

The Current

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FLOWERS, CLOUDS AND A STEGOSAURUS

MOMIX in "Botanica" performs at the Touhill

By Cate Marquis **Page 10**



ALSO INSIDE

2 International difficulties
Transfer credits hamper students' graduation

6 "Hanna" action drama
Revenge, assassins combine in stylish film

8 "Stomp" your heart out
Stunning sounds at the For Theatre

The Current

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

AFFILIATIONS



News

International transfer students encounter transfer difficulties

Sometimes lengthy transfer credit process for international students hampers graduation

DAVID VON NORDHEIM
Staff Writer

With a total of 955 students from over 100 different countries, the University of Missouri-St. Louis' community of international students maintains a considerable presence on the UMSL campus.

Like many of UMSL's undergraduates, a significant number of these students have transferred to the university from outside colleges in hopes of finishing their degrees.

Their status as international students, however, creates unique obstacles which makes their transition all the more difficult.

The lengthy procedure of transferring the credit hours from their previous institutions presents a particular challenge to these international students.

Although every transfer student has to undergo this extensive process, international transfer students often encounter massive delays in their credit transfers, a hindrance which has serious repercussions for the students.

"We [international students] need to graduate within three years, and if we don't get these credits, we'll run into problems," Minzi Han, sophomore, media studies, said, who, due to transfer credit delays, is still technically considered a freshman.

This confusing circumstance can force international students to retake courses they have already completed in hopes of reaching their graduation deadlines, a situation which is both frustrating and expensive.

"I don't know which classes I have to take, because if some classes are transferred and I didn't know, [retaking them] is a waste of money and a waste of time," said Hwaran Kim, junior, political science, said.

Kim, like Minzi Han, is technically a freshman. "I want to know as soon as possible which classes I have to retake."

The Center for International Studies (CIS), the university organization responsible for advising international students, is committed to preventing this dilemma by making the process as straightforward and prompt as possible.

Many international transfer students, however, are dissatisfied with the university's response, feeling that the CIS has not adequately addressed the problem.

"This is my second semester and I asked the person in charge of transfer credit about the situation," Minzi Han said. "We met about three times, and we haven't made any progress in the meetings."

"I went there again and again to ask for a transfer as soon as possible, but they still don't do it," Hwaran Kim said.

In response, the CIS acknowledged the difficulties students encounter during the international transfer credit process, but stressed that a number of the complex factors behind the procedure are beyond their control.

David West, assistant director of the Office of International Studies and Scholar Services, named "the quality of translations, incomplete documentation, the time it takes to receive documents from overseas institutions and the differences in educational systems" as just a few of the complications the CIS encounters.

"We have students from over 100 countries and several hundred colleges and universities," West said.

"Taking into account that there are no international standards for program requirements, grading systems, et cetera, then one just begins to see the complexity of the process."

This is not to say, however, that the transfer credit procedure is uniformly difficult for all international students.

According to the CIS, students can take measures to make the transfer less challenging, such as ensuring the transcripts they have submitted are official and providing accurate descriptions of their previous coursework.

Unfortunately, this advice may come too late for many international transfer students, especially those who are approaching their graduation deadlines and still waiting on the credit hours they need to complete their degree.

"We're degree seeking students, and I think they should [take] some real actions for us," Minzi Han said. "I think they have just been ignoring the problem so far."

WEATHER

MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
62	64	72	76	73	46	54
61	59	64	58	55	45	49

UMSL student studying abroad in Japan when big quake hit

UMSL students raise money for relief efforts in Japan

RYAN KRULL
News Editor

When the March 11 earthquake and tsunami struck the Tohoku region of Japan, University of Missouri-St Louis students studying abroad felt the shock immediately. And in the month since the disaster UMSL students and faculty back in St. Louis have been trying to have some effect as well by raising money and spreading awareness for those in need.

On the day the earthquake and tsunami struck, UMSL student Kayla Strauss, senior, Interdisciplinary Studies, had already been taking classes at Kansai University in Osaka, Japan for six months. However, March 11 was the first day she had managed to make the trip to Tokyo.

"I actually went up to Tokyo to talk to the senior advisor to the Japanese ambassador so I was up there for that meeting and I also wanted to go to a forum," Strauss said. "The first day I got there I was on the ninth floor of a department store just looking at clothes and I suddenly felt the building shake and it was really terrifying...and then it got really intense and I could see signs really shaking."

Strauss said the earthquake lasted for a good five minutes and knocked her off her feet.

"All the trains were stopped so I had to stay in the department store for a while until I just finally decided 'ok the trains aren't going to run anymore' I had to walk from the department store to my hotel which was a good hour walk," said Strauss. "I was basically walking with a sea of people trying to

get back to their homes...the taxis had given up too because there were so many people trying to get home."

Strauss said that being in a sea of people like that was unlike anything she had experienced before.

"Tokyo's usually a bustling city," she said. "People are happy and loud and going shopping, but people were really quiet that night just walking like ghosts. It was like a ghost town."

Strauss also said she was disappointed with the media's coverage with the disaster and that what she saw with her own eyes did not always sync up with what she saw on television back in America.

"We just didn't really know what to believe," she said. "The American media was on one end, the Japanese media was on another. They'd just go back and forth."

In particular, Strauss said she felt that the State Department overreacted when it urged all Americans to leave several major Japanese cities, Tokyo included, due to the Fukushima nuclear reactor crisis.

Fukushima is roughly 150 miles away from Tokyo.

On March 22, eleven days after the initial earthquake, Strauss said she decided to leave Japan and return to St. Louis. "It took me a really long time to make that decision because I had prepared so much to go to Japan and gotten a lot of scholarships to be able to go there," Strauss said. "But the bottom line was that my safety was a priority."

See "QUAKE" on page 4



Hiromi Kasuga and La'Ondrill Brown, a president and a vice president of JASA, fund-raising and sending for the natural disaster in Japan at the Clark Hall.

YUMETO YAMAZAKI / THECURRENT

The UNDERCURRENT

by Chenhao Li

"How is Japan's nuclear crisis affecting you?"



"It worries me that there are continuous reports regarding the safety of food grown in and around the nuclear plant."

Adrienne Duvall
Applied Mathematics
Sophomore



"I don't think it is affecting me because I am still able to enjoy my daily activities."

Christina Nelson
Elementary Education
Senior



"I am thinking how it will affect the price of goods imported from there to here."

Kyle Rieves
Accounting
Senior

Thanks for a great Stagnant!

- From The Current Staff

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you know.

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COMMENTS FROM THE WEB

"Quake" from page 3

Strauss is not the only person critical of how the media covered the disaster in Japan. Laura Miller, the Eiichi Shibusawa-Seigo Arai Endowed Professor of Japanese Studies and Professor of Anthropology, said that the coverage "could not have been worse."

"Initially there was no correspondence in Japan, that was the main thing," said Miller. "They were relying on really uninformed reports from foreigners who live there who don't even speak Japanese so couldn't understand Japanese news. CNN was probably the worst."

Miller said the news coming from reporters like Anderson Cooper who were on the ground in the Tohoku region was even still likely to be flakey.

"I'm sure they (American reporters) just picked a [translator] up in Tokyo, but something that was never made clear in any of the American coverage was that people in this area of Japan, this Tohoku region...don't speak standard Japanese. They speak a very strong dialect that most Japanese can't even understand so it's very unlikely that even their interpreters could understand these old people very well."

Understanding old people is paramount, Miller said, be-

cause in rural regions like Tohoku the majority of young and middle age people have left to go to live and work in big cities like Tokyo or Osaka.

"The demographics are really skewed. Over a third of the population is over 60....The victims were almost all elderly people," said Miller. "This is a really unique area in terms of the demographics and the culture and the American media just collapses all of Japan and so they say these stupid things like 'oh there's no looting and if this was America there would be looting.' Well I'm sorry people over 60 don't loot, even in the United States."

Even though many Americans may not be getting the most accurate information on Japan, people across the country and here at UMSL realize that parts of the country have a great need for support and aid.

The President of UMSL's Japan America Student Association, Hiromi Kasuga said members of her organization were able to raise "about \$3000 so far. We were on the MSC bridge for two weeks and had a movie night at Clark Hall for fundraising."

Kasuga said that the money raised will be sent to the Red

Cross as well as the Japan Society in New York. The Japan Society will then send the money directly to organizations in Japan.

"My family lives in a different area of Japan, but after the huge earthquakes hit Japan I could not reach my family for 3 days," said Kasuga. "I also could not reach one of my friends for 5 days. Even though all of my family and friends are fine, I am still saddened by the events in Japan. Every time when I watch news online, I fell depressed."

In addition to JASA's fundraising, professors teaching Japanese classes have also incorporated the recent tragedy into their lesson plans.

Elizabeth Eckelkamp, the Director of Language Programs and an Associate Teaching Professor, said that she included a discussion of cultural responses to tragedy into her curriculum. One of Eckelkamp's classes also attended the News at Noon series on the disaster in Japan that was held the Wednesday before spring break.

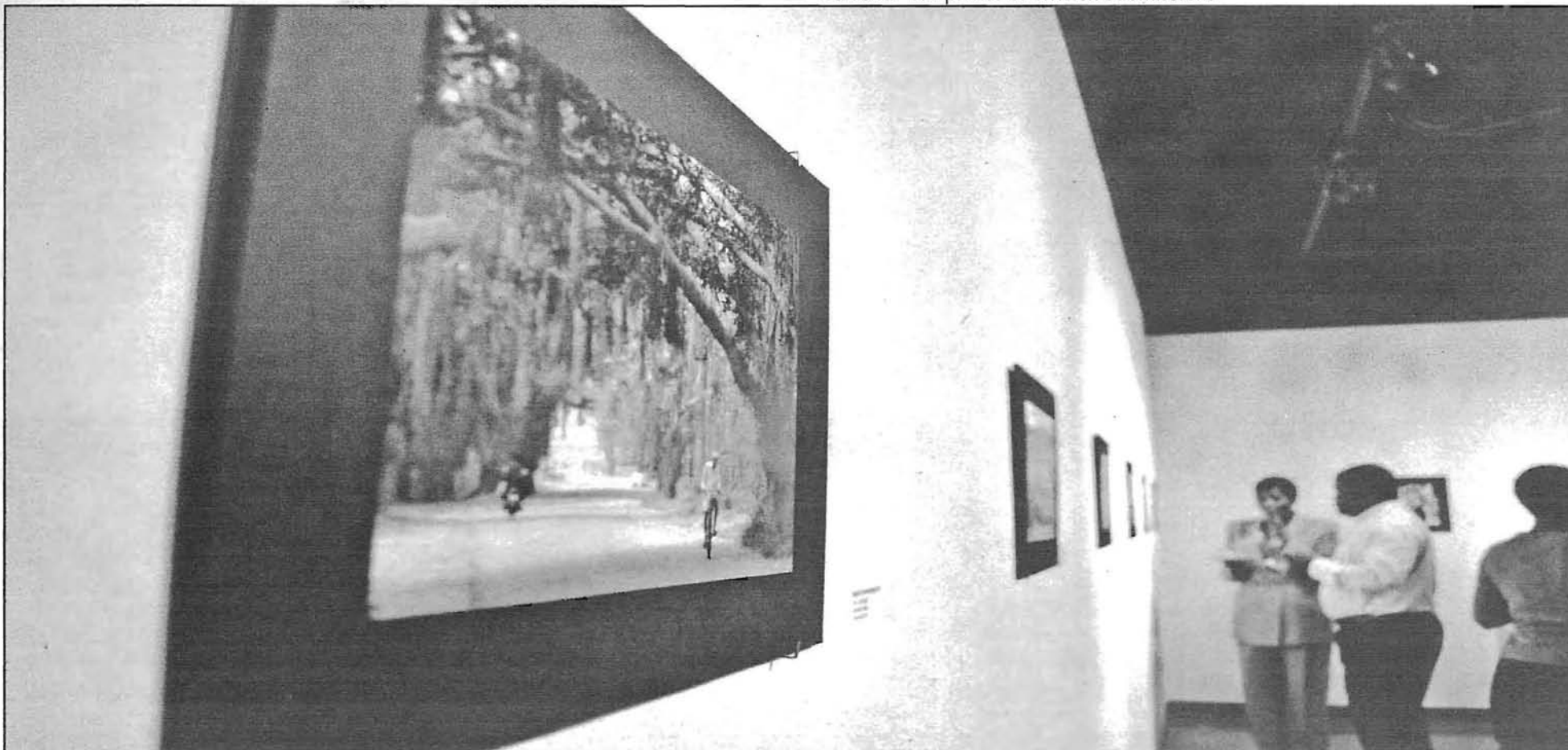
JASA is still accepting donations and for more information on how to give contact Beth Eckelkamp (beckelkamp@mail.umsl.edu) or Hiromi Kasuga (hkckf@mail.umsl.edu).



Hiromi Kasuga, president of JASA, talking about how awful the national disaster in Japan was.

What's Current

Your weekly calendar of campus events. "What's Current" is a free service for student organizations. Submissions must be turned in by 5 p.m. the Thursday before publication; first-come, first-served. Listings may be edited for length and style. E-mail event listings to thecurrentads@umsl.edu, with the subject "What's Current." No phone or written submissions.



Work from Gallery Visio's "Center for International Studies Photo Contest" includes Anu Vedagiri's "Road to Somanathpura #1" and was taken in Mysore, India in January 2011.

JENNIFER MEAHAN / THE CURRENT

Monday, April 11

Let Us Eat Cake to celebrate UMSL's Community Engagement

From 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., located all across campus and is open to all. "Let Us Eat Cake" to celebrate UMSL's investment in the community! Since our founding in 1963, community engagement has been a central focus of the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Help us celebrate the Carnegie Foundation's selection of UMSL for its 2010 Community Engagement classification. Various university departments will host several celebrations across campus throughout the day to recognize the Carnegie classification and highlight their interactions with the community.

For more information, call Patricia Zahn at 314.516.5267.

Sneak Preview: Africa World Documentary Film Festival

From 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., located at 331 SSB and is open to all. In honor of UMSL's Civic Engagement Week, The Center for International Studies cordially invites you to attend a sneak preview of the 2011 Africa World Documentary Film Festival. Refreshments provided. For more information please call 516-6495.

Wednesday, April 13

Resume Writing for Education Majors

From 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., located at 278 Millennium Student Center and open to all. Developing a resume for the field of education? Learn how to best market your skills and experience.

Pre-register to attend at: <http://www.umsl.edu/depts/career/students/workshops.html>

Thursday, April 14

Greater Saint Louis Jazz Festival: Combo Performances

From 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., located in the Lee Theater, Touhill Performing Arts Center and is open to all. Be a part of the Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival and come out to hear local and school jazz combos and ensembles in concert! Daily performances are free and open to the public. Support the next generation of Jazz greats!

For more information, call the Touhill Ticket Office at 314-516-4949.

Free Dog Thursday

From 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., located in MSC Patio and is open to all. Networking opportunity for students to meet with alumni in a friendly atmosphere. Food will be provided. Event hosted by STAT and the Alumni Association.

For more information, call Amanda Hausman at 314-496-0506.

Friday, April 15

Monthly Surplus Property Tag Sale

From 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., located in JCPenney Bldg. Dock and is open to all. Monthly Surplus Property Tag Sale will be held on Friday. Items to include, desks, chairs, file cabinets, printers, monitors, cpu's and laptops. All items are first come first serve only. Some items may be very limited in quantity. All sales are final. All items must be picked up by Tuesday, April 19th by 3:00 p.m.



Saoirse Ronan stars as the title character in Joe Wright's adventure thriller "HANNA", a Focus Features release.

COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

"Hanna" mixes action thriller and drama, flavored with Brothers Grimm

MOVIES

The term "Fairy-tale story" usually conjures up images of princesses in pink and romance; however, in director Joe Wright's involving contemporary thriller "Hanna," the fairy-tale is of the darker Brothers Grimm folk tale sort.

Director Wright re-teams with the young actress from "Atonement," Saoirse Ronan, for a tale of girl raised by her father in an isolated cabin and trained to be the perfect assassin.

Erik Heller (Eric Bana) has raised his daughter Hanna (Ronan) in complete isolation in a tiny wooden cabin hidden deep in the Finnish woods. Living completely self-sufficiently, he tirelessly trains her to be the perfect assassin, preparing her to defeat an enemy waiting for her in the outside world. Sixteen-year-old Hanna has never met another person, but she has been schooled by her father using a Bible, a book of Brothers Grimm fairy-tales and her father's own knowledge as a former Central Intelligence Agency operative. All parents worry about sending their children out into the world, but the story of a child growing up in isolation and venturing out to conquer an adversary is very Brothers Grimm. A coming-of-age tale about a young girl raised as an assassin has the elements

of both epic and fantasy. There are both feminist and fairy-tale themes, but overall it is just good drama.

"Hanna" has far more "Bourne Identity" than "Kick Ass's" Hit Girl in it. Basically, Wright takes a story that could have been an ordinary action film and imbues it with a more complex layer of meaning and atmosphere, aided greatly by the 16-year-old Ronan's spooky-good acting. The action is terrific but, better yet, believable and the story is engrossing and well-acted.

Once Hanna steps out of the shadows, it does not take long for her adversary to find her. Marissa (Cate Blanchette) is a CIA operative with a Texas accent and a cool air of self-assurance. With her red hair and green-tinged wardrobe, she is an iconic symbol of powerful forces.

Excellent work in supporting roles deserves credit, although this is largely Ronan's film. Cate Blanchette and Eric Bana both contribute complex characters. Olivia Williams and Jason Flemyng add a little comic touch as free-spirited parents Rachel and Sebastian who cluelessly take in Hanna along her travels. The couple's more typically teenage daughter, Sophie (Jessica Barden), offers a contrast to the otherworldly Hanna, but also an emotional connection to humanize her. Tom Hollander is simply terrifying as Isaacs, a quirky, bloodthirsty as-

sassin who pursues Hanna. The story takes us across two continents. Location shooting in Finland, Germany and Morocco add a layer of undeniable authenticity that cannot be achieved with Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) effects. The action is edge-of-the-seat but there is also a realness to it that action films often lack, thanks to the degree of stunt work done by Ronan and the rest of the cast.

Lush photography is a signature of Wright's films. "Hanna's" striking visuals lend an air of mystery with a touch of David Lynch. Unusual locations create an eerie feeling and add to the scary fairy-tale aspect of the modern-day story. A chase through a "Dr. Strangelove"-inspired CIA facility and tension-filled scenes shot in an abandoned East Germany amusement park filled with decaying fairy-tale figures and gingerbread cottages are haunting. Just as there is little scarier than a clown turned sinister, the dark side of fairy tales are classically creepy and the perfect setting for contemporary thriller action.

Overall, "Hanna" gives audiences their money's worth. Creative direction, outstanding acting and unexpected locations all add up to fresh twist that transforms this thriller into a haunting drama.

B - Cate Marquis

“Jane Eyre”: a surprisingly faithful literary adaptation



Jamie Bell as St. John (right) and Mia Wasikowska as Jane Eyre (left) in the romantic drama “JANE EYRE”.

COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

ART

When the trailer for Cary Fukunaga’s (“Sin Nombre”) adaptation of Charlotte Brontë’s “Jane Eyre” appeared on the Internet in December, hardcore Brontë fans and English majors freaked out so much that they could have been mistaken for comic book fanboys: Mr. Rochester is too handsome! It looks like a supernatural thriller! Alice cannot be Jane—she is too pretty! Dear God, they turned it into “Twilight!” And Kilowog probably will not even be in it!

While, the film’s trailer does make it look like something in the vein of “Twilight,” the movie itself is anything but.

The story begins in the middle of the book, when Jane Eyre (Mia Wasikowska, “Alice in Wonderland”) is wandering the moors, frightened for her future, until she faints on the doorstep of saintly country pastor St. John Rivers (Jamie Bell). Mr. Rivers and his two sisters nurse Jane back to health, and

he gives her a post teaching country girls in a newly opened school.

Then the audience learns of Jane’s past through flashbacks: first, her unhappy childhood with her horrible aunt, Mrs. Reed (Sally Hawkins), then her education at Lowood School for Girls, and finally, her tenure as governess at the isolated Thornfield Hall, inhabited by the sarcastic, but broodingly sexy Mr. Rochester (Michael Fassbender, “Inglourious Basterds”). After several months at Thornfield, things look like they might be looking up for Jane, but Mr. Rochester has been hiding a dark secret.

This is very much an art film, slowly paced with gorgeous cinematography. The film uses many wide shots at the beginning to show the dreariness of the moors, and from that point on, the lighting has a brightness to it that makes even the sunniest days that Thornfield seem cold and distant, slightly out of reach, not unlike Jane’s relationship with Rochester.

As far as book-to-film adaptations go, this one is probably

one of the best and most faithful in recent memory. The script adds no subplots or characters, but instead drops a couple of them in order to streamline the plot; it also manages to boil down some of Brontë’s more verbose dialogue passages (including a speech from Rochester that lasts about six more pages than it should) into several effective sentences. The cast, overall, turns in superb performances.

Wasikowska and Fassbender have a wonderful, simmering chemistry, showing that it is possible to be sexy without on-screen sex. And Bell somehow manages to make the cinematic Mr. Rivers more interesting than his literary counterpart. Some purists may complain that they are all too attractive for the roles, but these characters, unlike the ones in “Twilight” and similar romantic dramas, actually draw the audience in with their personalities instead of being cardboard-cutout fantasies. “Jane Eyre” is aesthetically pleasing but also has a soul.

B —Mary Grace Buckley



COURTESY OF STOMP, LLC

"STOMP" is a performance all its own

THEATRE

The Fabulous Fox has once again played host to an outstanding performance. From Friday, March 25 through Sunday, March 27, the performers of "STOMP" put on some amazing shows in a way that is a little different for the Fox.

Performing a solely percussion show, the 13 men and women that make up the cast use anything and everything to create noise, but melodically.

The use of objects that one may not even consider an instrument in any way proves the creativity that surrounded the performance of "STOMP."

While none of the characters have specific names, it is extremely hard to describe individual performances. As a whole, the group performs with precision and an enthusiasm that instantly translates to the crowd.

The way each performer is excited about the role that he or she plays, makes "STOMP" just that much more intriguing to watch and participate in.

Unlike most theatre-based shows, "STOMP" asks for audience participation. In order to maintain audience attention, a series of two claps issued by

the head of the "STOMP" group warrants a series of two claps from the audience. The claps lead the audience to believe that the show is more relaxed and fun, which it definitely is.

The show also has elements of humor based in a character and also in its own way throughout the show.

The character is the outcast of the group. He is often given the short end of the stick (literally) and also teased and prodded by the rest of the "STOMP" members. While it is not exactly slapstick humor, it is definitely humor that translates through several age groups.

The show itself was phenomenal. The precision and exactness that are required throughout the performance prove how hard the members have worked toward their art form. The creativeness of the use of each prop and the way it is used is outstanding.

Props for the show included just about everything. The use of brooms, newspapers, plastic bags, gas stations, drink cups, banana peels, street signs, folding chairs and lighters were all seen throughout the performance. The items were sometimes even used in combination.

By far the most awe-inspiring part of the show was the use of the lighters. The

lights on the stage went dim and the audience could only see the flicker of light that was seen when the lighter was lit. All of the sounds from the lighter were used (the flick of the top to pen in, the stroke to turn it on, and the flick to close the top).

The precision was enough to silence the entire crowd at the Fox. The ability of a group to be that in tune with each other is astounding.

There were too many amazing parts of the performance to adequately include them all.

Anybody interested in "STOMP" is best off seeing the performance for him or herself. The show really is indescribable and the type of bonding audience members feel with the performers (even in the back row) is something that cannot be found in another show.

While "STOMP" may no longer be in St. Louis, a list of upcoming tour dates can be found on their website: www.stomponline.com. A trip to see them is entirely worth it. Those who sit in the audience of a "STOMP" performance will soon find themselves tapping on objects, too.

A+ -Janaca Scherer

LATEST + GREATEST

Movies Opening Friday, April 15

"THE CONSPIRATOR"

(Tivoli, everywhere) - James McAvoy stars as the lawyer defending Mary Surrat, the lone woman accused in the Lincoln assassination plot, before a military tribunal, in this powerful historical drama from Robert Redford.



"SCREAM 4"

Director Wes Craven sets out to revive his '90s scary movie franchise, with original stars Neve Campbell, Courtney Cox, David Arquette and some new faces, including Emma Roberts, niece of Julia.



"SUPER"

(Tivoli, elsewhere) - Quirky action/comedy about man who decides to transform himself into a super hero, starring Rainn Wilson and Ellen Page and directed by St. Louis native James Gunn.



Latest "Pokemon" games revitalize tired series

156 new creatures, one new region, two fantastic additions to the series

VIDEO GAMES

Pokemaniacs now have another reason to "catch 'em all," all over again.

The "Pokemon" franchise has been a popular game worldwide since the release of "Pokemon Red and Green" in Japan back in 1996. Last week, the most recent installment hit shelves, and Nintendo and Gamefreak added a fifth generation in the form of "Pokemon Black and White."

156 new Pokemon have been introduced. This is par for the course with a new generation; however, a special twist has been included this time around. Unlike every previous generation expansions, this installation forces players to use only new Pokemon until the game's main story has been completed.

It appears to be a simple change, but in reality, it changes the entire game around. That being said, many of the new Pokemon do act as parallels to past generations. This still provides a measure of comfort to players who

may not want to completely sacrifice their familiarity with the series, while still enforcing the law that players must actually give the new creatures a try before resorting to the tried and true Charizards and Salamences of previous games.

There are also a variety of new features in the game, aside from new Pokemon. First and foremost, the graphical quality of the game has yet again been given an immense touchup from previous installations. This can be seen in a variety of places throughout the game. One of the best additions to the series is simple enough, but turns out to be a massive quality of life boost. Game Freak has added a few frames of animation to each Pokemon, making battles less boring, the sprites more lively, and the game more fun, believe it or not.

Naturally, the environments themselves have been improved from even "Heartgold and Soulsilver" quality. This can be seen most intensely in the grandeur of Castelia City, a massive metropolis based upon the city and

boroughs of New York.

On approaching this city over a massive sky-bridge, players are immersed into a fully three-dimensional, rotating environment, which continues upon reaching the city itself. Yes, the entire city rotates as players traverse its landscape, providing for the absolutely largest city in the history of "Pokemon" games.

Another large graphical improvement is present in battles, where the Pokemon are now fully-animated. They are constantly moving in one fashion or another, finally removing the static, lifeless feeling the sprites of previous generations had.

Speaking of battles, there are also two new battle styles available. While they are not introduced until a fair bit of the story is completed, players are now capable of participating in two different forms of triple battles, in which each side fights using three Pokemon at a time. The first style is rather simple: three Pokemon enter the battle and each can attack the opponent directly in front of it, as well as the one immediately adjacent.

The alternative form is dubbed a Rotation Battle, still involves three-on-three, but involves one-on-one elements as well, as Pokemon must be alternated at the player's leisure. Unlike a regular battle, however, alternating these three does not waste a turn, and is just another action the player may take prior to fighting. The game does come with some down sides. The menu system is a step back from "HeartGold and SoulSilver"—having an on-screen menu was nice. Also, the "PC" system of storing Pokemon has not been changed from the early original Gameboy games: the same clunky interface remains and moving and organizing creatures is still tedious.

Overall, "Pokemon Black and White" do an excellent job of pumping new life into one of the highest grossing games Nintendo has released in the past decade and receives a solid A- for its innovations and for still sticking to the practical formula players have come to love and adore.

A- -Matthew B. Poposky and Andrew Seal

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Features

FLOWERS, CLOUDS AND A STEGOSAURUS

MOMIX in "Botanica" performs at the Touhill



CATE MARQUIS
Staff writer

MOMIX in "Botanica" brought the magic of the natural world to the Touhill stage through a mix of dance and illusion.

Dance presenter Dance St. Louis brought our campus the perfect spring gift. The MOMIX troupe's colorful, hypnotic production "Botanica" dominated the Touhill Performing Arts Center stage for three performances on April 8 and 9.

MOMIX is a troupe of dancer-illusionists who present colorful, imaginative productions that blend magic, dance and stagecraft. They are noted for their surprising and playful use of costumes and props, transforming dancers' bodies into birds, stones, flowers and a host of startling, haunting images. The troupe's artistic director is Moses Pendleton, an innovative choreographer who was one of the founders of the expectation-shattering Pilobolus Dance Theater. Pendleton is also the choreographer behind "Botanica." The Touhill's Anheuser-Busch Hall was packed for the Friday night performance. The program took the audience through the seasons of the year, with Winter and Spring before the intermission, followed by Summer and Fall. Even the program notes were imaginative, describing the dances only through a poem that touched on the various elements. For an encore, there was a Solar Flare, dancers waving long, flexible orange tubes in an array of patterns.

Each segment was visually breathtaking. The staging always created seductive illusions, often colorful and always emotionally powerful. The dancers' costumes were mostly form-fitting, giving the illusion of nudity when in skin-tones, but they were also often embellished with a series of props or mechanicals which the dancers manipulated.

Many of the program's elements directly reference the natural world. In the second half, dancers wave huge blue and white stippled banners, creating rippling clouds and even spin-

ning tornadoes. Other dancers, in white ragged costumes, scooted across the stage like clouds scudding across the sky. The effect is both evocative and beautiful.

Other portions were more fantastical. In the show's first half, two dancers used what looked like the skeleton of a stegosaurus to portray a person riding the dinosaur skeleton across the stage. Objects on stage that appeared to be props, revealed themselves to be dancers in elaborate costume. Before that, dancers in black with white dots covering only hands, forearms, feet and lower legs, created a series of illusions under black lights. They transformed their limbs into writhing snakes, flying birds and more. The illusion was both magical and mysterious but with a touch of humor, another thread running through the performance.

There was a pair of impressive solos. The first was a solo piece by a female dancer, prone upon a tilted mirrored surface, creating images that sometimes seemed as if she were two dancers. "The Beaded Web" was another female dancer who came on stage encased in what seems at first to be a cage that is then transformed into a variety of undulating forms, as the dancer spins.

One especially playful and colorful segment features a blue summer sky under which female dancers in exuberantly puffy and frilly orange skirts dance as marigolds. The dancers manipulated their generous skirts, transforming their shape into a series of illusions.

The wildly-divergent music was perfectly matched to the dancers' performances. Music ranged from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons: Primavera" to Celtic Woman's "The Voice," ZerO One's "NaNO" and "braiNwave" were paired with Lang Elliot's "Loons" from Nature Sound Studio in one piece.

The audience was on its feet applauding before the last dance finished. All in all, MOMIX and "Botanica" offered a delightfully fanciful and fantastic evening of dance and illusion, the perfect dance into spring.

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NIKKI VAHLE / THE CURRENT



Jessica Lake, graduate, social work, got UMSL's Back-To-School Uniform Drive back up and running for the Normany school district in Missouri.

NIKKI VAHLE / THE CURRENT

Social work student restarts uniform drive

JACQUES ZSCHAU
Staff Writer

Graduate social work student Jessica Lake has taken on the task of leading a uniform drive for the Normandy school district. Both her team of helpers and the amount of uniforms being donated are steadily increasing.

The Current: How did you end up at the University of Missouri-St. Louis?

Jessica Lake: I am from St. Louis, born and raised. I initially planned to go to Mizzou and was going to study pre-journalism. But, my senior year of high school, I met my current boyfriend who I've been with for about six years now. So, I decided I didn't want to move away after all.

I decided to go to UMSL, and I chose to study social work. I was kind of on the fence about both of those the whole time. So, I came to UMSL in 2006 right out of senior year of high school, got my Bachelor of Social Work at UMSL, and I went to Pierre-Laclede Honors College.

TC: So, how did you finally decide on social work?

JL: I chose social work because you can still be whoever you want to be as a Social Worker. I'm the kind of person where I get distracted easily; I get bored. I would not be happy doing the same thing for 30 or 40 years. As social worker[s], we can pick up and change, choose a different direction, and work on everything at once.

TC: Can you tell us some about the clothing drive you are running?

JL: I restarted it. It wasn't my idea. It was something that was kind of originally started by the social work department, and then students of service did it as part of Holiday Fest. I just kind of decided to make this a separate thing. The goal was to do it during back-to-school times, so it's kind of stretched out way longer than I intended. It kind of lost the back-to-school feel, and it makes a little less sense, but it turned out really well. If it works, it works.

TC: What inspired you to restart it?

JL: It was actually Holly Ingram from the community partnership project. Last semester, I had a fellowship with her

community partnership project kind of working with the 24-1 initiative.

I kind of focused on education, mainly student access to college and career success. I decided there were more things essentially during my one semester fellowship, but as my time was ending, I wanted more ways to stay involved because I got really connected to the community and the students.

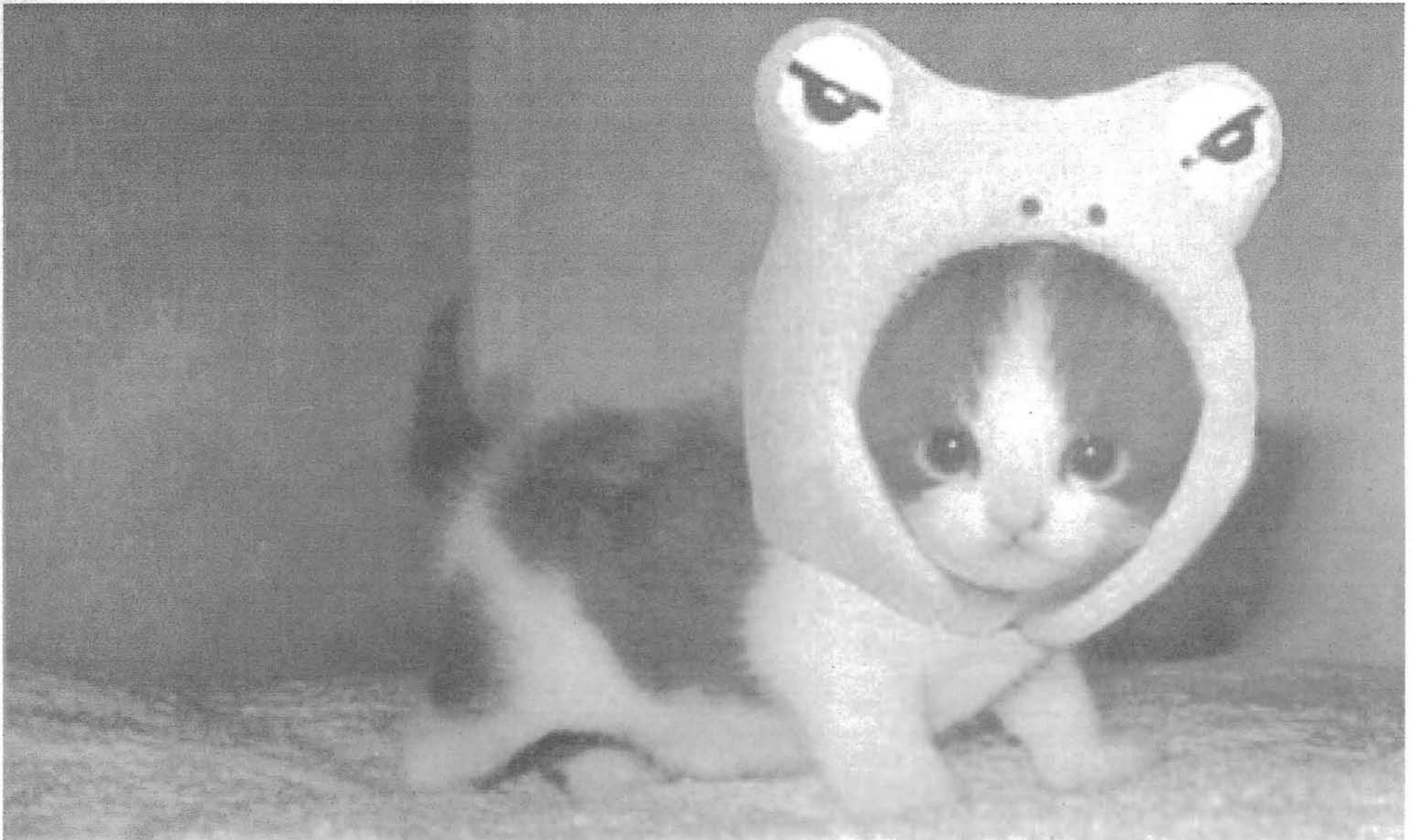
I didn't want it to stop. They ran out of funding to pay me so I've been doing this kind of unofficially. I mentioned the uniform drive; was there any other way to get resources for the students while getting UMSL students more involved with it. The ultimate goal is more involvement.

TC: What do you like to do for fun?

JL: I go to a lot of concerts. My boyfriend and I are really into music. So, sometimes we'll travel to go see concerts. I love school. I would go to school forever if I had the money.

TC: Who inspires you?

JL: The first person that pops into my mind is Thomas Jefferson. Sometimes, if I'm in an ethical bind or not sure what to do, I think, "What would Thomas Jefferson do?"



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Sports



Triton Leslie Davis takes the plate.

SAMUEL J. SURGENER / THE CURRENT

Triton softball flops in losses to first-place Lewis

CEDRIC WILLIAMS

Sports Editor

The University of Missouri-St. Louis women's softball team suffered a pair of debilitating losses at the UMSL Softball Field on Saturday.

The Tritons were hoping to gain ground on Great Lakes Valley Conference frontrunner Lewis University with a home doubleheader against the Flyers.

But almost nothing went right for UMSL in the two games, landing Lewis two easy wins at 9-0 and 3-1.

Lewis jumped right on top of the Tritons, when their first three batters of the game came up against Triton starting pitcher Leslie Davis.

Davis only allowed two hits in the inning. But with the bases loaded, groundball outs by Lewis' Stephanie Harmon and Alyssa Moseley drove in runs for the Flyers.

UMSL had its chance to tie the score in the third, when third baseman Heather Arras and second baseman Jacee Ellis each rapped two-out singles to reach base.

Unfortunately, Triton senior right-fielder Karey Kruse, who came into the game leading the GLVC in hitting with a .440 batting average, popped out to end the inning.

Lewis made UMSL pay for the blown opportunity in the fourth, adding two runs on two more hits off of Davis, to make the score 4-0.

But the big inning for Lewis came in the sixth, when it plated five runs, the big blow being Harmon's third home run of the season, that made the score 9-0.

And when UMSL could not score in its half of the sixth, the eight-run mercy rule came into effect, and the game was over.

Davis (3-6) took the loss, as the Tritons fell further behind the first-place Flyers.

In game two, Lewis snatched the lead early again, this time against Triton pitcher Amanda Seib.

Flyer junior Michelle Vucsko slapped a base hit for Lewis that drove in one run in the first, while an UMSL error led to an unearned Flyer score in the second.

Vucsko then launched a deep homer, her second of the season, to lead off the fourth and put Lewis up 3-0.

That lead proved more than enough cushion for the Flyers, as UMSL could only muster one run in the bottom of the seventh, on a two-out hit to center by first baseman Courtney

Gahan.

The Tritons did have one last shot, with runners at the corners for centerfielder Monica Strube. But she hit a fly out to center, ending the game and sending UMSL to its third straight doubleheader sweep.

This week's game schedule calls for UMSL to play several games on the road. But the Tritons will still be close to home when they take on McKendree University on Monday, April 11, and Lindenwood University on Thursday, April 14.

McKendree's Bearcat Field is only 45 minutes east of UMSL's campus, while Lindenwood's Lou Brock Sports Complex is approximately 20 minutes west of UMSL, meaning all true Triton softball fans would only need to make two fairly short drives east and west of campus to see the team play.

UMSL's next true home game will be Wednesday, April 20, when the Tritons will host another in-town rival, Maryville University, for a doubleheader at the UMSL Softball Field.

First pitch for the McKendree games is 3 p.m., the Lindenwood doubleheader will start at 5 p.m. and the home twin-bill against Maryville is slated for a 4 p.m. start.

Tennis squads pull off double sweep

Tennis teams swat down Quincy, UIS for double sweep to start GLVC season

CEDRIC WILLIAMS

Sports Editor

The University of Missouri-St. Louis men's and women's tennis teams enjoyed a glorious start to the Great Lakes Valley Conference season last weekend.

Both Triton squads took on rivals Illinois-Springfield and Quincy in team meets last Friday and Saturday and absolutely destroyed those opponents, winning the men's competition by a combined 17-1 score and taking home the women's victories by a score of 15-3.

The UMSL teams really did a number on University of Illinois - Springfield on Friday. The Triton women won all nine matches against the Prairie Stars in straight sets, except for Pujitha Bandi's three-set win over UIS's Jane Brown at number two singles.

The UMSL men also dominated UIS, winning eight of its nine matches, with the only loss coming at number one doubles where Daniel Anthony and Tim Bryant suffered a 9-7 loss

to UIS pair Punsisi Darayatne and Josh Patrick.

The Triton men got their revenge for that one loss in the singles competition, where all six UMSL players won their matches in straight sets.

On Saturday at Quincy, it was the UMSL men who won all nine of their matches. The Triton top five singles players, Andrea Hammar, Chetan Panditi, Daniel Anthony, Tim Bryant, and Alex Cherman all won their matches against Quincy in straight sets. The only match to reach a third set was the number 6 singles battle between UMSL's Felipe Naranjo and UIS's Dan Martin. Naranjo eventually won the match 6-4, 3-6, 6-1.

For the women against Quincy, it was a much tougher battle. The Tritons won the meet 6-3. But it was not without trepidation. Quincy won one of the three doubles matches to start the competition, then quickly won at number five singles to even the score at two, with five matches left to complete.

UMSL's Katie Rynkiewich had to retire early in the third set of her match at number four singles, allowing Quincy to pick up another win.

But the Tritons' Louisa Werner, Pujitha Bandi and Aya

Gombo, at numbers one, two, and three singles and Kristiana Lazarova at number 6 singles each won their matches in straight sets to close the competition and clinch the UMSL win.

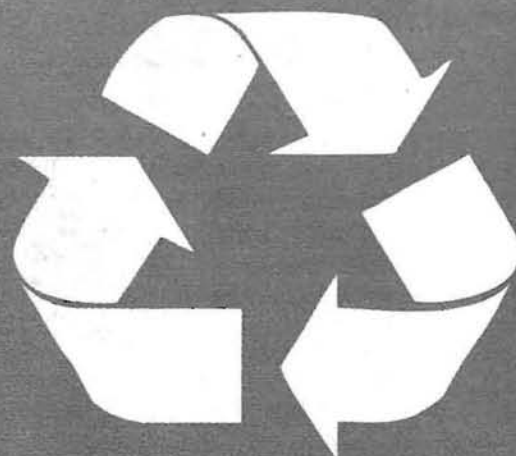
For the season, the Triton women have a 7-6 meet record and are 2-0 in GLVC play. The men are 7-5 on the season, and also boast a 2-0 record in the league.

Both teams will close out the regular tennis season with a series of matches here in town before traveling to Highland Heights, Kentucky, where the GLVC Tennis Championships will be hosted by Northern Kentucky University on April 22 and 23.

This week, the Triton tennis teams will host team meets against Maryville University on Tuesday, April 12, and against Rockhurst University on Friday, April 15. Those matches are slated to begin at 2 p.m. on both dates.

UMSL will also squeeze in another meet date against Washington University, on Thursday, April 14. Those matches will be played at Wash. U., and are scheduled for a 4 p.m. first serve.

When all is read and done, please recycle.



-A friendly reminder from The Current

Triton baseball now fourth place in GLVC standings

CEDRIC WILLIAMS

Sports Editor

The University of Missouri-St. Louis men's baseball team continued its surge up the Great Lakes Valley Conference standings last weekend by taking three of four emotionally charged ballgames from new league rival Illinois-Springfield.

The Tritons, who at one time were as low as seventh in the GLVC West race, now sit in fourth place in the division, after winning one of two games against UIS on Saturday, and then sweeping the Prairie Stars on Sunday.

UMSL's overall record is 11-16, and 7-9 in GLVC play. And although those marks remain below the .500 median line, the Tritons have moved into 10th place in the eight-team race for a GLVC playoff spot.

UMSL managed to make up so much ground this week by playing its best ball of the season, taking five of six games against UIS and cross-town rival Maryville.

The Tritons swept a doubleheader from the Saints on Wednesday, then handled UIS on Saturday and Sunday.

Game one on Saturday was all about starting pitcher Jeremy Butler. A junior right-hander from Libertyville, Ill., Butler tossed a complete game, allowing just two runs and nine hits, while striking out six in a 4-2 Triton win.

Rightfielder Kenny Bechaud got the key hit in the game,

an RBI single in the sixth that drove in teammate Spencer Ammons. Bechaud later scored what proved to be the game-winning run on an RBI groundball by designated hitter Brian McCulloch.

UIS took game two on Saturday, 5-1, and jumped out to a 6-0 lead against Triton No. 1 starter Adam Radick in game one on Sunday.

But Radick hung tough and held UIS close, until the Triton bats woke up.

UMSL got one run in the bottom of the third, when Bechaud doubled home Ammons to get the Tritons on the board. But the big inning was the fourth, when UMSL broke loose for nine runs on seven hits.

Second baseman Angel Recci-Gonzales sparked the rally with a two-run single, which was followed by a two-run baseknock by McCulloch. But the big blow of the inning was a three-run homer by Andrew Keating, his first of the season, which narrowly missed hitting the scoreboard in leftfield at UMSL Field.

Buoyed by the big inning, Radick and closer Kurt Driemeyer held UIS down the rest of the way for what ended up being an 11-8 UMSL win.

In the series finale, Drew Boyer took his turn to toss a complete game. The junior righthander from House Springs, Mo., held the Prairie Stars to just four hits and the Triton offense bashed the ball again for a 13-1 UMSL win.

Bechaud led the charge, with four hits and four RBIs.

But the crowd favorite on Sunday was no doubt catcher John Tierney, who reached base five times, drove in two runs, scored four runs and fired up the home fans with a remarkable display of machismo and toughness.

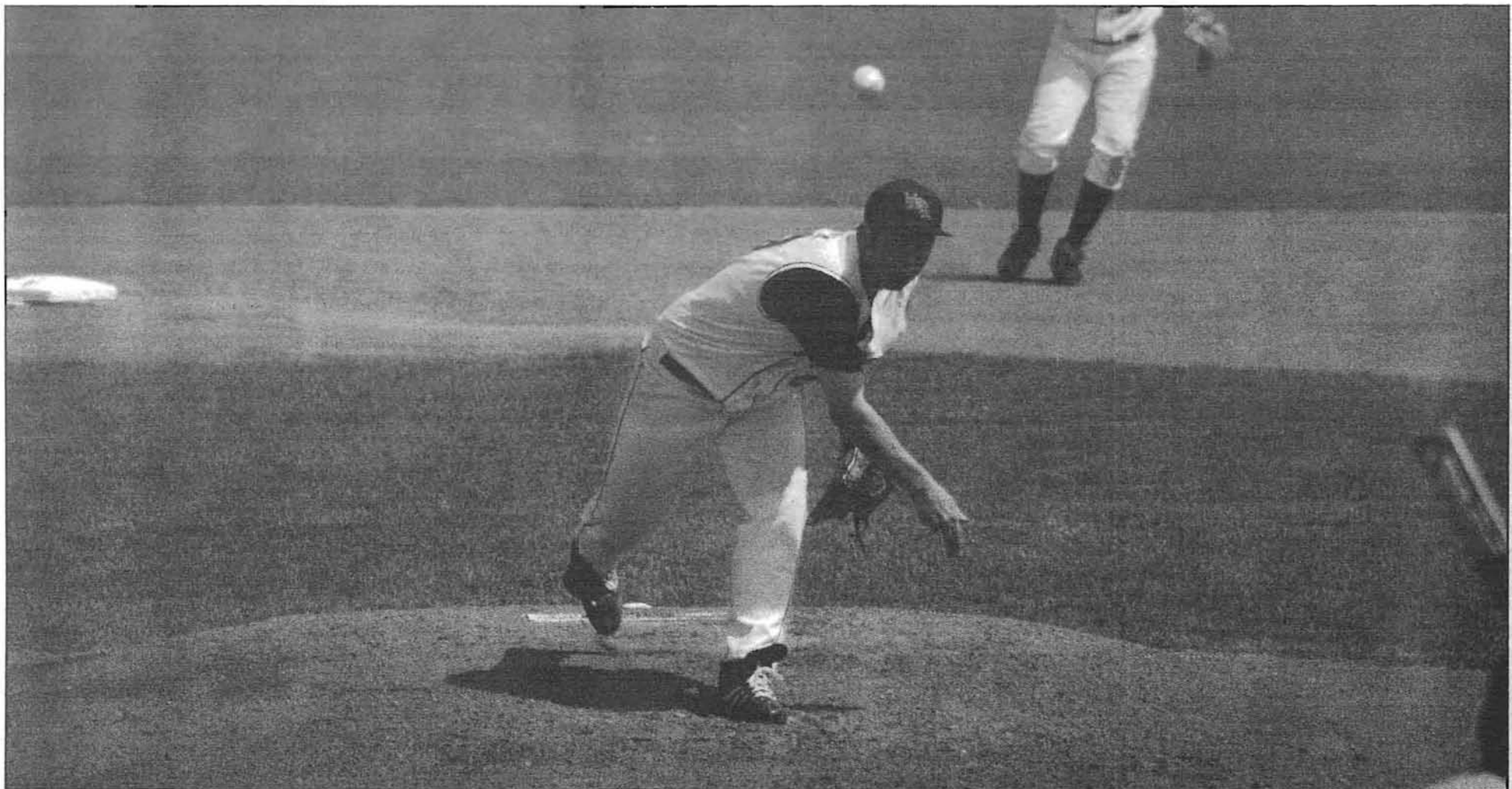
Near the end of the fourth inning, Tierney appeared to severely dislocate his the ring finger on his right hand. Fans in the crowd, and even Triton players in the dugout, refused to even look at it.

But Tierney simply asked to have the finger re-set, then returned to the game with a standing ovation from the crowd. Tierney then stole second base and scored on a hit by Bechaud, which sent the home fans into a frenzy.

With the weekend done, UMSL will return to action on Wednesday, April 13, when the athletics department will host its biggest baseball party of the season, which it calls the "Bleacher Bash" at UMSL Baseball Field on south campus.

That day, all UMSL students, faculty, staff, alumni, and fans are invited to attend the Tritons' home baseball game against Bellarmine University. Admission will be free for all and several campus organizations will supply free food and free prizes for all who attend.

The baseball game itself is scheduled for a 3 p.m. first pitch, and could go a long way in determining who reaches the GLVC playoffs. Bellarmine currently sits at seventh, and UMSL, which is in 10th place, desperately needs to close the gap if it is to earn its first playoff berth since 2004.



Adam Radick, UMSL men's baseball team player, throwing the ball in the match against UIS Sunday on the UMSL Baseball Field on South Campus.

CHENHAO LI / THE CURRENT

Opinions

OUR OPINION

Congress' budget squabbling disgraceful, has easy solution

For a household budget, one looks first at unnecessary spending: cutting out the daily coffee at Starbucks and making coffee at home. Should not Congress do the same for the federal budget?

Instead of focusing on the most wasteful spending and the biggest savings for the least amount of harm, Congress has been fighting over budget items that represent small amounts of spending while ignoring waste and pork-barreling that represent vastly greater amounts. The reason for this: differences in ideology.

Both parties bear blame in this situation by ignoring the most wasteful and unnecessary spending programs: programs that have long since outlived their usefulness or which never worked in the first place. So where is this big pile of waste? It is hidden in the defense department budget.

Federal spending is a matter of public record. If Congress were serious about spending cuts, they would look at wasteful programs first. They even have a useful tool: the General Accounting Office's report on the top 25 most wasteful government programs. But there is a problem. Twenty-three of those wasteful programs are in the defense department, which both parties have vowed not to touch. Please note that this is not spending to support troops in the field or fund

veterans' benefits. These programs do not even produce weapons we can use now. Mostly, these are weapons to fight the old Soviet Unions or weapons that never panned out. Often the Pentagon itself tells Congress they do not need them, only to see them funded anyway. Basically, these are corporate welfare programs supported by lobbying. Military spending is no small amount - it accounts for more than half of the federal discretionary spending budget, at more than half a trillion dollars every year. Look at some budget basics: first, there is discretionary and non-discretionary spending. Programs like Social Security and Medicare are non-discretionary. They are big, but they have their own dedicated revenue streams. They are called entitlements because citizens pay for them and are then entitled to collect. Since this spending is mandated, changes are more complicated, although it is a matter of finding a balance between income and expenditures. The discretionary part of the budget is the portion Congress sets every year. These are programs funded by general revenues, including all that spending we talk about - agriculture, education, social programs for the poor or disabled - and defense. Of this discretionary spending budget, more than half is the defense department. The portion going to

other programs is divided into small bites: education gets 11 percent, social programs like housing about nine percent and energy, environment and science nine percent. The half-trillion dollars we spend annually on the military is almost more than the rest of the world combined. We spend \$10 billion - every year - to fund the old Star Wars program. Yes, the Reagan-era missile defense program from the Cold War. Not only has the Soviet Union vanished, but a report by an association of physicists in the last decade stated that in order to work effectively, the program would have to violate the laws of physics. But we still fund it - every year. Ten billion dollars.

Most taxpayers would say this is crazy, but the program exists thanks to lobbying. And this is not the only one. That GAO report on the top 25 most wasteful government spending programs spells it all out.

This is all public record. If Congress were serious about cutting spending, they would be talking about this, instead of quibbling about the tiny amounts we spend on Big Bird.

Unsigned editorials reflect the majority viewpoint of The Current's Editorial Board: Andrew Seal, Ryan Krull, Jen O'Hara, William Kyle, Cedric Williams, Jennifer Meahan, Zachary Kraft.

SEAL OF APPROVAL

Republicans suck

Republicans are pretty much the worst people, hands down.

Well, that is a bit much. Perhaps it is better to say that the members of the Republican party are the worst people. It would be easy to call Republicans bigoted out of touch liars, but those statements, aside from being inflammatory for the sake of being inflammatory, are not entirely true.

But the fact remains that Republicans are the ones responsible for the mess America is in today.

To start with, Republicans claim to be in favor of small government and big business, when the reality is that they're only in favor of big business that benefits them or their cronies, and small government when it fits their misguided beliefs.

The links between the Bush dynasty and the oil companies is already well-documented. Bush Jr.'s blatant nepotism and war profiteering in Iraq with the appointment of Halliburton as the overseer of Iraq's oil fields was another such incident of Republican greed at all costs. Helping the rich get richer is another Republican modus operandi. The Center for American Progress has a chart at www.americanprogress.org that shows the disparity between the GOP's proposed social services cuts and the massive tax breaks afforded to the wealthy. Keep in mind that it was Republican presidents that gave these massive tax breaks to the wealthy.

Essentially, the chart says that if the United States eliminated all the Bush tax breaks

for the top-bracket wealthy, we could almost cover the social services that are on the chopping block. We'd only be two billion short, and when you're talking about a government that bandies about billions like they were pocket change, that's not a whole lot.

Naturally, it is the Republican party that is proposing massive social cuts to education and welfare...while also staunchly defending any attacks on reducing the massive military spending spree the Department of Defense has embarked on. Military expansionism at any cost is a pillar of Republicanism. The Republican party is the home to ridiculous conspiracy theorists like Donald Trump, who despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, continues to believe that President Obama is not a legal, natural citizen of the United States. It is also home to the members of the racist Tea Party movement, and whacko nutjobs like gold-peddler Glenn Beck and media tramp Sarah Palin. Despite their claim of being for small government and reducing or abolishing things like welfare, social security and medicare/medicaid, the Republican party sure seems intent on using the government to tell people what they can and cannot do. If you happen to be a woman or a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered person, then the Republican party has a message for you: your body is not your own, and you cannot marry your significant other if they share the same reproductive organs as you do.



Andrew Seal

If a further example of Republican backwardness was needed, take a recent poll by Public Policy Polling. A poll "gauging Mississippi Republicans' preferences going into the 2012 election" revealed something surprising: a whopping "46 percent of GOP voters in the state think interracial marriage should be illegal."

We're not even talking same-sex marriage here, we're talking normal, already-legal-and-has-been-since-1967 marriage between a man and a woman of different races. In this modern day and age, this kind of backwardness is appalling and slightly frightening. What is fascinating in the PPP poll is "that Palin has more support among voters who believe interracial marriage should be illegal than among those who are OK with it." Palin supporters being misguided? Surprise surprise.

Now, don't get the wrong idea: the Democrats aren't shining stars of incorruptibility and fiscal responsibility. But they are the ones willing to help out their fellow Americans.

Andrew Seal is Editor-in-Chief for The Current.

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

SCIENCE MATTERS

'World Ecology Center' lecture focuses on rivers

March was backwards this year, coming in like a lamb and leaving like a lion. Spring's stuttering start, with a rare heavy snow fall and unseasonably cool temperatures after early warm weather, has all of us looking for signs that spring is really here.

One of those signs of spring at University of Missouri-St. Louis is the annual Jane and Whitney Harris Lecture, sponsored by the campus' Harris World Ecology Center.

The spring event takes place Tuesday, April 12, at the already-blooming Missouri Botanical Garden, a partner organization in the World Ecology Center along with the Saint Louis Zoo and this university.

The April 12 event is an informative, multi-media, all-audiences discussion of rivers and their food webs by Ecological Society of America past president Dr. Mary Power, professor of integrative biology at University of California - Berkeley.

The free lecture takes place at 7:30 p.m. in the Ridgeway Center's Schoenberg Auditorium at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Boulevard, St. Louis.

Every year, the Harris World Ecology Center invites a renowned nature writer, researcher or other notables to speak on their work. The topics are in areas of conservation or ecology with broad public appeal.

Speakers have included nature writers, naturalists, researchers and advocates as well as academics.

Topics have been as diverse as preserving wildlife in African conflict zones, acid

rain, co-evolution, disappearing amphibians, old-growth forest preservation, the role of zoos in conservation and other topics of interest to those interested in the natural world.

Past guest speakers include "Once There Were Lions" author David Quammen and Saint Louis Zoo head Dr. Jeffrey Bonner.

"Food Webs in River Networks" is the title of this year's multi-media presentation by river ecologist Power.

Power is faculty director of the Angelo Coast Range Reserve, one of several large nature reserves for academic research, teaching and outreach to the public. She is also a member of the American Society of Naturalists, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the California Academy of Sciences.

Power and her students research the full range of life on and in the rivers. Her research explores the food chains of temperate and tropical rivers. They examine the interconnections of feeding between fish, insects, birds, amphibians, water invertebrates, spiders, reptiles and bats.

The food webs reveal connections between watersheds and coastal marine ecosystems. Power's work looks at how the food web is impacted by changes in land use, climate and species.

Last year, Power was guest speaker at Harvard University Center for the Environment's "Biodiversity, Ecology and Global Change" seminar on April 22, 2010 (Earth Day).

Power's U.C.-Berkeley website bio relates that her fascination with observing aquatic life began with snor-



Cate Marquis

keling as a child. Her research is summarized briefly in easily-accessible fashion at her Power Lab, website <http://ib.berkeley.edu/labs/power>.

Power's research has included the impact of climate change on food webs in rivers, meadows and of invasive species on watershed food webs, particularly as related to spiders, bats and other land organisms who eat insects hatched in nearby rivers.

Much of her work is based on California's South Fork Eel River.

Power was past president of the Ecological Society of America, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization of scientists that has existed since 1915. ESA aims to promote connections between ecological scientists but also to educate the public on the importance of ecology research and to communicate with policy-makers about ecological science.

A talk about life on and in rivers seems particularly apt for a city situated at the confluence of three great river systems.

Cate Marquis is Associate A&E Editor and a columnist for The Current.

POP CULTURE WITH POPOSKY

Internet stupidity is eternal and thanks to Failbook, very public

Facebook and its ilk, including such websites as Twitter and MySpace, have all but revolutionized the fashion in which information is shared amongst our society. Yes, the internet did this first, but the speed at which information can now be instantly shared due to social networking sites is absolutely astonishing.

The magnitude at which information is now shared online is nothing to be laughed at. Facebook, for instance, is sitting at well over 400 million users as of last year. On any given day, more than 50% of that user-base is guaranteed to log on.

Over 35 million users update their status at least once, every single day, and there are well over 60 million status updates posted per day.

The site pulls in over 3 billion pictures per month. Over 5 billion videos, links, and other media, are shared weekly, and all of this can now be done in streaming, real-time, thanks to applications on devices such as the iPad, iPhone, and Android phones. This means that all of this can happen in the blink of an eye.

That embarrassing photograph from the office party, when John pulled down Sally's skirt after drunkenly tripping over Patrick's outstretched leg during a game of hopscotch will now hit the internet, uninhibited by a sober, questioning mind. Good luck finding employment with that photo stinking up your profile page.

Oh yeah, employers know all about Facebook, Twitter, and anything else along those lines that can be thought up. Employers check websites like this regularly.

Just blocking content is not enough, either, as employers have access to plenty of backdoors if they really want to learn more about a potential employee.

Facebook and the like also ought to be feared for further reasons: they are ink, not lead. To clarify, the internet is a permanent record of anything which is ever posted upon it. Every time a website is updated (say, when one of those embarrassing photographs is posted, or when somebody drunkenly says something they "do not actually mean"), a new record is made for that site.

Thus, every version of a website which has ever existed, no matter how marginally, can, in one way or another, be retrieved, meaning that which is posted on the internet is never truly gone.

Then of course, there are the immortalizing websites which make hunting down old versions of Facebook absolutely unnecessary. Anybody on Facebook who has yet to visit Failbook really ought to give the latter a look-over sometime. There is always a chance a friend may have guaranteed eternal internet fame by uploading a random, embarrassing moment from Facebook, Twitter, etc. to Failbook.

The entire point of Failbook is to visit social net-

working websites, look for



Matthew B. Poposky

"fails," or humiliating posts, and upload screenshots, links, etc. to Failbook. The website revolves around the concept of profiting by another's embarrassment, and doing so all day long, for eternity, as Failbook does not delete embarrassing posts, unlike Facebook.

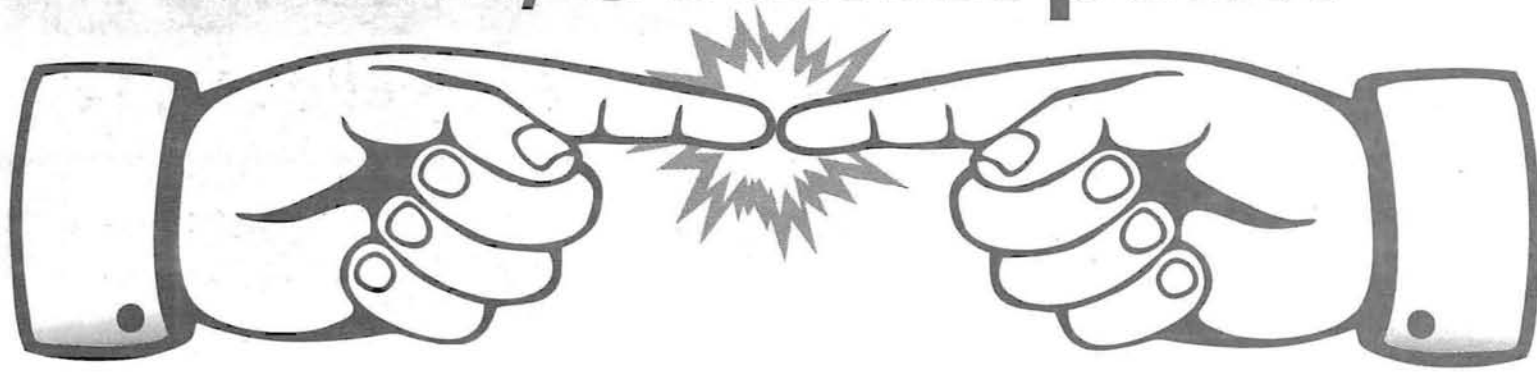
Of course, these websites are still useful. It just seems that in the modern day, people far too often become upset because their "relationship" is ruined by something being found out through a website such as Facebook, or that they do not get a new job because their addiction to alcohol or something entirely worse, is made public knowledge through the use of Facebook. Honestly, if something is not meant to be public knowledge, maybe a source which is written in the most eternal ink known to man should not be the medium with which it is recorded. Or, maybe, just refrain altogether.

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Point/Counterpoint



Should we be cutting social programs or the military?

Military spending is paramount to security of the United States

In these dark times, when the specter of depression starts to loom on the horizon, a natural reaction is to tighten the collective belt.

Reining in the out-of-control budget is an excellent first step. Allowing mass spending like the Obama presidency has been is ludicrous in a time like this.

The Republicans have the right idea. Cuts need to be made and the first place to start is with social programs. Sadly, some (especially Democrats) have been saying that the military's budget needs to be reduced as well.

This is not wise, nor especially fiscally sound. Gimping our military both at home and abroad is not a smart idea. Perhaps reducing the amount spent on the safety of America and her allies would be alright if we were not currently engaged in two international police actions and one North American Trade Organization-led action.

The military's annual budget breaks down into several categories, none of which we can do without. The salaries, training, and health care of both uniformed and civilian personnel is covered by the budget. The defense budget helps the military maintain our armaments (including our nuclear weapons), as well as our equipment (like tanks, aircraft, and ships).

According to a fiscal year 2011 budget breakdown guide at armscontrolcenter.org, the Obama administration requested "\$548.9 billion for the Department of Defense...in addition, the Administration has requested \$159.3 billion for 'Overseas Contingency Operations,' to fight the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Which of course, brings the Fiscal Year 2011 defense budget request to a grand total of \$708.3 billion dollars. It may seem like a lot, but keep in mind, this money is going towards helping keep

America safe from terrorists and those who would seek to harm her.

On top of that, remember that the military is always an excellent choice for young people. It offers life skills, a chance at leadership, and money for college after service. Cutting the defense budget would lead to cuts in these kinds of perks, which makes the military less attractive to potential soldiers.

All too often, it seems like people forget why we are over in the Middle East: many of the countries in the area are willing or un-willing hosts to terrorism training camps. Keeping a military presence in the Middle East will help curb insurgent activity.

As fiscally attractive as turning America's focus inwards would be, it would be a colossal mistake. On the scale of world events, a xenophobic America would only allow for another nation to rise and become technologically and militarily superior.

Cuts to social services is wrong, irresponsible, and underserving

The budget showdown continues. Once again, the House of Representatives is being forced to pass an emergency spending bill to avoid a government shutdown.

We are hearing the same tired old song from the Republicans: we have to cut social spending in order to balance the budget. But how exactly is that supposed to fix the budget crisis?

Many of the programs to which the Republicans would take the axe are health care programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, which are absolutely vital to the happiness and well-being of many Americans. They are not simply a luxury; for millions of people across the country, they are a necessity, especially in these times of economic uncertainty.

However, the fact remains that the country is in a desperate pinch for money. The deficit in the current fiscal year stands at \$1.6 trillion. Tax hikes are unlikely, given the Republicans' violent aversion to taxation in any form.

Thus, spending is certainly going to have to be cut somewhere if we are going to get a start on balancing the budget. There is no disputing that, but as the current political goings-on have shown us, it is still up for debate what

programs and budget items would be the best to cut.

Most politicians do not seem to want to address the elephant in the room: the military.

In this day and age, it has become almost taboo to criticize the military or suggest cutting their funding. Those who do so are considered unpatriotic, or even traitorous to some on the political fringe. However, given the status of the economy, it only makes sense to make defense as likely a target for cuts as things like health care, if not more so. As it is, too much of an economic burden already is being placed on the people who are forced to rely on the social programs that the Republicans would have cut to the bone.

Consider that defense spending takes up approximately 20 percent of the total federal budget; that is essentially the same amount devoted to health care. Roughly \$685 billion was allocated to the defense budget for 2010. That is an all-time high. By 2012, defense spending is expected to eclipse \$1 trillion, a difference of over \$300 billion between now and then. If that increase in spending was instead shifted to deficit reduction, it could eliminate 20 percent of the current

deficit.

Also consider that after nearly a decade of continued operations, the military is finally beginning to draw down its major operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is currently in the process of removing our troops from those countries and permanently turning military responsibilities over to local forces.

Why does the military need more money in order to do less? If anything, the military budget should receive the same cuts as what is being proposed to social spending, if not more.

During his term as president, Dwight D. Eisenhower warned that "we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

Despite this warning, Ike's fears have, over the years, been realized. Defense spending has become increasingly ironclad, to the point that expressing a desire to cut military spending has become equivocated with disloyalty to the country.

This has led to social spending becoming the villain in the farce that is our latest budget crisis, a label that is not only false but counterproductive.

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