national economy, the number of defaults, which occurs 270 days after no payments are made, will likely increase at the university.

In an effort to quell this possibility, the Obama Administration reduced repayment periods and adjusted the formula for the IBR, which currently calls for 15% of an individual's monthly income to be taken out as loan repayment.

Effective July 1, 2014, the IBR

"is scheduled to reduce that limit from 15% to 10% of discretionary income," according to a letter from the Office of the Press Secretary at the White House. The White House administration has decided to lower the percentage to encourage and assist those at financial risk of defaulting.

Amos believes that not only will defaults affect individual graduates but the national debt as well. "Students unable to make loan payment schedules causes them to default, thus causing institutions to have higher default rates which could place the institution in jeopardy of losing its ability to participate in Title IV Programs."

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Presidents Pen - Delta Lambda Psi

Hello Northeastern Illinois Students!

My name is Jorge L Vargas. I'm currently President and Founder of Delta Lambda Psi, the First Queer and Gender Neutral Fraternity. I officially joined Delta Lambda Psi Jan. 18, 2011.

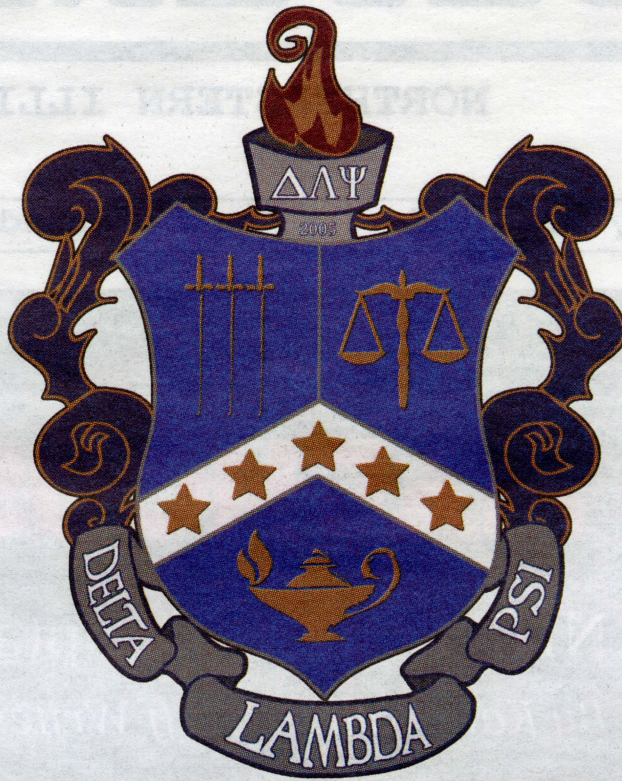
However, many months before, I was working with our Alpha Chapter to establish Delta Lambda Psi at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU).

I did a lot of research before I joined Delta Lambda Psi because I wanted to see the option for someone like me to join Greek life. I also joined because I wanted to be a part a greater movement in which we challenge the world we live in.

Delta Lambda Psi allows other LGBT, straight students, and gender non-conforming students to be a part of an organization they can be proud of and build strong friendships that last a lifetime.

The NEIU Chapter of Delta Lambda Psi currently has five members and continues to grow. We have a diverse age group ranging from 21- 29. Currently we have straight, gay and lesbian members. As we continue to grow we hope to recruit more people with different sexualities and backgrounds and we also hope to attract students who are gender non-conforming, queer and Trans into the organization.

We stress that you do not have to label yourself as anything in order to pledge and join Delta Lambda Psi. At Delta Lambda Psi. We stress and express and value individuality, meaning we will honor what-



ever you chose to label yourself.

The objective and goals of Delta Lambda Psi are to strengthen Greek life at NEIU by providing a vehicle for positive leadership, change, and growth in the queer, transsexual, transgender, questioning, pansexual, lesbian, intersex, gender-queer, gay, bisexual, asexual and ally communities. It is our intention to provide further opportunity to obtain a well-rounded educational experience by offering leadership skills and the exposure needed to succeed financially, academically, socially and culturally.

Delta Lambda Psi has done a few events in the past couple of months at NEIU, such as a screening of the documentary

called Cruel and Unusual. This documentary dealt directly with issues that affect MTF (male to female) persons within our prison system. Another event we hosted was Dance for a Cure. This event was a group exercise class in which all the profits raised were given to a local organization that helps women with breast cancer.

An event that we have coming up soon is a family portrait exhibit. The idea of "family" is changing and we want to show that to the rest of the University and community.

Why have a gender-neutral organization:

Gender is a social construct. It is important to have an option for those of us that want

to be rebels and fight the system we live in. It is also important to have an organization that wants others who don't the traditional molds or expectations of society.

How is the Fraternity accepted/perceived on campus:

So far we have received very positive feedback from the school and from other Greek organizations within the University. From day one, we have challenged the idea that we are just the gay frat on campus. Delta Lambda Psi is much more complex than that.

One of the biggest strengths that our organization has is that we are hungry for change. We all work together to tackle issues, not just one group of individuals. Another important strength is our commitment to education and leadership. We hope to create future leaders that have the tools to educate others.

Short-term and long-term goals for the local Fraternity:

One of the long-term goals we have for the beta chapter of Delta Lambda Psi is to create a local mentoring program for high school students who are LGBT, allies, and gender non-conforming. We want to show these teens not to give up on their dreams or their lives and to fight everyday because giving up is not an option.

If you are interested in rushing please contact Jorge Vargas at jlvargas55@yahoo.com

Student Loan Taxcontinued from page 1

....said Amos. Title IV deals with the eligibility of U.S. colleges and universities to receive financial aid. One of the main components Title IV looks at is the default rate. If NEIU graduates increasingly default on their loans then it is possible for NEIU to lose their Title IV privileges.

According to US News and World Report, in 2010 NEIU ranked first in the Midwest "for students with the least amount of debt upon graduation." The changes in Pell Grant qualifications during the 2012-2013 year affected many students who may have turned to loans to accommodate financial need.

More than half of the 10 million people who took out Stafford loans during the 2011-12 school year should be eligible for the reduced payment plan because of their income

according to Barclays analyst, Cooper Howes. Assuming this is a trend, this current academic year may see these numbers heighten.

Because evidence of the effectiveness of this tax increase will take some time to obtain results, the task of finding trends that offer clues to the effects of the tax increase may also take some time. It is certain that taxes must be paid after forgiveness is granted. According to nolo.com, the most popular method of collecting on default loans is through the interception of tax refunds.

The most apparent issue at hand for those close to finishing payments is taking care of the remaining taxes. The burden of student loans is not complete until taxes are paid in full.

To learn more about the income-based repayment, visit



NEIU student wallets, before and after repaying the taxes on their loans

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/ibr>. For more available information on financial aid, visit studentloans.gov. To apply for any of these or other repayment plans, a new available tool on the site is intended to speed up the eligibility process so repay-

ment can begin as soon as possible. Most of the loan servicers are already in the system with hopes of getting all servicers in by the end of spring.

NEIU Legal Battles Continue - Retraction

In the story entitled "NEIU Legal Battles Continue" published in the Dec. 4, 2012 issue of the Independent newspaper, we incorrectly relayed that the Aug. 29, 2012 court decision listed in the article was decided in favor of Dr. Loretta Capeheart.

The court did not rule in favor of Dr. Capeheart on the grounds of the Garcetti v. Caballos precedent.

The Independent was also incorrect about Capeheart not being responsible for NEIU's legal fees. In fact, the 7th Circuit

Federal Court of Appeals sided with NEIU. Capeheart is still responsible for all legal fees, including NEIU's.

We sincerely regret this error and any confusion it may have caused.



Photo by Gary Soriano

Bye-Bye, Blackboard

By Melissa Brand - Staff Writer

Courtesy of Blackboard



After years of using Blackboard (Bb) as the main online tool for classes, students and faculty of NEIU will be switching to Desire2Learn (D2L) once the spring 2013 semester ends. The contract for Bb, which has been the learning management system (LMS) for the university since 2001, expires in June 2013, which means all summer classes will start on D2L.

Dr. Thomas Tobin, Coordinator of Learning Technologies in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), said a lot went into picking the new LMS. Tobin said, "We went through that process, we got six different vendors and at that point, we created review boards of 24 faculty from throughout the university. There were also technical review

committees from our university technology service areas."

According to Tobin, some of the key features they looked for were: the ability to have discussions with students, options to post files such as a syllabus, receive files from students, access for mobile devices, ways to showcase student work outside of the class and how many clicks it is to perform certain functions.

"Of the six vendors we looked at, D2L constantly came up to the top and received the highest marks from all of the different sub-teams," said Tobin.

During the fall 2012 semester, a select group of classes were part of a pilot program to test D2L. Margaret Rios, a CMT major said, "The only problem I encountered with D2L is that it was difficult to find all of the tabs. What I mean by that is that the site is not as organized as Blackboard would be."

An issue that Tobin said is easily fixable as D2L is much more customizable than Bb. "The one thing that I do like, is that when writing

in a discussion board, there were never any glitches," said Rios. "The opposite goes with Blackboard. When writing on a Blackboard discussion board, there were times where I would be kicked off or the whole post would delete itself before I had a chance to post it."

Dr. Shane Pepper from the CMT department was also part of the pilot program. He used D2L for one class in fall 2012 and is using it again this semester. "I did not have any issues and I did not hear any substantial concerns from students," said Pepper. "Any new system has quirks, but we worked through them easily."

One of the many new features of D2L that Bb did not have, is the ability to block discussion board posts from other students' view until they have posted their own response. Rios said, "This is good because you know that those that did not study or read, could not slack off and take your work." This feature is liked not only by students, but by professors too.

"I've noticed that the posts are

much more thorough, as students are not able to just draw upon the responses of their classmates," said Pepper. "Instead, they are engaging with the readings and providing their unique analysis. This has even led to a higher response rate when it comes to comments, as students seem to go and read the other posts to find out if they were on the right track with their own."

Dr. Gerardo Moreno, from the Special Education Department, said there were no negative issues with D2L encountered by him or students. "Quite the opposite," said Moreno. "I have had a couple of email messages from students praising D2L and the course, and were inquiring if all SPED online courses would be offered in this manner."

Moreno also prefers the new interface and praised D2L for being, "Truly optimized for mobile computing as opposed to Bb, which the latest iteration still relies on a full computer setup for the complete user experience."

Currently a handful of faculty

uses D2L as well as the entire College of Business and Management. Tobin said, "The next thing students and professors should look for is starting in late February, we will be offering training for professors and instructors throughout the rest of the university." Students already have access to login with their NetID, and can get familiar with the new system.

The CTL works directly with faculty and instructors to help them create their course materials. However, they have provided links on their website to help students with the transition from Bb to D2L.

The main link for students is: <http://www.neiu.edu/~ctl/D2L.html#student>. This section provides seven topics students can get information on to learn D2L. Just like in Bb, if you have questions or need technical support in D2L, you would contact the student helpdesk at Ext. 4357 (HELP).

Norovirus Knocking Out Chicago, Not the Flu

By Christos Liardakis - Opinions Editor

photo by George Borawski



Fear-mongering stories have flooded the airwaves from various media outlets in Chicago about the city's influenza epidemic. Reports of multiple strains, particularly the H1N1 and H3N2, has people running to the doctor at the first sign of illness.

Yet according to the Chicago Department of Health, an average of just 25 percent of the patient specimens tested in January were actually influenza. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported similar numbers, with just over 29 percent testing positive as influenza for the U.S. overall. The alleged "flu" that is knocking Chicago off of its feet may actually be several strains of the norovirus.

The UK is currently experiencing a norovirus outbreak with more than 1 million people thought to have suffered the debilitating effects of the virus this winter alone. Europe and Asia have experienced similar outbreaks.

The problem in identifying which malady a person has may lie in the public's general lack knowledge about the admittedly small differences between the symptoms of the two viruses.

Flu symptoms are typically fever, head and body aches, respiratory congestion, vomiting, diarrhea and especially fatigue or weakness that can persist as a general malaise for several weeks.

Norovirus symptoms are usually fever, head and body aches, vomiting that is often projectile and diarrhea. The symptom list is nearly the same, except for the respiratory distress and fatigue.

The real difference between the flu virus and the norovirus is in the endurance of each. The flu virus can live outside a host body for up to 48 hours, while the norovirus can survive for up to 12 days outside of a host.

Every year the world will see several new strains of the flu due to mutations, but people who are vaccinated or experience the flu are usually immune to the strains they target or experience. According to the CDC, the norovirus mutates constantly and any immunity the human body gains is short-lived and virtually useless against the next mutation.

"Norovirus is one of the most infectious viruses of man," said Cambridge University's Ian Goodfellow, Professor of virology. "It takes fewer than 20 virus particles to infect someone. So each droplet of vomit or gram of feces from an infected person can contain enough virus to infect more than 100,000 people."

According to the CDC, the norovirus can survive contact with cleaning products pasteurization techniques, freezing, temperatures of 60 degrees Celsius (140 degrees Fahrenheit) and immersion in human stomach acid.

The mechanics of the norovirus have recently been highlighted by researchers for the unusually effective methods of propagation the virus uses.

Once infected, it's only a matter of 24-48 hours before the virus has completely hijacked the host's digestive tract and intestinal lining by attacking cells within those

areas. While the virus is replicating, it causes the cells in the intestine to purge their fluids, leading to diarrhea.

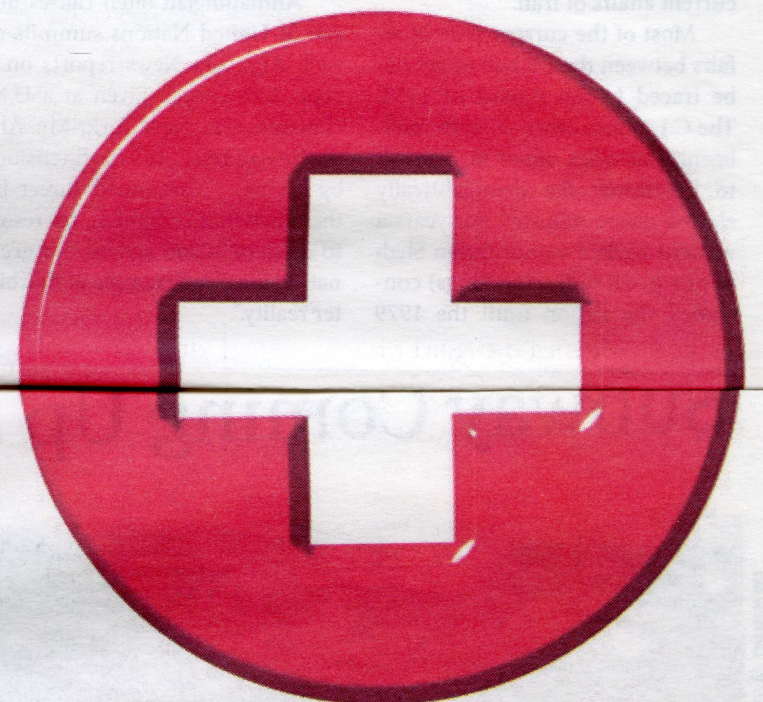
According to the CDC, even though the patient may feel well again after several days, they can continue shedding the virus in their stool for up to two weeks after initial infection.

The stomach's function is also altered during infection, causing the passage of food to the intestines is slowed down, thought to be as a result of the virus temporarily altering the nervous system response to those areas.

This causes food to build up in our stomach without being digested. When the virus has propagated enough copies of itself, it manipulates the nerves in the stomach lining to induce vomiting by sending signals to the muscles in the stomach to contract swiftly.

The often abrupt vomiting projects millions of newly replicated viruses out of the body, spraying fine droplets loaded with norovirus ready to infect others.

As unpleasant as vomiting and diarrhea is, the discomfort these cause are often the only risk factor that comes with the norovirus. For the young, elderly and those with weak immune systems, the norovirus could easily cause dehydration and complications. For healthy college students though it is most likely to just lead to several days of intense stomach pain and a lot of time in the bathroom.



A few tips on how to prevent/care with the norovirus around:

1. Wash your hands thoroughly. Use soap, and count to 15-20 at a moderate pace from the moment you start washing your hands until you go to dry them. If caring for a sick person you should be washing your hands for a full minute and wearing medical gloves if possible.
2. Pack in that Vitamin C. Oranges and Emergen-C™ are great ways to boost your immune system. Orange juice works too but Tropicana and other commercial orange juices have large amounts of sugar.
3. Get a flu shot. There is no vaccination for the norovirus but a flu-weakened immune system with the flu can increase your chances of getting the virus.
4. For those using the CTA or frequenting heavily trafficked public areas, wash your hands before touching your eyes, nose, mouth.
5. Do not share food utensils or drinking containers and carefully wash all fruits and vegetables.
6. If sick, just stay at home and drink plenty of liquids. The norovirus is extremely contagious, and the possibility of sudden projectile vomit and diarrhea makes you a potential biohazard.

The Iran rundown

By Luis Badillo – Staff Writer

To Many Americans, Iran is the political adversary of the Middle East. Hostile language towards Western nations, threats to regional allies, as well as threats of nuclear expansion have given world powers reason to be wary of the Islamic nation.

Though feelings and opinions are strong when it comes to Iran, knowledge of the actual history and governmental system of the country is less so. A study conducted by National Geographic reported that 70 percent of the students surveyed could not locate Iran on a map. Even with regular media attention, there is still a lot unknown about the Middle Eastern nation. The U.S. led economic sanctions, as well as the closed off cultural nature of the country have led Iran to be somewhat of an enigma to most Americans. Still, the relationship between the two nations might overshadow decades of complex history, so here's a brief summary on past and current affairs of Iran.

Most of the current state of affairs between the US and today can be traced to the August of 1953. The C.I.A. and other western intelligence agencies aided in a revolt to overthrow the democratically elected prime minister. For years a western backed authoritarian Shah (a title given to Iranian kings) controlled the nation until the 1979

Cultural Revolution. The events of the revolution led to the takeover of the American embassy by students and militants. 52 Americans were held hostage for 444 days in what is now known as the Iranian Hostage Crisis.

The 1979 revolution or the Islamic awakening as its leaders called it, ultimately led to the dethroning of the Shah, and in that whirlwind of power an oligarchy of Muslim clerics took control. These clerics infused the country with Islamist ideals and laws, replacing more western ones enacted by the U.S. supported Shah. This tone of anti-westernism has been the prevalent tone in the nation's politics and diplomacy for decades, and to this day still views western nations as an enemy. Such views are not even subtly expressed, as current President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (like many leaders before him) occasionally refers to the U.S. as "The great Satan."

Ahmadinejad often causes unrest at United Nations summits as well. Aljazeera News reports on a Sept. 27th speech given at a U.N. conference in New York, Mr. Ahmadinejad refers to Israeli tensions by saying, "Continued threat by the uncivilized Zionists to resort to military action against our great nation is a clear example of this bitter reality."

Israel and Iran currently are in dangerous straights. As of Nov. 6, Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu claim's he is ready to attack Iran if need be, says the BBC. "I am; of course, ready to press the button if necessary." Iran hasn't been on friendly terms with the Jewish state, and has often been hostile in their relations. This most recent call to arms is over the Iranian nuclear program.

In 2011, The U.S and Canada strengthened economic sanctions against Iran, when reports suggested that Iran may be trying to reap a military application in their Uranium enrichment program. Ahmadinejad and other Iranian leaders deny these claims and insist that the program is solely for the development of nuclear energy, saying that the right to nuclear power was "unalienable." At another U.N conference according to The Guardian, Ahmadinejad said "Let's even imagine that we have an atomic weapon, a nuclear weapon. What would we do with it? What intelligent person would fight 5,000 American bombs with one bomb?" Regardless of which many nations are still strongly opposed to the idea as Iran as a nuclear power. Netanyahu states, "As long as I am prime minister, Iran will not have the atomic bomb."

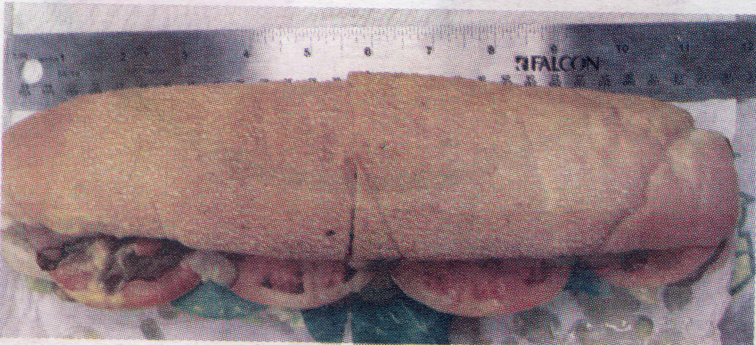
This leaves a lot for the United States to deal with. President Obama has taken a less hostile stance than his predecessor with Iran. Former President George Bush was often at odds with Iran, and even went so far as to label them as a member of "The Axis of Evil." In contrast, the White House has given an official statement, in it a willingness to work with the government of

Iran in achieving "peaceful nuclear power." The statement also includes language giving Iranian leaders a choice in how it will interact with the international community. "It is time for the Iranian government to decide whether it wants to focus on the past, or whether it will make the choices that will open the door to greater opportunity, prosperity and justice for its people."



Subway Coming Up Short - From the Editor's Desk

Photos by George Borawski



A recent controversy has arisen regarding the actual size of Subway footlong sandwiches. People around the world began posting pictures of their Subway brand sandwiches beside various measurement devices Jan. 15, 2013. Many of the sandwiches didn't measure up to their footlong name, measuring anywhere from 10.5-11.5 inches. Requests piled up for a response to the photos alleging footlong sandwiches that fell short via Twitter. Subway initially cited improper baking methods employed by franchise employees for creating inconsistent bread lengths. However, on Jan. 16, Subway Australia posted a response to the controversy on Facebook, saying "With regards to the size of the bread and calling it a footlong, 'SUBWAY FOOTLONG' is a registered trademark as a descriptive name for the sub sold in Subway® Restaurants and not intended to be a measurement of length. The length of the

bread baked in the restaurant cannot be assured each time as the proofing process may vary slightly each time in the restaurant." The post was quickly taken down, but the Subway company further explained in a statement to ABC news that "Most countries, such as Australia, follow the metric system so the term Footlong can only be used as part of a trademark." While that explanation may quell some of the unsatisfied international customers, it does nothing for Subway customers here in the U.S.

The Subway sandwich pictured was made here at NEIU's own Subway. It measured just 11.5 inches, even with the traditional Subway center cut adding a small increment of extra length to the overall sandwich for the purposes of measuring. Whether the name "Footlong" was just intended to be a clever catchphrase or not, Subway customers will be scrutinizing their food more closely from now on.





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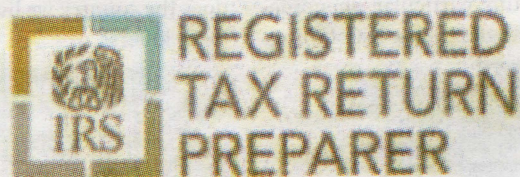
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- Must be studying at least half-time

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- Reduce your taxable income by up to \$2,500

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Patent Trolls Lurking Under Every Bridge

By Lauren Gugwor — Staff Writer



Photo by George Borawski

Student using an NEIU copier with scanner function. If patent trolls prevail, NEIU (and through the resulting new tuition fees students) would theoretically be required to pay a usage license fee for the right to use this machine.

Trolling, the act of intentionally inciting anger or distress, usually through posting a message, derived from the fishing action of dragging a lure until something (or someone) that anybody who has used the internet for the past five years should be familiar with.

Aside from irritating or shocking their intended targets, trolls are generally harmless. However, the similarly-named patent trolls aren't as harmless as their Internet counterparts.

Patent trolls are individuals or companies that buy up patents from bankrupt companies or renew old patents that have lapsed. With these patents, they then sue rival companies claiming that they had the idea first.

Unlike most companies patent

trolls, also known as NPEs (Non-practicing entities) have no intention of marketing or manufacturing their patented invention. Instead they make their money by suing others with the intent of settling out of court. Recently patent trolls have begun attempting to enforce patent licensing fees on end users and consumers, a move which, if successful, may become their main source of revenue. Patent trolls will stop at nothing to "protect" their ideas, even if it means they have to go after the average consumer and small companies.

In a recent case, a patent organization known as Project Paperless LLC, began sending letters to small businesses such as BlueWave Computing. These letters stated they needed to pay \$1,000 per employee

to license a technology patent Project Paperless described as used for "distributed computer architecture." Basically, BlueWave was told they need to pay \$1,000 every time a document was scanned and emailed.

Though why would Project Paperless go after BlueWave and not Canon, Brother, Xerox or Hewlett Packard (HP), the entities making the scanning technology that they claim was infringing on their patent? A recent journal article by Prof. Colleen V. Chien of Santa Clara University found that 55 percent of defendants to patent troll suits are small businesses, and gross less than \$10 million in annual revenue.

This finding makes sense, as larger companies often have better-funded and more aggressive legal

departments. Going after individuals and small companies by way of letters demanding payments for alleged infringement by threatening legal action has been a successful legal tactic used by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and the Recording Industry of America (RIAA) in recent years.

When faced with the prospect of high litigation court costs associated with suing a large entity such as Canon or HP, Project Paperless LLC likely chose the relatively low-cost option of sending out letters to collect royalties from small business consumers.

BlueWave refused to pay the demanded licensing fee for using technology it legitimately purchased on the consumer market. When sued by Project Paperless, BlueWave "actively pursued counter-claims" and Project Paperless "ultimately dismissed the case without conditions or any opportunity for further recourse," according to a statement released to the public on Aug. 6, 2012.

Due to constant advancements in technology, patents are put in place to protect designs, software, or components for future hardware. Actually having physical hardware built or having the intent to distribute the technology is not required to file a patent for it. The patents also endure for a standard term of 20 years according to the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

According to Brian J. Love who conducted a recent study on patent litigation timing for the University of Pennsylvania Law Review, many of the patent lawsuits filed involve software written an average of 17-20 years ago. In a technological age where new versions of programs are released (and expected) yearly, the functionality of the software these patent suits champion is almost as-

surely obsolete, and the damage to the market value and original inventor questionable.

Many of the suits are akin to representing the original inventor of the wheel in a suit against Michelin Tires for utilizing the round shape.

The rising problem of patent trolls in the past 20 years has prompted the United States Patent and Trademark Office's to consider proposals of a revision to the patent fee structure. Currently patent holders must pay maintenance fees at the 3.5, 7.5 and 11.5 year mark of the standard 20 year patent licensing term. Continued fees would ensure that only viable and relevant patents would be maintained, limiting the number of obsolete patents being sold off as minor assets when businesses go bankrupt.

Among other anti-patent troll ideas is the SHIELD (Saving High-Tech Innovators from Egregious Legal Disputes) Act introduced last year by House Rep. Peter DeFazio of Oregon and Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah.

SHIELD seeks to better define the limits of software patents, punish people seeking to abuse the patent (such as patent trolls) and force frivolous lawsuit filers to take financial responsibility for their actions. This is an especially important provision considering that the victims of patent trolls are often smaller companies that risk closure or serious financial impacts as a result of litigation entanglement.

While the SHIELD does not solve all of the flaws in the current patent law system, it is a significant step forward in protecting both the rights of legitimate patent holders, end-users and the ability of technology to progress without unnecessary hindrance.

Sandy Hook Tragedy Shoved Down Nation's Throat

By George H. Borawski — Visual Media Editor

Does the Sandy Hook tragedy directly affect anyone in the area? What could warrant the amount of coverage, for weeks at a time no less?

These horrific shootings are for the most part a local story. A brief mention of it would suffice. People who live outside of Connecticut are missing out on more relevant stories due to the relentless coverage. Five hundred people were killed in Chicago last year, including more children than at Sandy Hook.

Consuming and regurgitating this information serves to attract negative attention to ourselves. For many people this is in absence of a way to attract positive attention. Also paradoxically it works to convey a sense of morality to those listening. As if shaking one's head at the tragedy makes them a good person.

It sucks people into a situation where it is implied that any reaction less than the most sincere reflection and sadness immediately qualifies

one as a horrible person. How genuine are these people?

On the other side of it news organizations are motivated by ratings. Nothing more than a measure of how much money they can sell their viewers to advertisers. There is no question about it, this stuff sells.

The nation turns to watch these stories like rubberneckers at a train wreck. Some news stations detailed the story with step by step computer generated reenactments. America sits watching with perturbing fascination and T.V. dinners. Is any of this necessary?

Tragedies should be covered. All news should be reported regardless of taste and subject matter. The difference here is these school shootings are unpredictable and unpreventable. These incidents occurred for similar reasons as the Jonestown and Heavens Gate cult suicides. To put it bluntly, people are crazy.

In the wake of each of these massacres, politicians use the mem-

ories of slain people to forward their own agendas. The politicians and lobbyists on both sides of the gun control issue already had plans and were waiting for a time like this to arise. They take advantage of it. Shame on them.

So as far as prevention goes, what's next? Profiling the quiet loner and alleging thought crimes, furthering the alienation that seems to be the only consistent trait of these shooters? I'd argue these are some of the most profound incidents of displaced anger the country has ever seen.

Individuals with an inarticulate hate for society and a death wish are not preventable. Treating schools like prisons with armed guards is not a healthy psychological environment for children.

The string of tragic shootings of helpless and seemingly guiltless targets may be a sign of the times.

It also may be safe to assume with a U.S. population of over three million these emotionally disturbed

and violent anomalies are bound to happen. Germany has had four school shootings, Finland two, nearly all other countries have experienced single incidences.

The United States leads the world in this particular phenomenon. Add that onto the list of things

we lead the industrialized world in per capita, like: teen pregnancies, prison population, carbon emissions, fast food consumption and prevalence of mental disorders.

Why not start by asking, why does the country we live in produce these killers?



Sandy Hook Elementary School makeshift memorial on Berkshire Road in Newtown, CT, Dec. 26, 2012

Photo by B.B. Jeter

2012: The Awakening of a Global Power Monster

By Hiram Crespo – Staff Writer



In recent years, the Mayan script has been decoded and great advances have been made in our understanding of Mayan culture. This has inspired a renewal of interest in Mayan spiritual traditions, and has also called to our attention that the last day in their calendar was our winter solstice (Dec 21) of 2012.

Our current 20-year Mayan calendar period or katún, from 1992 – 2012, is known as the Time of No-Time since these were the last years of the sun's 5,125 year cycle in the Mayan calendar. Mayan elders believe that there had been many humanities before us and that the fifth humanity would emerge on this day from the ruins of the previous one.

There have been innumerable doomsday predictions. For instance, the pastor of an early Christian American sect known as the Millerites convinced his flock to await the end of days on April 28 of 1843. Some of his followers sold everything they had and gathered on a hill to await Christ's return.

When nothing happened, the pastor announced a new date, Dec. 31, 1843, then March 21, 1844, then Oct. 22, 1844. Eventually, the disciples distanced themselves from

Miller and renamed themselves the Seventh Day Adventists while others became Jehova's Witnesses. These groups have continued to postpone the date and turned fear-based doomsday predictions into a tradition.

More recently, homophobic preacher Harold Camping squandered millions on doomsday propaganda that assured his followers that the world would end May 21 of 2011 and blamed gays for everything he perceived to be wrong with our planet.

When God failed to exhibit his wrath, he postponed the date to Oct. 21 of 2011, and when nothing happened, the fraudulent preacher stopped playing God's ventriloquist and receded into irrelevance. He failed to offer a money-back-guarantee to his donors.

It's difficult to understand why some people get so easily seduced by doomsday prophecies: scientists have advised us that the sun is not scheduled to expand, swallow the Earth and explode as a super nova for at least another 3.5 billion years. Unless a comet hits before then, humanity should be fine and will probably have migrated to other planets by then.

One theory is that certain generations are more vulnerable to mass hysteria: this was certainly the case when the black plague killed a third of Europe and many people believed the end was near. Our generation has seen an increase in populist uprisings throughout the world. Increasing poverty in the US may also contribute to the phenomenon, as more people turn to faith

for consolation.

Perhaps humanity does need some form of controlled outlet for its repressed violence and anger just as volcanoes serve to vent the repressed magma within the Earth, and art can be explained as one such civilized, tamed, acceptable outlet. But it would be unfair to say that all of the discourse around 2012 is fire and brimstone. 2012 is an indigenous American cultural phenomenon and its relevance must be understood within an indigenous and neo-indigenous context. No assessment of 2012 would be fair and complete without the voices of indigenous peoples.

There have been several Pan-American Gatherings of the Elders in Perú, where indigenous shamans and leaders from the entire hemisphere have come together in mountains in the Andes that have always been considered sacred to seek visions and are weaving a new continental myth-making tradition centered around the prophecy of the condor and the eagle.

The elders say that when the condor (South America) and the eagle (North America) are seen flying together; there will be peace on Earth.

There are other hope-filled indigenous prophecies, most notable among them the Warriors of the Rainbow prophecy which emerges from the Hopi tribes and which the indigenous Bolivians associate with their rainbow flag.

We of the last katún of the Mayan calendar are the generation that saw the first indigenous president



President of Bolivia, Evo Morales, December 2009. Photo by Simon Wedege

ever in Bolivia, Evo Morales, whose first ceremonial act as president was to make a humble offering to Pachamama (Mother Earth) and whose nation was the first on Earth to pass a law granting rights to Mother Earth. T

his happened after all the water in Bolivia had been sold by the previous neo-liberal regime to one American corporation, Bechtel, and it had become illegal for indigenous and poor Bolivians to even gather rainwater. The water wars ensued in Bolivia, where people died on the streets to take back their access to the water that fell from the sky.

In the end, the people won and Bolivia's water is now in public hands again. While this was all happening, the water wars were not mentioned in U.S. corporate-owned media.

And then, of course, we had the Arab Spring, the Indignados, the Occupy movement and similar populist ones focusing on the

discourse and countered generations of corporate, elitist and political propaganda and tyranny. This global awakening is exacerbated by the fact that we were cast into the information era in an evolutionary blink of an eye. We're all rapidly reinventing ourselves and re-contextualizing ourselves in the midst of more changes within one generation than any other group of humans has seen. Global access to the internet did not even exist twenty years ago.

Thomas Jefferson once said 'When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; When the government fears the people, there is liberty.' There is a sign that one would see at the boundary of the autonomous territory of Chiapas that reads: "You are in Zapatista Rebel territory. Here, the People Command and the Government Obey."

Indigenous groups have always been community-oriented, collectivist cultures and in Chiapas today all decisions are made communally, by vote and by consensus. Chiapas has become a model of decentralization of power and participatory democracy, and of course a huge challenge to the power of the corrupt Mexican state.

Post-insurrection Chiapas remains a stateless society where the mothers and grandmothers make sure that no one goes hungry, without an education or any of the basic requirements for human dignity. It is there that the Mayans originally made their home.

Catfishing - When People Take The Bait

By Jacklyn Nowotnik - Managing Editor



Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o in 2010

Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o recently found out that even having celebrity status won't necessarily protect a person from being "catfished." According to hosts of the MTV show *Catfish*, the term 'catfish' is used to describe a person who pretends to be someone else, and uses Facebook or other social media to create a false identity.

In an interview with ESPN's Jeremy Schaap, Te'o revealed that he met a girl online named Lennay Kekua, and began an online relationship with her.

In September of 2012, Te'o was shocked to learn that Kekua,

then his girlfriend, had supposedly passed away from leukemia. However on Dec. 6, 2012, he received a call from someone claiming to be Kekua. Te'o claims that he wasn't completely sure that Kekua's identity was fake until recently. An acquaintance named Ronaiah Tuaisosopo called Te'o on Jan. 16, 2013 and admitted to being Kekua and apologized for the hoax.

Heisman finalist Te'o became embroiled in a scandal as the story broke that had media outlets questioning his draft pick prospects and accused him of orchestrating the hoax to improve his chances

of winning the coveted trophy. Te'o said that he "catered" his responses to his family about his girlfriend to make it seem like he met Kekua, causing his family to inadvertently claim he had met the girl, but now that he knows the truth behind all of it, he only has one hope.

"I hope [Tuaisosopo] understands what he's done. I don't wish an ill thing to somebody. I just hope he learns. I think embarrassment is big enough," said Te'o.

The term catfish did not come into widespread usage until the movie *Catfish* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2010. *Catfish* the movie is a documentary about the experience of Nev Schulman and his online romance with a person named Megan Faccio. Schulman met Faccio through who he thought was an 8-year-old prodigy child artist named Abby. Faccio was supposedly Abby's older half-sister. Schulman and Faccio shared some common interests and began chatting regularly. "I was opening up to Megan in ways that I had not with actual girlfriends that I had had," said Schulman in a 20/20 interview.

Their romance and flirting hit a snag when Schulman and Faccio traded song requests. Schulman asked Faccio to sing a cover of Tennessee Stud, but the song she sent him sounded exactly like a cover of Tennessee Stud someone else had posted on Youtube.

Schulman was frustrated and wanted to cut off communications but Schulman's brother Ariel and he friend, Henry Joost, saw this as an

opportunity find out the real truth.

Schulman admitted to feeling embarrassed and gullible, but Joost said that "the reason that Nev believed it is because he wanted it so badly. And if you really want something in your life, you're willing to overlook all of the warning signs and you put on blinders."

The trio flew out to Michigan where Faccio claimed she lived and found out that Abby the child prodigy artist and Megan Faccio, along with several other Facebook profiles were fake characters made up by Angela Wesselman.

Wesselman created characters "to support the one character of Megan [Faccio]. It's not normal for just one person to be on Facebook with just one friend...you have other friends."

Before leaving, Wesselman's husband Vince told a story of how codfish in Alaska would die on their trip to China, so fishermen started putting catfish in the tanks with the cod to keep the cod alive. "There are those people who are catfish in real life, and they keep you on your toes, they keep you guessin', they keep you thinkin' and they keep you fresh," said Wesselman's husband.

The movie prompted MTV to develop a show called *Catfish* that follows a similar plot to the movie, helping people expose their own catfishes. The show premiered on MTV on Nov. 12 2012 and according to the site *The Futon Critic*, *Catfish* "was the #1 non-sports show among persons [aged] 12-34."

Regardless of how popular the

movie and show are, the one question that revolves around "Catfish" is, is it a hoax? Both Schulman and Te'o denied being a part of a catfish hoax, but one thing is sure, social media has changed communication.

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) Communications Professor John Ross said that communication through instant messages or texts can both encourage and discourage interpersonal communication, depending on the person's intentions and attitude. Ross also said that different means of communication changes the moral code and gives one a different set of boundaries.

Dr. Tony Adams, a communications professor at NEIU said that there isn't much of a difference from how we communicate online and in person because in both scenarios people have to discern if they are being told the truth. Online profiles offer short cuts to a person's interests, whereas in person it may take longer to find out interests face-to-face. Adams also said that the only thing that may make online communication and fact checking hard is distance.

As long as people wear their hearts on their sleeves, they have the ability to be a catfish and get hooked on someone else's lie.



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Managing Director
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Statistically Developing Latin America Export/Import Strategies

Laura Spingola
President and Founder
Trade Resources Ltd.
Chicago IL

Session TBA

Omar A. Duque
Panel Moderator
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SPORTS

The Bears Falling Out of Lovie

By Greg Adler - Staff Writer

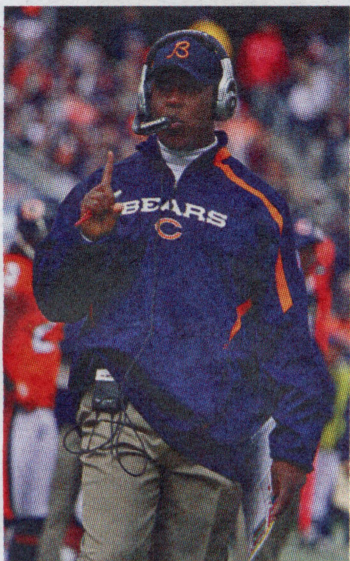


photo by Matt Quinman

Ahhhhh the new year, a time to reflect on the things that need to change in order to live better, lose a few pounds, and make positive changes. They say the key for sticking to a resolution, or at the very least breaking even with a goal, is to have a set plan in place. Apparently,

management of the Chicago Bears are taking a more "let's throw caution to the wind and hope we land on our feet" approach. After nine seasons, the Bears have decided to kick head coach Lovie Smith out of the den and into the cold. The team will no longer be guided by a poised and collected coach who very rarely got fired up. Perhaps that's the reason that Smith got cooled down.

Smith has spent nine seasons as the head coach of the Bears, but after turning a 7-1 season into a 10-6 waste of a season, General Manager Phil Emery's heart couldn't bear it anymore, hence the dismissal. Granted, this season did not turn out the way many of fans thought it would several months ago.

Smith has had some positive impacts on the Bears during his tenure. He brought us back to back in 2005 and 2006 respectively, and he led the Bears to Super Bowl XLI, even though they couldn't manage to maul the Colts for a victory. Ad-

ditionally, it should be stressed that Smith really helped the Bears reclaim their title as "Monsters of the Midway" by having one of the most formidable defenses in the league, which led the NFL this season with 44 takeaways. Smith, having come from a defensive background by working with the St. Louis Rams as their defensive coordinator, had a constant struggle with forming an offense that could pull as much weight as the Bears defense. By juggling four offensive coordinators; Terry Shea, Ron Turner, Mike Martz, and Mike Tice, Smith forming an offense that could have any sort of consistency was near impossible.

Smith won't be the only NFL coach dusting off the old resume; it seems other coaches faced the same fate as a result of Black Monday. The Arizona Cardinals clipped the wings of head coach Ken Whisenhunt and general manager Rod Graves. Eagles head coach Andy Reid cracked an egg with a pink

slip stuffed inside for his team's not-so-steady flight this past season. Romeo Crennel, head coach of the Chiefs, won't be in Kansas anymore as he has been asked to follow the other brick road, and the Buffalo Bills gave head coach Chan Gailey the boot. Several teams decided to really clean house and hand out combo-deal pink slips to both head coach and general manager. Both Pat Shurmur and Tom Heckert of the Cleveland Browns got the short end of the stick. It was no shock when the Chargers asked head coach Norv Turner and GM A.J. Smith to unplug and find somewhere else to get their juice.

Of course, there were some teams that found their issues weren't with the coaching staff but rather the management. New York Jets GM Mike Tannenbaum was permanently grounded while Jacksonville Jaguars GM Gene Smith lost his spots for good. All puns and clever plays on words aside, the NFL has really

shaken things up and has been left in a frenzy of who's going to coach and who has retired permanently.

Taking a look at the uncertain future of that lies in front of the Bears, the speculation and fantasy football fans have begun providing their own tips for the Bears better coaching resolution. The most memorable of which was an internet based meme showing a picture of none other than Mike "Da Coach" Ditka, the quote below the photo reading "I'M AVAILABLE." Another poked fun at the lack of Super Bowl championships stating that the Bears should consider former Bulls head coach Phil Jackson. Instead, the Bears chose a rather unconventional route when they recently hired Marc Trestman as their new head coach. Trestman is certainly known for his keen offensive minded strategies, but will he be able to control the Monsters of the Midway? Only time will tell.

Orange Bowl Too Big for the Huskies

By Katie Kelly - Staff Writer

Northern Illinois University's ability was tested in Discover's BCS Orange Bowl when they battled the Florida State University Seminoles, the Atlantic Coast Conference Champs. Northern's Huskies, the Mid-American Conference Champs ranked No. 15 in the BCS standings, demonstrated that they belonged in the bowl after speculated concern all week that they were not good enough. Although they were unable to produce a victory, the Huskies established their school and football program on a higher level.

NIU Huskies beat out No.17 Kent State during a double overtime victory of 44-37 in December to earn their spot in the Orange Bowl. It was the first time in the school's history they were offered a spot in a bowl game. The Huskies record, 12-1 overall and 8-0 in the Mid-American Conference, beat out Wisconsin and Louisville, who were also competing for the spot in the bowl. University of Iowa, coincidentally not offered a bowl invitation, was the only school to beat out NIU early on in the season. It was a special season opener played at Sol-

dier Field in downtown Chicago. The huskies overcame that loss, got their head on straight, and continued to fight to become undefeated.

Unfortunately, Huskies head coach, Dave Doeren, transferred to North Carolina State, leaving the Huskies to fend for themselves. The school announced his replacement, Rod Carry, previously offensive coordinator, to be Doeren replacement effective immediately. The team, who practiced everyday from December 3 on was ready for a fight. Carry had some tricks up his sleeve that he brought out during the game, however it just wasn't enough. Many missed opportunities by the team, especially by quarterback Jordan Lynch, did not help. The Huskies proved that they belonged in the game by holding on tightly in the beginning, even as they slowly slipped away towards the end.

Four quarters was too much for the Huskies. Although they started out strong, the fight just wasn't in them. Tommy Lee Lewis for the Huskies received the ball and got a short run in before being tackled. It wasn't long before the ball was turned over and FSU quarterback

Ej Manuel had the ball. Manuel was able to take his time due to the lack of pressure from the Huskie defense, allowing for long passes for big yards. A sloppy fumble for the Seminoles was picked up by the NIU Huskies, however, the opportunity was missed and they turned the ball back over to FSU, who scored with just five minutes left in the first quarter. The Huskies were able to get the ball to the 25-yard-line and set up Mathew Sims for a field goal, which at least put the Huskies on the board.

FSU kicker Dustin Hopkins missed a 50-yard field goal attempt for the Seminoles. Now at third and goal with only 15 seconds left in the half, FSU snapped the ball and ran it in for a touchdown. The kick was good making the score 14 to 3 at haltime.

Florida State's defense was too much for Northern's offense. They held them back, pressured them, and caused a couple of sacks. Jordan Lynch, however, was able to get a pass through to Akim Daniels who ran to the 37-yardline. Martel Moore received a pass from Lynch and ran



photo by Katie Kelly

it in for the touchdown. Extra point was good, making the score 17-10.

Right after they began to make way, coach Carry decided to do an onside kick and was able to pull it off. This risky play actually worked, giving the Huskies another chance to score a touchdown. Once again the missed opportunities plagued the Huskies, and all they could manage was to get the ball intercepted by FSU's Terrance Brooks.

To say Florida State dominated the 4th quarter would be an understatement. EJ Manuel started it off running the ball in for a touchdown, making the score

24-10. Then NIU fumbled the ball, FSU recovered it, and Lonnie Pryor ran right up the middle for a 60-yard touchdown on the next play. The extra point was good bringing the final score to 31-10.

Wasted opportunities and not on their best game caused the Huskies to lose the game. The trip down to Miami is, however, still the biggest in the school's history and something that they players will be talking about for a long time.

NBA 2K13

By Ari Guttman - Distribution Manager

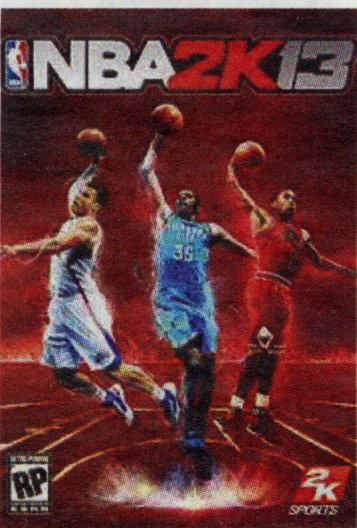


photo courtesy of 2K Sports

The NBA season is a fourth of the way through. Chicago fans are missing Derek Rose, Miami fans are waiting in the lane for the Miami Heat to win the NBA Finals again, and others want to see how Kobe Bryant and Dwight Howard will play together.

There's no need to wait any longer. NBA 2K13 has all of this and more. Features include having the player build their own legacy and see if they can be another Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, or any superstar they desire.

Gameplay has improved, the career mode is better than last year, the soundtrack is awe-

some, and the player can even play tracks without having played a single game. They also have the empirical question of which team would dominate, the USA Dream Team of 1992 or the 2012 squad.

Another good thing about this is when the player is in Association Mode, the player can choose if there will be weekly practices for the team and if so, the player decides what the team should work on. Within Association Mode is Developmental Mode. Before every month the player can pick a player from the association team (i.e. LeBron James' Miami Heat was the chosen dynasty team). They can

choose LeBron James to do some developmental work in rebounding. If LeBron James does "around the world," a rebounding exercise, and knocks out all of his teammates, he gets offensive and defensive rebounding points toward his legacy and also gains vertical, which helps James get more rebounds.

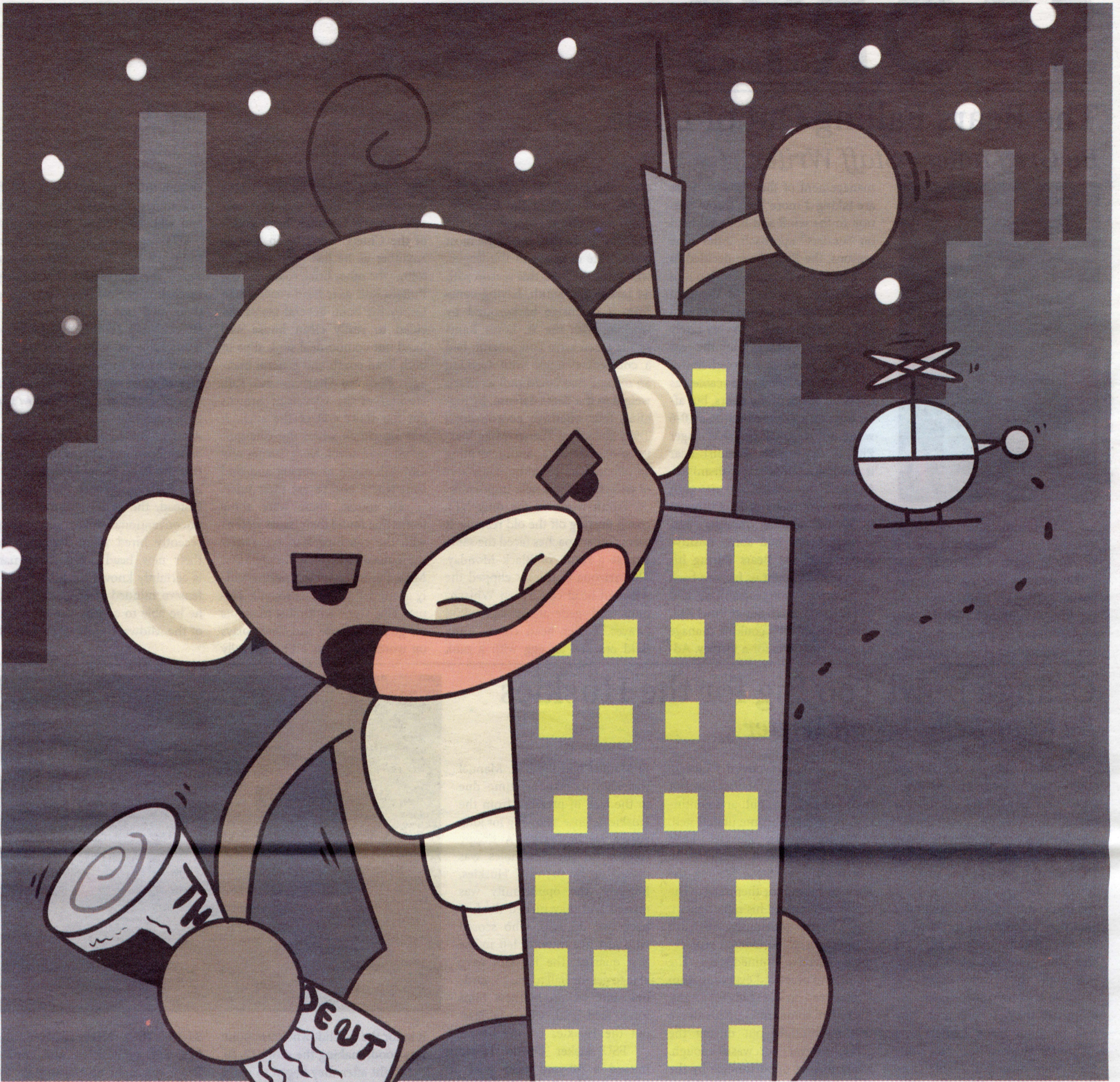
The downfall of this game is in Career Mode. When the player wants to be picked No. 1 overall in the draft, they most likely won't be due to the developers of this game having the actual 2012 draftees in front of the player. The player really has to have a real solid game when the Elite team meets the

stars team in New York at Madison Square Garden. That's where career mode begins. After the career game, the next stage is how the player relates to the general managers that visit the player and ask them some questions. How the player answers for their character in the game is how they will be drafted. The player can answer questions cocky or straightforward.

Besides the Career Mode, the game is well put together. Association is the best mode to play, including online. Possibly next year the creator and the director of this game can improve Career Mode.



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NEIU Faculty Exhibits Art

By Nell Greaney – Staff Writer

If the word Art brings to mind traditional mediums such as paint, black and white photography, or sculpture, get reacquainted with the masters of modern art, your faculty. The fine arts building art gallery is hosting the biennial faculty art show now through Feb 1. This gallery displays the faculty at their most creative and crafty, if you have been curious as to what kind of art technique your teachers possess, or you're curious to see whether they practice what they preach.

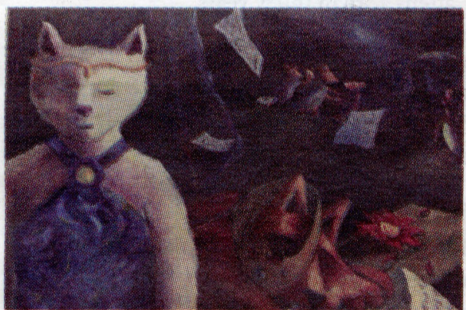
Some of the art in this faculty show is really far out there in comparison to the classic

Words From Faculty Artists



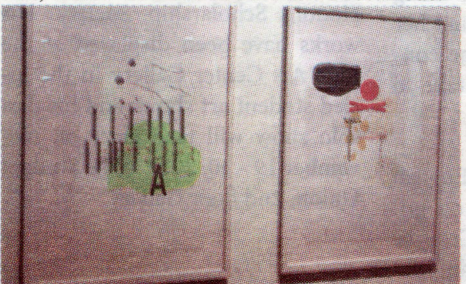
"Beginning on Memorial Day and ending on Labor Day of 2010, a time period chosen because of the increased number of killings as the temperature rises, I tracked the homicides within the city limits of Chicago, visiting and photographing each site. 172 people were killed between those dates. It took well into the fall to photograph each location. The images here represent one week (June 16-22) of the resulting piece, a 65-foot long installation of the photographs placed in a chronological graph that mimics a city skyline. The form draws attention to the homicides and their frequency in a schematic way. Moving left to right in the piece, there is one column for each day. Stacked photographs in each column reflect the number of homicides that day as well as document each crime scene."

Krista Wortendyke, NEIU Art Instructor, creator of *Killing Season Chicago*.



"Animals and theatrical motifs allow me to explore different aspects of human relationships in my work with both gravity and levity. Many of my current paintings address the difficulties of loss, and the resulting tension, conflict and reinvention that our relationships must weather. Using a theatrical setting, my cast of animals experience moments of absurdity and awkwardness, as well as tenderness and consolation. My current work draws upon imagery I have accumulated through my love of animals and my relationship with the theatre."

Pamela Bagdzinski, NEIU Instructor of Art, creator of *Midsummer* and *Precarious*.



"In my work, I often rely on the letterpress as a tool for designing. This pair of letterpress prints was entirely composed on the press and their form took shape in relationship to the process of letterpress printing. Each color was printed one at a time and after printing each layer the composition was evaluated for the next color and form addition. The decisions regarding mixing color, setting the pressure and controlling the impression became directly related to the development of the form. The process of creation became a dance using the letterpress as a tool to slow down the designing, allowing for the form to develop organically and with ease. The results are these two untitled letterpress prints."

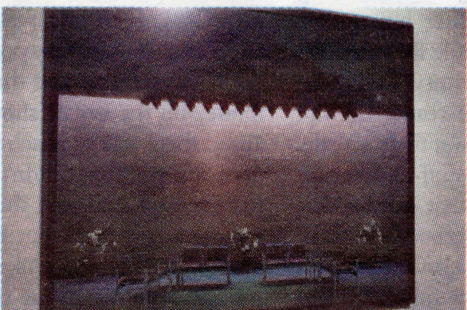
Vida Sacic, Assistant Professor of Art, creator of *Untitled 1* and *Untitled 2*



"Repetition, patterns and colour have always been important in my work. I work with a collection of materials accumulated over an extended period that at first glance may seem to be unrelated but is repetitive."

The work currently on display in the gallery is a graphic representation of the number of emails that I delete roughly every fifteen days. I have been recording deletions since July 2011. The size and colour of each circle in the two pieces corresponds to the number of emails deleted as indicated by the legend along the bottom of the work. Each piece represents a six-month period."

Mark McKernin, Art Department Chairman, creator of *Deletions Feb. 19 through Nov. 27* and *Deletions Jan. 13 through Sept. 14*



"My creative work revolves around examining how society experiences architecture, how we respond to built environments, and how people alter those spaces to make them more inviting. My photographic images examine institutional environments of anonymous universities that are built out of concrete and other utilitarian materials. I highlight the artificial features that have been created within these environments in an attempt to mitigate the effect of the structures

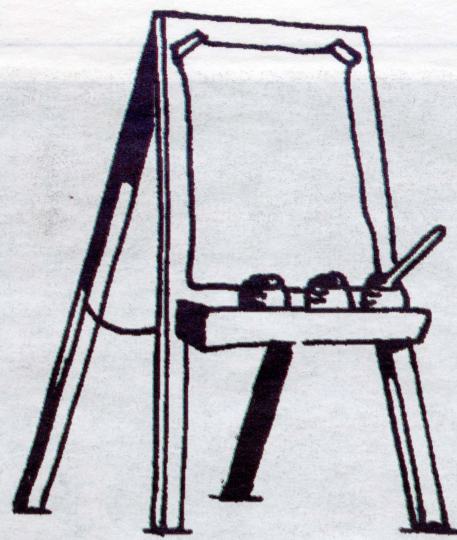


image of art normally invoked. Deanna Krueger's "Ghyll" is stapled together pieces of medical diagnostic film, the staples don't even seem rustic or detractive, they flow with the overall image of the piece. Other faculty artists, such as Jaime Mendoza, mixed something in with their medium. Mendoza's "Hay- SOOS" is acrylic paint with clipped-out text on the canvas, and little plastic men sitting on the tops of the canvas. There's more to see in the gallery than what is mentioned here, the gallery show features 17 faculty members.

that, while functional, are essentially cold flat featureless boxes, drawing attention to these elements as inadequate substitutes for real places or things."

Nathan Mathews, Assistant Professor of Art, creator of *Three Flower Pots*



"My work focuses on storytelling. I create small sculptures dealing with what I call 'ambiguous narratives.' The current pieces on display at the University Gallery are part of a 'Memory Landscape' series – these pieces use the landscape as a repository for personal recollections. The landscapes in these four works move from macro to micro: the beach is the largest landscape while the grill in the last piece is the smallest. Each of these locations directs me to think about past experiences and events."

Jane Weintraub, Professor of Art, creator of *Memory Landscapes*.

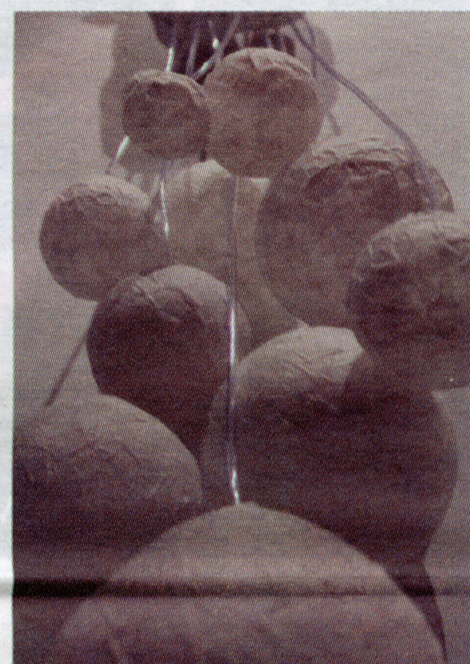


"The piece I am exhibiting in the Faculty exhibition is partly about reusing materials to create a new piece of work. For this work I used images from store catalogues sent to my daughter, newspaper images, used paper bags and manila envelopes. I used a hole puncher to create textures, break down the image and to create a sense of fragility on the piece. Through this work I wanted to explore the theme of renewal, recreation or reinvention."

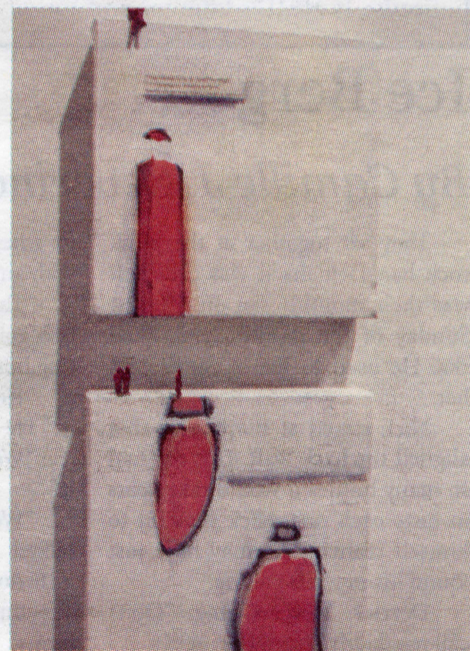
Santiago Vaca, Assistant Professor of Art, creator of *Resettling*



Art by Deanna Krueger



Art by Dubhe Carreno



Art by Jaime Mendoza



Art by Shencheng Xu

Photos by Barbara Kowalewska



Senior Art Show

2

Northeastern art student Erika Berg is presenting her Senior art show, a collection of handmade jewelry. The exhibition is being held in the Northeastern Fine Arts Gallery room 217 now through Jan. 25.

(clockwise from left)

1. Agate Ring

2. Entrophy. Leather cord, copper mesh, thread, polyester, electroplated copper. 2012

3. Agate Necklace copper, Agates, shell, green leaf, 2010

4. Barnacle Necklace Copper, Brass, Patina, ocean Jasper, Pietersite, Chrysocolla, 2010

..Seeds.. Corner

..Seeds.. Is NEIU's Literary and Visual Arts Journal. Their first meeting takes place Thursday, January 24, 3:05-4:05 p.m. in Fine Arts 247.

Ice Berg

By Camille J. Severino – SEEDS Contributing Writer

They sat together at the punk rock bar. Delilah's it was called. It was their monthly ska on the first Sunday of the month. Nick liked ska. He used to like it more with her.

Nick stared at the bottles that aligned the back wall. This bar had so many bottles it would take years to taste each one. Nick thought to himself realizing he may have just found his new life calling.

Derrick Morgan sang, "Don't call me daddy" from the juke.

"Why don't we leave here?" Andrea asked him. He almost forgot that she was there. He can't wait until the day he forgets her all together.

"And go where?" Nick said without looking at her. He hadn't looked at her in days.

"Anywhere. Anywhere but here."

They sat at the punk rock bar not speaking for longer than she could remember. Toots and the Maytal's called out "Hey Yeah!" from the Bose system.

"You can go anywhere you like Andrea." He told her staring down his glass of bourbon.

"Is this all you're gonna do Nick? Is this how you're gonna handle this?" Andrea's voice raised a few octaves, which was always his cue that she was growing angry. It's funny the things one is conditioned

to when spending a few decades with another person.

"Three days of closing this place isn't going to solve it?" she said getting bossy.

"How do you suppose we solve it?" He asked.

"We go home and we talk about it."

"We've talked about it and talked about it and talked about it. It doesn't change what you did." This time Andrea looked away from him.

"You want another?" the bartender asked Nick who nodded but wouldn't let go of his empty glass.

"I haven't written since I found out. I have deadlines." Nick said to Andrea with almost as much anger as he had when he first found out.

"And somehow that's my fault too?" she used that tone that reminded him of her mother. Fuck how he hated her mother.

Wait a minute. He hated her mother. How did he not see this before?

For the first time since Andrea's drunken girlfriend told him what she felt he needed to know, Nick looked at his wife. Andrea said it was his fault. He didn't make her feel beautiful anymore. But when was the last time she made him feel beautiful? When was the last time she appreciated anything?

"Have you heard of Heming-

way's iceberg theory?" Nick asked his wife.

"What?" She gazed into his eyes. She had forgotten how she loved to be in his eyes. Andrea always felt safe and loved in Nick's eyes. He was a fool when it came to her and everyone knew it. But this time there was a look she had never seen. And inside these new eyes she no longer felt warm.

"Hemingway's iceberg theory of story telling?" He smiled for the first time in days.

"You see, the theory goes that you see only the top of the ice berg from above the water but underneath there is a whole lot you don't see. That's how a story should be told. Only give the reader the tip: kind of a device to wet their whistle. But still, it's all the stuff underneath that you don't see that truly makes up the bulk of the iceberg, or story."

"What does this have to do with anything?" she grew impatient and looked away from him. "What in the world does this have to do with us?"

"That's it. Right there."

"What's it? Right where? Seriously Nick, I don't understand what the Hell you are talking about."

"You're impatience with me. You're little fits when you don't get your way. Your selfishness, all of these qualities were evident when we first got together. Even the fact

that your mother is so sneaky when it comes to your dad; these are all the tip of your iceberg. These were the things I should've paid attention to. It should've been my clue. Because then maybe I would've known what a whore you were before I married you!"

"Keep your voice down!" Andrea yelled past clenched lips at the husband she was losing. He sat as still as a mirrored lake while she frantically looked about. The contortions of her facial expressions indicated that the realization of what she had done and what she was going to lose over it spilt over her head like a bucket of maple syrup.

Nick stood up and threw some money on the bar. "I should've realized there was so much more underneath you that I didn't see. And to be honest Andrea, I think I have seen enough." Nick put his empty glass on the bar and walked out.

She sat alone at the punk rock bar. The Skatalites were just starting to sing about a Monkey Man as Andrea counted the bottles along the back of the bar. She salted her husband's bourbon while she considered how long it would take to taste each one.

Camille J Severino is an English Major at NEIU who plans on going on to earn an MFA in Creative Writing. She has been creating fic-

tion and poetry/song lyrics for as long as she could write. Being forty-two years old, that would be more than thirty years.



Frank Bonello's piece "The Angel of the Butterfly." 2011, Oil on canvas, 30" x 40".

Frank Anthony Bonello is an Art Major at Northeastern University. He is a member of the National Honors Scholarship Society. His works have been displayed at the Fine Art Center Gallery in the Juried student art shows and his first solo show will take place on November 19 - 30, 2012 at the Student Union, 2nd floor Gallery.

Tripping the Light Fantastique Down the Red Carpet

By Matthew Greenberg – Sports Editor

Award season epitomizes the pop culture dream of America, which is to one day saunter down the red carpet of a major award ceremony. People crave the flashing cameras, sexy celebrities, and the latest in fashion trends hitting the Hollywood scene. Events like the Golden Globes and the Oscars are not just award shows and fancy dinners; they are a window into the life that America truly desires.

The Golden Globes have already come and gone with great frivolity and ensuing hilarity. This year the Golden Globes were hosted by the power comedy duo of Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. Their fantastic play off of each other combined classic improv with sheer delight as they poked fun at former host Ricky Gervais, who is apparently no longer in show business, Meryl Streep for her fantastic performance in having the flu, and Daniel Day-Lewis for his prolific role as ET. Do the finger, Daniel Day-Lewis, do the finger. There it is.

As expectedly humorous as Fey and Poehler were each time they appeared on stage, the funniest award presentation goes to Will

Ferrell and Kristin Wig. Their bit about having supposedly watched each of the films in their category, and subsequently proving that they knew nothing about any of those films, was met with raucous laughter by everyone in the audience, except for Tommy Lee Jones. Tommy Lee Jones was not amused.

As Amy Poehler so candidly stated in the opening monologue, "Only at the Golden Globes do the beautiful people of film rub elbows with the rat faces of people of television." Within the film spectrum, Les Misérables took home the most wins with three Golden Globes for Best Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical, Hugh Jackman for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical, and Anne Hathaway for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical.

Argo and Django Unchained each nabbed two Golden Globes. Argo earned victories for Best Motion Picture – Drama and for Ben Affleck for Best Director – Motion Picture, while Django won for Quentin Tarantino for Best

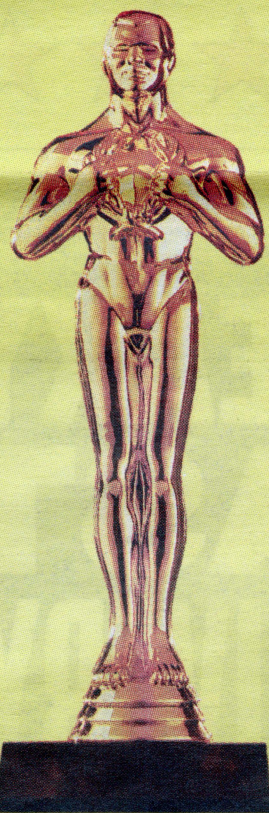


Screenplay – Motion Picture and for Christoph Waltz for Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture.

Two other notable films that each won themselves a Golden Globe were Zero Dark Thirty and Lincoln. Jessica Chastain and Daniel Day-Lewis both very deservedly won for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama in Zero Dark Thirty and for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama in Lincoln, respectively.

As for the "rat-faced television," the two big winners of the evening were Homeland, which took home three awards, and Girls, which earned a handsome two. Homeland won for Best Television Series – Drama, Claire Danes for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series – Drama, and Damian Lewis for Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series – Drama. Girls won for Best Television Series – Comedy or Musical and Lena Dunham for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series – Comedy or Musical.

Critic's Oscar Predictions



Best Picture

- Amour
- Argo *
- Beasts of the Southern Wild
- Django Unchained
- Les Misérables
- Life of Pi
- Lincoln
- Silver Linings Playbook
- Zero Dark Thirty

Directing

- Michael Haneke – Amour *
- Benh Zeitlin – Beasts of the Southern Wild
- Ang Lee – Life of Pi
- Steven Spielberg – Lincoln
- David O. Russell – Silver Linings Playbook

Actor in a Leading Role

- Bradley Cooper – Silver Linings Playbook
- Daniel Day-Lewis – Lincoln *
- Hugh Jackman – Les Misérables
- Joaquin Phoenix – The Master
- Denzel Washington – Flight

Actress in a Leading Role

- Jessica Chastain – Zero Dark Thirty *

- Jennifer Lawrence – Silver Linings Playbook
- Emmanuelle Riva – Amour
- Quvenzhané Wallis – Beasts of the Southern Wild
- Naomi Watts – The Impossible

Actor in a Supporting Role

- Alan Arkin – Argo
- Robert De Niro – Silver Linings Playbook
- Philip Seymour Hoffman – The Master
- Tommy Lee Jones – Lincoln
- Christoph Waltz – Django Unchained *

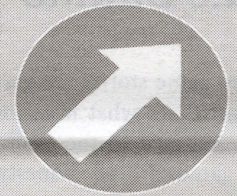
Actress in a Supporting Role

- Amy Adams – The Master
- Sally Field – Lincoln
- Anne Hathaway – Les Misérables *
- Helen Hunt – The Sessions
- Jacki Weaver – Silver Linings Playbook

For the complete list of Oscar nominees visit Oscar.go.com/ nominees. The Oscars air live on Feb. 24th at 7 p.m. EST on ABC.



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ASPIRA Pride Shines Bright

By Desiree Dylong – Copy Editor

Culture and history was vibrant during ASPIRA's initiation ceremony, called Areyto (pronounced ah-ray-toe). Members of ASPIRA, or "Aspirantes," meaning individuals that aspire, gathered this past December at Biagio's Banquet for performances and storytelling to celebrate their cultural past and hopes for the future.

ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, a Puerto Rican non-for-profit organization, provides Latino youth with an outlet for cultural and educational growth, and has clubs in 33 Chicago Public Schools. ASPIRA has also expanded to suburban Oak Park and River Forest High School.

A dinner kicked off the event with each table representing different ASPIRA clubs from schools such as Lincoln Park, Lane Tech, Haugan Middle School and Roberto Clemente.

Chief Youth Development Officer Ivette Nieves, said that one of her favorite parts of being involved with ASPIRA is how they help the lives of young people.

Parent Coordinator Ana Sanchez explained how students who are a part of ASPIRA have the opportunity to explore together. San-

chez also expressed that ASPIRA is a safe place for students to perform and grow.

Throughout the night, the tables held conversation and the occasional banter, which showcased how being a part of ASPIRA allows youths to belong and form strong bonds with their peers.

Alise Lopez, president of the Lincoln Park ASPIRA club, believes it gives members a chance to help people. Lopez explained that by helping others, members learn that "it's not all about you." Their vice president, Lupita Carrasquillo, said that ASPIRA is like "another family," and provides a "platform to be activists."

"ASPIRA helps us grow," said Laura Devitt, a student from Oak Park. Christina Bedula, another student from Oak Park, as well as River Forest High School explained how ASPIRA allowed her to go on a college visit to Northwestern University.

After dinner, the Areyto ceremony began. The Areyto was a Taino Indian ceremony where songs were sung in homage to those from the past. ASPIRA pays tribute to this history by holding their

own Areyto ceremonies in honor of their ancestors.

During the ceremony, Evaristo "Tito" Rodriguez explained the importance of history. "We without history are nobody."

In honor of the Areyto, Lane-Tech danced a Salsa routine, and La Borinqueña, the anthem of Puerto Rico was also sung in tribute to the Island.

An important part of the ASPIRA Areyto ceremony is pledging an oath to always be a part of ASPIRA. The bright lighting of the banquet hall was replaced with candlelight as students and staff joined together to recite the oath in their choice of English or Spanish. Leaders and advisers from each school lit the candles of their students as they pledged to always strive to fulfill ASPIRA's missions.

The oath was proclaimed in a resounding chorus, but the loudest and most enthusiastic part of the oath was the end when students and staff joined together and said, "Once an Aspirante, always an Aspirante."

The spirit of being an "Aspirante" continued long after the candles lit out. Towards the end of



Photos by Desiree Dylong

the event, music filled the room as students danced Salsa, Merengue, and even the Cha Cha Slide in celebration of pledging commitment to their ASPIRA family. It was clear

that this celebration wouldn't be forgotten by the students.

To learn more about ASPIRA go to <http://aspirail.org/>.

The Walking Dead: Season 1 Video Game: A Step in the Right Direction

By Luis Badillo – Staff Writer

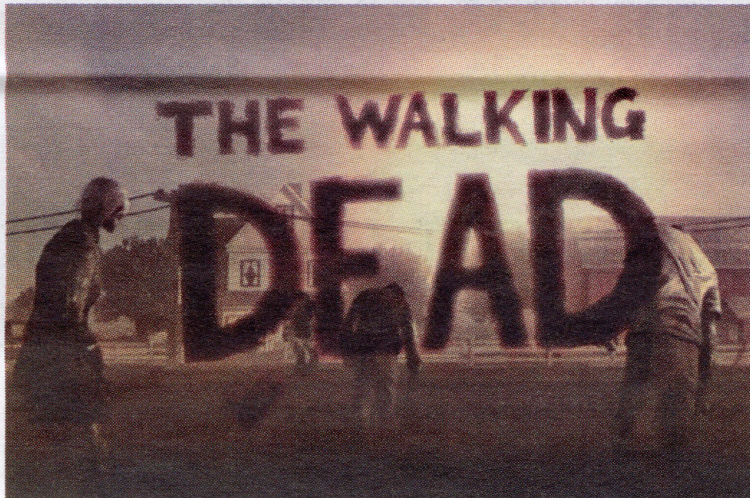
All video game stories are garbage. At least that's what it seems like when compared to the Walking Dead game. In all honesty, many game enthusiasts aren't used to great writing in games. Most of the gaming industry's writing is the equivalent of bombastic summer blockbusters, b-rate horror flicks, or bargain basement fantasy novels. That's not to say that they're bad, but most games' stories are adequate enough to motivate players through while still servicing the game's mechanics.

The creators of the Walking Dead have performed a role reversal on these components. Almost all of The Walking Dead's appeal comes from the narrative it weaves. Though most point-and-click adventure games rely on funny little jokes and some puzzle solving, this title engages the player with tense conflicts, character-driven dialogue and some of the most difficult (and sometimes heartbreaking) choices delivered in any game release.

The Story follows Lee Everett, a professor at the University of Georgia, on his way to prison until the complications of an undead apocalypse postpone his trip. While escaping his initial encounter with the undead, Lee is saved by an 8-year-old girl named Clementine, who has been surviving on her own for several days. Though only just meeting, Lee promises to keep Clementine safe until they find her parents.

Lee and Clementine's tale spans over a series of five episodes, which had players waiting about one month in between for each. Now that all five are available, it is possible to finish the game in approximately 12-15 hours.

A huge portion of the game consists of the player making choices for Lee through dialogue. In the very first moments of Episode 1, it



is immediately apparent how much these choices weigh. Not only will other characters recall the decisions you made in future chapters, but those same choices may mean life or death for the group of survivors that eventually forms. Most of these choices only give the player a small window of time with immediate consequences, such as choosing who to save and who to let perish. Others are more spread out but just as impactful. An example of this is during a moment when Lee needs to feed a group of ten people, but there is only enough food for four. The decisions made won't alter the events of the plot too much, but instead each paints a dramatically different picture of Lee.

These choices create some of the tensest and nerve-racking moments available in any video game. But these moments would have no effect at all were it not for the game's greatest strength, which is The Walking Dead's ability to create empathy for the cast. Each character has their own personal history and motivations, which fuels both their actions and reactions to the player's choices. Lee develops genuine relationships with the cast, the strongest of which is the forced fa-

ther-daughter relationship between Lee and Clementine.

The game's puzzle and action moments plays second fiddle to the writing. Most of the puzzles are simple enough, but make sense given the context. For instance, early on Lee attempts to fix a radio (Hint: find the batteries, dummy.) The action sequences boil down to timed button presses or clicking on the enemy you need dead. Keep in mind that zombies aren't the only antagonists the player encounters.

The actual game part of The Walking Dead is the average point-and-click adventure, but the way the story is executed is enough to propel it into the pantheon of one of the best games ever released. The game forces you to make terrible decisions, with no clear sense of right or wrong, and these choices definitely create a sense of ownership over Lee. By the end of the game, some players may find themselves holding back tears as the final scene of the game plays out; an achievement most video games can only hope to accomplish. The Walking Dead is a game changer, and with its incredible take on storytelling and character choice, it's a must-play for all gamers.



4.5
Stars

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Django Unchained – Tarantino Unleashed

By Matthew Greenberg – Sports Editor



5.0
Stars



Courtesy of imdb

“Kill white people and get paid for it? What’s not to like?” Obviously, Writer/Director Quentin

Tarantino understands that there is everything to like about killing people and getting paid for it. He’s been doing it for more than 20 years, and he has certainly become somewhat of an expert on the matter.

With his newest film, *Django Unchained*, Tarantino has produced a piece of work that disgusts, offends, excites and intrigues its audience, while leaving them thoroughly entertained throughout the two-hour-45 minute bloody extravaganza. Bill Goodykoontz of the Arizona Republic said it perfectly, “The name of the movie is ‘Django Unchained,’ but for all practical purposes it might as well be called ‘Tarantino Unleashed.’”

Tarantino’s blaxploitation/spaghetti western mash-up would not come close to its astounding suc-

cess without its star-studded cast. Jamie Foxx is dark and magnificent as Django, a slave-turned-bounty hunter who, under the tutelage of his mentor Dr. King Schultz, played by Christoph Waltz, seeks to free his wife from Calvin Candie, a devious plantation owner and Mandingo slave trader. Leonardo DiCaprio’s portrayal of the vile slaver Candie was so encapsulating it is a crime that he did not receive an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

Of course, no Tarantino film would be complete without Samuel L. Jackson dropping a few n-words and motherf****s. And by a few, it was actually every other sentence. Jackson’s character, Stephen, an aged slave-aid to Candie, was by far one of the most intriguing charac-

ters to figure out. His dynamic role as a slave who is also a villain leaves the viewer conflicted and searching for closure as to the character’s true nature, which Tarantino deliberately buries beneath the swell of racism depicted in his 1858 Southern United States.

The Golden Globes were friendly to Tarantino and his newest film, bringing in five nominations and three wins. Tarantino won the Golden Globe for Best Screenplay – Motion Picture and Christoph Waltz won the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture. Leonardo DiCaprio was also nominated in that category, as well as Tarantino for Best Director – Motion Picture, and Best Motion Picture – Drama.

Besides DiCaprio’s aforementioned Oscar snub, notable Oscar nomination for this film include: Best Picture, Quentin Tarantino for Best Original Screenplay, Christoph Waltz for Best Supporting Actor, as well as nominations for Cinematography and Sound Editing. If only there was a write-in category for Most Hilarious Scene, Jonah Hill’s KKK representation would have to be included.

See the movie, laugh at the bag scene, cringe at the blood and gore, cheer at every catch phrase and oversized explosion and nod expectantly when almost everyone dies. If it wasn’t expected, it wouldn’t be Tarantino.

The Hobbit, Not Half Bad

By Gary Soriano – Arts and Life Editor



4.5
Stars

A new trilogy has begun. The *Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is the first of three installments directed by the same man who brought The Lord of the Rings trilogy to the big screen, Peter Jackson. His adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* serves as the first installment of the prelude to the blockbuster LOTR trilogy.

Part one of the children’s book has all of the weapon-wielding, magic-gathering, and troll-slashing that the first trilogy offered, and more. Jackson’s newest trilogy has dragons and more wizards— one more wizard to be precise. It stars a younger Bilbo Baggins (about 40 years of age) accompanying a baker’s dozen of dwarves assisted by Gandalf the Grey, who serves as an adviser on their mission to slay a dragon and reclaim their lost home, the Lonely Mountain.

Bilbo, played by Martin Freeman, is a nervous wreck when dwarf after dwarf arrive at his humble hobbit hole. Upon learning about a castle, treasure, a dragon, and a dangerous adventure, Bilbo initially refuses Gandalf’s invitation to join the company as their thief. But the morning after a night of binge eating and drinking (most of which was taken part in by the dwarves,) Bilbo has a change of heart, racing out of his hole to join the bearded travelers.

The company encounters trolls, elves, goblins, and eagles as they journey toward their final destination, the Lonely Mountain— a solitary peak wherein lies a treasure hoard guarded by a dragon named Smaug, the last of its kind in Middle Earth.

But if 13 dwarves, a nervous hobbit, and a wizard aren’t enough

to keep this journey moving, the introduction of the Brown wizard gives fans of the trilogy a new character to follow. Radagast the Brown, a lover and communicator of animals, is a fool according to the wizard Saruman. The Brown wizard has a love for plants and animals that compels him to live among them, establishing a permanent abode inside of a forest in Middle Earth. When animals in his forest get sick, and plants seem to deteriorate, the wizard’s curiosity leads him to discover a great evil. He quickly races from his forest home to inform Gandalf. Radagast, who sports a bird’s nest under his wizard cap, also has Rhosgovel rabbits that can outrun the giant wolf-like wargs the orcs ride upon. His quirky personality steals the show, if only for a moment.

A side story involving the wiz-

ards and elves is related to the evil uncovered by Radagast. The other side story is Bilbo’s discovery of the ring that eventually becomes Frodo’s burden 60 years later.

Tolkien’s book is full of adventure, which is why Jackson saw fit to turn it into three installments, even though it was initially scheduled for two. Each chapter is a new adventure fighting off goblins, trolls, etc. The decision to split the movie into three parts pays more homage to Tolkien’s work, particularly by adding aspects from Tolkien’s *Silmarillion*. Not so simply, Jackson did a wonderful job with this first segment.

The movie, shot at 48 frames per second (fps), is double the standard 24 fps. This is the first time any movie has done this and the epic backgrounds and detailed sceneries are as entertaining as the adventure.



Courtesy of imdb

The only issue with this part 1 of 3 is the abrupt ending. Just when things are about to get even more exciting, the credits roll. Fans of Middle Earth and curious cinema-goers will have to wait until next December to continue the journey. All signs indicate it will be well worth the wait.

Washington Heights - A Fresh Take on Reality TV

By Desiree Dylong – Copy Editor



4.0
Stars

Washington Heights, MTV’s new reality TV show joins the ranks of heavyweights like the *Real World*, *St. Thomas*, *Sixteen* and *Pregnant*, and *Snooki and JWoww*. MTV is often criticized for having reality shows that are trivial and don’t represent positive examples for young viewers. With so many of MTV’s shows under such scrutiny, it’s understandable if viewers had some reservations about the premiere of *Washington Heights*. Would this new addition be different against the backdrop of MTV’s other reality shows?

Set in the Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights, the show follows a group of aspiring Dominican Americans and presents an example of positive reality television.

Washington Heights starts with JP, also going by the stage name Audubon, a young man driven to make it in the music industry as a hip hop artist. Within the first few moments of the show viewers are shown an example of a young man who is willing to work for what he wants. JP reflects on the lack of opportunity in “the Heights,” but still dreams big despite the doubts

and hardships.

It’s refreshing to see a character like JP, especially on a network as popular as MTV. According to parentstv.org, “MTV is the best way to connect with 12-34’s who are 91 million strong and growing, and represent 33% of the U.S. population. They look to MTV to find out about their world in their language, from their point of view.”

Since MTV has such a young demographic who turn to the channel to gain perspective on their peers and generation, it’s nice to have driven characters like JP that they can look up to. Besides having positive characters, *Washington Heights* doesn’t skimp on the entertainment value. It’s one thing having characters to look up to, but without drama the show would be dull and only maintain a very small audience.

Some of the drama in the pilot episode was provided with the help of Ludwin, who wants to be an artist, and Frankie, a girl who writes and performs spoken word poetry. Frankie wants Ludwin, but Ludwin has a girlfriend.

In one scene, while Frankie talks of Ludwin she says, “I want to

jump his bones. I want to give him a new religion. And if he doesn’t believe in god now, I wanna be the Messiah.”

Throughout the pilot, there were stolen glances and flirtation on both sides which leads audiences to wonder how happy Ludwin really is in his relationship. The flirtation and mixed messages from Ludwin and Frankie’s constant confusion over whether or not she should move on will be one of the major plot points this season.

Another character who adds drama, and will supply most of the ratings, is Reyna, who dreams of being a singer but also has a notorious temper. Towards the beginning of the pilot, Reyna talks about how a girl named Eliza threatened her on Facebook after Reyna talked to Eliza’s boyfriend Jimmy.

“She threatened me, so I’m ready for whatever,” Reyna said about Eliza. Lines like this build tension and hint at cat fights to come.

The pilot shows both Reyna and Eliza’s side of the story. The tension is high, and it gets even worse during one of JP’s performances.

Reyna asks Eliza if she could

have a word with her, and not too long after, an all out girl fight ensues between the two, with hair pulling included.

The scene when the two girls are fighting mirrors the typical *Real World* and *Jersey Shore* formula of alcohol, drama and screaming. Some viewers may even find themselves rolling their eyes once the yelling and fist-throwing between Eliza and Reyna begin. What was once a show that had positive and driven individuals is now a typical MTV fight fest. But let’s face it,

this is reality television and without screaming matches, there’s no show.

Despite the fighting that Reyna and Eliza bring, but the fighting doesn’t detract from the several positive role models that *Washington Heights* provides. Each character has a dream and works to accomplish it. *Washington Heights* represents strong, authentic and ambitious Latino youths and is worth checking out.



Courtesy of realitytv.com

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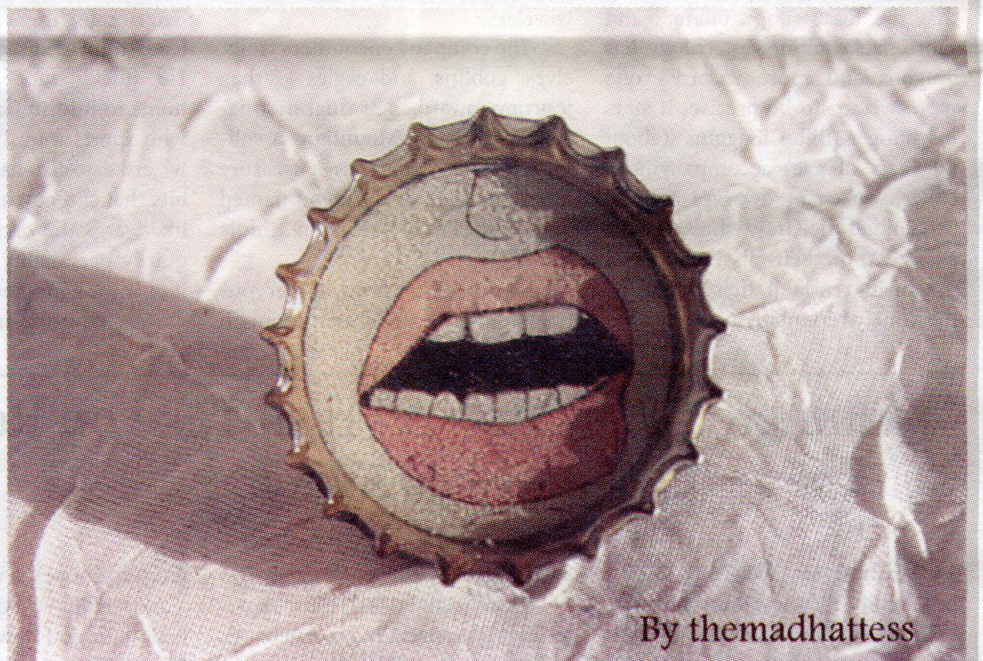
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