

# The Current

WWW.THECURRENT-ONLINE.COM

JULY 11, 2011

VOL. 45;

ISSUE 1347



## American Idol visits Gateway City in search of uncharted talent!

By Minho Jung, page 2

### ALSO INSIDE

**3** Smokers say goodbye  
New smoking ban policy at UMSL turns heads

**5** Bay tries once again  
Transformers 3 is met with critical acclaim

**13** Pirates on the coast  
A debate amongst idealists and profiteers

# The Current

VOL. 44, ISSUE 1346  
WWW.THECURRENT-ONLINE.COM

## EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief.....Matthew B. Poposky  
Managing Editor.....Janaca Scherer  
News Editor.....Minho Jung  
Features Editor.....Ashley Atkins  
Sports Editor.....Open - Please Apply  
A&E Editor.....Cate Marquis  
Opinions Editor.....Jeremy Zschau  
Copy Editors.....Sara Novak, Johanna Hoffarth  
Staff Writers.....David Von Nordheim, Greg Laine

## DESIGN

Design Editors.....Matthew B. Poposky, Cate Marquis, Minho Jung, Jeremy Zschau, Ashley Atkins  
Photo Editor.....Nikki Vahle  
Web Editor.....Yusef Roach  
Staff Photographers.....Jennifer Meahan  
Illustrators.....Greg Laine

## BUSINESS

Business Manager.....John Wallace  
Advisor.....Charlotte Petty

## CONTACT US

Address 388 MSC, 1 University Blvd  
Saint Louis, MO 63121-4400  
Newsroom 314-516-5174  
Business/Advertising 314-516-5316  
Fax 314-516-6811  
E-mail (General) thecurrent@umsl.edu  
E-mail (Advertising) thecurrentads@umsl.edu  
E-mail (Employment Inquiries) thecurrentjobs@umsl.edu  
E-mail (Tips) thecurrenttips@umsl.edu  
Twitter umslcurrent  
Facebook The Current

## ABOUT The Current

The Current is the student newspaper at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, printing weekly through the fall and spring semesters on Mondays. Advertising rates are available upon request; terms, conditions and restrictions apply. The Current, financed in part by student activities fees, is not an official publication of UM-St. Louis.

The University is not responsible for the content of The Current and/or its policies. All materials contained in each printed and online issue are property of The Current and may not be reprinted, reused, or reproduced without the prior, expressed and written consent of The Current.

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

## American Idol comes to Saint Louis to look for hidden talents

*American Idol season 11 auditions kick off in Saint Louis among six cities selected across entire nation.*

**MINHO JUNG**  
News Editor

“American Idol” came to St. Louis seeking hidden talents on June 28 2011. This was the second visit since the 2004 audition where unknown blonde singer, Carrie Underwood, from Oklahoma tried out at the same venue. By the end of that year, she had become a superstar after winning the competition.

St. Louis was announced as the first audition city for the upcoming season 11 of American Idol. With that being said, Scottrade Center was packed with more than 10,000

a golden paper.

“I came from St. Louis, where I go to UMSL optometry school. My friend Angel, 14 years old, will have an audition today. I just came here to support her. [If she won the ticket,] I would be really happy for her because she wants it so bad.” Sarah Morris, participant, said.

Some participants came from much further away than St. Louis for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“We came from Kansas for this audition. It’s about six hours driving from there to here. The driving was boring, but I thought that if my daughter does not do it now, she probably will never do it.

“I figured why not. I thought it was once-a-lifetime- thing!”

-Aqira Foster

hopefuls on the audition day.

Participants, who were wearing wristbands after registering in the previous two days, waited their turn, practicing their performance in the halls.

“I have been here since five o’clock this morning. I haven’t gotten my audition yet. [I’m] still waiting. I have seen some really good singers, but it does not make me feel threatened. I think it eventually comes down to me.” Jessica Gregory, participant, said. “I would be really excited if I won the ticket to Hollywood.”

For this audition, singers performed in front of producers of the show instead of judges. Those participants who pass this first stage will be given an opportunity to perform again in front of the judges when they come back, which is later this summer. Only a small fraction of the participants got a golden paper, which is given to people who pass the audition. The audience applauded every time someone got

So it is like a now or never type thing,” Rebecca Whitely said. “She will be in the audition within a couple of hours. I’m so nervous.”

Some participants questioned the management of the event asking why they told people to come so early in the morning, although it was not necessary.

“[About the competition] I figured why not. I thought it was once-a-lifetime- thing! All in all, it was fun, even though I don’t like the fact that they told people to get here at 5 a.m. unnecessarily,” Aqira Foster, participant, said. “The whole thing is not done in a first-come-first-served way. It’s done by registration order. Pretty much they make you get here at 5 a.m. just to get a nice crowd shot. That’s pretty much all. There is no benefit for you to get there that early.”

The search for the next American Idol continues in seven other cities in the nation over this summer.

## WEATHER

MON. 99	TUES. 98	WED. 86	THURS. 86	FRI. 90	SAT. 91	SUN. 91
81	79	73	73	53	75	76

# New Smoke-Free Campus policy creates waves

**DAVID VON NORDHEIM**

Staff Writer

On New Year's Eve, 2011, the city of St. Louis introduced a new countywide non-smoking policy that had been in discussion for nearly two years. As smoking restrictions of this sort become increasingly commonplace in cities across the country, the University of Missouri-St. Louis has mirrored St. Louis County's new policy with a smoking ban of its own.

The new campus-wide policy, effective July 1, expands UMSL's previous smoking restrictions, a policy which had been in effect since 1991. The previous campus policy, which had remained relatively unchanged until the recent campus-wide ban, only barred the use of tobacco products within campus build-

"I think this is a change that was long overdue," Jacob Riess, senior, music, said. "I think that even though this decision might frustrate some students, it really puts the university on the cutting edge in terms of health and safety awareness."

"I really don't think it will be that difficult of a transition," Alex Hale, sophomore, biology, said. "So many other public places already have a ban on smoking. We've known about the dangers of secondhand smoke for decades, so it was really just a matter of time until something like this came along."

Other UMSL students, however, are somewhat skeptical about the university's readiness and ability to enforce the ban, speaking to the frustration of UMSL's many tobacco-using students, some of whom feel slighted by the new policy.

"I believe this not to be a restriction on smoking in actuality, just the end of

"I think this is a change that was long overdue."

- Jacob Riess

ings and facilities.

Previously, students and faculty could smoke in any open-air area on the university campus as long as they maintained a distance of ten feet from buildings. The new Smoke-Free Campus initiative broadens this restriction to apply to the entire UMSL campus, permitting smoking only within students' vehicles, provided the doors, windows, sunroof and other openings are closed.

This campus-wide smoking ban is hot off the heels of likeminded initiatives within St. Louis area colleges, including Washington University, which has had a non-smoking campus for several years, and Saint Louis University, which is considering similar campus-wide smoking restrictions as well.

Although UMSL's own initiative will certainly encounter some resistance among students, many UMSL students and faculty have a very optimistic outlook on the necessity and future success of the new smoking restrictions.

universities enabling it," Elliott Risch, junior, philosophy, said. "The real downfall of policies like these is that it flies in the face of public favor. No policy will stand if the will of those under the policy does not stand in support."

"It just seems like it was dropped on us without much warning," Matthew Plodzein, senior, communications, said. "I don't remember being given any opportunity to express my thoughts on the policy, and it seems that smokers, the only people who are really affected by the change, are being sort of marginalized."

Though the transition to a smoke-free UMSL cannot really be gauged so soon after its introduction, the polarizing opinions of UMSL students towards the ban certainly suggests interesting developments for the fall semester, when the returning students will truly be putting the new ban to the test.

## University of Missouri system cuts down economic development fund

*Board of Curators discuss a number of options to resolve the funding gap issue*

**MINHO JUNG**

News Editor

University of Missouri school system is slashing its \$5 million economic development fund almost in half in order to address the recent decision about the budget cut in higher education from the state government. University of Missouri system officials expected overall funding cuts in higher education due to the economic downturn. However, the recent decision about withholding from the system was unexpected.

"The governor assigned University of Missouri systems an extra \$4.4 million cut. That is called withholding. That is a one-time cut instead of a permanent cut, which nobody expected." James M. Krueger, Vice Chancellor of Managerial and Technological Services, said. "So we have to deal, at the systems level, with that additional \$4.4 million [withholding as well as permanent funding cut in higher education]."

Governor Jay Nixon's recent decision about a budget cut in higher education has created controversies since it withholds more money from four universities in University of Missouri system, University of Missouri in Columbia, Rolla, Kansas City and St. Louis, than most of the other state universities in Missouri. An average 5.5 percent increase in tuition fees of those four universities this year, which is more than the rate recommended by the state government, has been pointed out as a cause of the decision. Only Missouri Western State University was included for the budget cut along with the University of Missouri systems among state colleges.

"University of Missouri average tuition increase was 5.5 percent. The state wanted it to stay 5 percent or below." Krueger said.

Because Governor Nixon's extra cut left the University of Missouri system with a \$4.4 million gap in its budget, the system is struggling to come up with possible solutions to address this funding gap. Capping enrollment on in-state students, but not on out-of-state students who usually pay much more tuition, is considered as one of the options to solve this problem as well as student surcharges.

"Right now, the Board of Curators are discussing the number of options. The idea of potential caps is still out there. But it's not used at this time. It has been presented as one option for the future, but nothing has been decided." Krueger said.

Half of the funding gap will be covered by enterprise investment programs. The other half will be allocated by the extension, system office, university wide programs, and administrations of four universities in the system. Details about solutions have been discussed.

"[About the next year's possible tuition increase,] I think, at the system level, it may come into play or at least be considered," Krueger said.

Nixon said that he had to make cuts because the state budget became tight due to natural disasters which recently happened in Southeast Missouri and Joplin. He set aside \$25 million for each area for initial recovery.



Sculpture at the Saint Louis Zoo

JENNIFER MEAHAN / THE CURRENT

## College student's guide to not wasting summer in St. Louis

**GREG LAINE**

Staff Writer

Summertime is one of the most notorious times to be found at home on a nice weekend wasting the day away. Without the proper knowledge, all there is to do is waste time sitting around. Well waste no more time, here are a few things to do around the city this summer.

Fans of "The Amazing Race" hold on to your seats. This September, St. Louis is taking part in an event called "Urban Dare St. Louis." This one-day event will include all the elements of the TV show but set in downtown St. Louis.

The dare will start at Maggie O'Brien's at 2000 Market St. at about 11 am. With a prize of \$300 for first place and a possible \$5000 prize for the Super Dare winner, along with the adventure in the great outdoors, it seems well worth the \$90 dollar application fee.

Another well-known and primarily free attraction in St. Louis is the St. Louis Zoo. A beloved visiting spot for children and families of visitors and residents of St. Louis, the Zoo is a

brilliant idea for spending a summer morning, a day or an afternoon.

Open almost year-round, the Zoo offers a look at exotic animals from all over the world and the information to go with them, everything a young and upcoming zoologist would need to get started. Plus, general access to the Zoo is free - the only things that do cost are the places like the stingray exhibit, the sea lion show or the Emerson Children's Zoo.

While the Arch and the Zoo are staples of St. Louis, there are a few time-sensitive events to visit as well. Some of St. Louis' most popular venues will be electric with live entertainment from some very large name bands.

Followers of the show "American Idol" will be excited to know that the "American Idol" tour is heading to Scottrade Center on July 31. Featuring such talents as Casey Abrams, Haley Reinhart, and Jacob Lusk, the "Idol Live" tour is sure to be a promising display of talent.

Those more in tune with '70s rock will be sure to find the upcoming Journey concert to be an entertaining way to spend an evening. Coming

on July 27 at Verizon Amphitheater, tickets are still widely available. It would be a great treat for music lovers of all ages.

For fans of more modern rock, there are three major concerts coming to St. Louis this summer: Vans Warp Tour (August 3, Verizon Amphitheater), The Honda Civic Tour (August 19, Verizon Amphitheater), and The Rock Allegiance Tour (August 30, Family Arena). With all three concerts hitting St. Louis in August, starting with the Warp tour and ending with Rock Allegiance, the month promises to be a rock fan's dream.

There are a multitude of events and places available to visit to better spend a summer afternoon. For more information as well as ticket sales and other concerts this summer, visit [www.ticketsolutions.com/stlouis/concerts](http://www.ticketsolutions.com/stlouis/concerts). For more venues, attractions and upcoming events to see, [www.events.stltoday.com](http://www.events.stltoday.com) is a great place to start the search.

St. Louis has much to offer in the ways of entertainment. Do not let summer crawl by - enjoy St. Louis.

## 'Suburbia' is album of our generation

### MUSIC

The Wonder Years have been a growing name in the alternative music world. The alternative band brings a freeze of new talent into the music industry.

Making their mark since 2005, the band hit it big in January 2010 with "The Upsides," TWY's second full-length album. "The Upsides" pushed the Pennsylvania natives into the spotlight and nothing has been the same since.

The alternative world has since been impatiently awaiting their next release. After a year and a half, they produced "Suburbia: I've Given You All and Now I'm Nothing."

Debuting June 14, "Suburbia" hit it big and made an impact on the iTunes and Billboard charts. Selling almost 8,100 copies in the first week, "Suburbia" is still selling strong and with Warped Tour coming up, it will only grow more.

The album itself is a little different for TWY. "The Upsides" focused on the depression of lead singer Dan "Soupy" Campbell. "Suburbia" focuses on him trying to overcome his depression ("It's not about happiness/ it's about not letting sadness win").

However, despite the shift in mood, the album is a complete masterpiece in every sense. Further mastering their unique alternative sound, The Wonder Years have something that cannot be duplicated or even found in most other bands: passion.

The iTunes download of "Suburbia" features 13 tracks plus a bonus track and Digital Booklet. Each song is better than the next and will have most singing along by the third listen.

Starting off with "Came Out Swinging," the album hooks listeners. Speaking from Campbell's own break-up and confusion of where home really is, the song hits the hearts of anyone who has gone through a rough patch. Combining the driving melodies and heartfelt lyrics that could only come from personal experience, "Came Out Swinging" is easily one of the Top 3 songs on the album.

Joining "Came Out Swinging" in the Top Three is also "Don't Let Me Cave In." It is another emotional song that features beautiful melodies, amazing drum work and the emotional trials of Soupy once again. Using references that have been mentioned in "The Upsides," the song creates an almost personal feeling for fans that have grown to love that album as well.

"Summers in PA" easily tops the list. Fast-paced and extremely catchy, it will easily wear out any repeat button. Give "Summers in PA" 30 seconds and it will have the listener up and out of any seat. Using references that seem to define not only summers in Pennsylvania but Missouri as well, the lyrics will easily find their way into any drunken night. ("We ended up busted, broken, and choking down a Grand Slam/ I can't think of a better way for the night to end").

Joining the rest of the alternative music scene, The Wonder Years will be making their appearance at this year's Warped Tour. Easily one of the most anticipated bands to play, it is easy to see that these boys have talent that fans crave more of. Purchase "Suburbia: I've Given You Everything and Now I'm Nothing" and it will easily be one's most played album of the year.

- Janaca Scherer

## Ascend to bliss with 'Ascension'

### VIDEO GAMES

Imagine a world where shuffling decks for a card or board game is no more. Imagine a world where game pieces do not go missing and no one has to be "the banker."

Digital board games are here, and they want to play. Say hello to its latest offering "Ascension: Chronicle of the Godslayer."

"Ascension" is a fantastic deck-building game with combat mechanics. Think "Magic: The Gathering" except not as expensive, life-consuming or social-life destroying. In fact, it was created by former MTG world champion Justin Gary.

Since its release last year, the card game has been growing in popularity all across the world.

Hence the excitement when Incinerator Studios announced that they had partnered with Gary and the game's publisher, Gary Games, to bring Ascension to the iOS platform. Unfortunately, there was a little cause for worry. Board games on the App Store sadly end up in one of three categories: most are passable adaptations, some are absolutely god-awful, and a rare few are outright excellent.

On top of that, "Ascension" is Incinerator's first iOS app. Of course, that is not necessarily a detriment: after all, The Coding Monkey's first iOS app was "Carcassonne" and the level of love and polish it displays has become the benchmark for successful digital board games.

Luckily, all fears have been allayed. Ascension's iOS version is a masterwork, the perfect marriage of a beautiful user interface with functionality and performance.

For starters, it is available for all iOS devices. That means that even older devices like the iPod Touch 2nd Gen can still play it, which is fantastic. The app itself is universal, meaning it contains both a version that works on the iPhone/iPod screen as well as the iPad's.

The iPad visuals are lush and gorgeous, and while the iPhone/iPod version is admittedly a bit scrunched due to the smaller screen, it is still serviceable. Incinerator thoughtfully included a card gallery so that game artist Eric Sabee's work can be properly displayed (and the cards examined up close for greater strategizing).

And that gameplay! The same quick-playing strategy from the physical version is immaculately retained in the digital one. The rules are easy to learn, complex to master and best of all, there is an in-game tutorial that lets the player learn by doing instead of telling.

Awesomely enough, Ascension features not only two levels of artificial intelligence difficulty to play against but also local pass-and-play multiplayer as well as asynchronous (turn-based) online play.

What is even better is that asynchronous games can actually turn into live games if both players are online at the same time. The fact that this app had all this functionality in it at launch is a testament to Incinerator Studios' abilities and should be enthusiastically commended!

As of this writing, Ascension is being featured as one of Apple's "New & Noteworthy" apps, which is a special honor to the game's popularity.

Indeed, the high regard in which digital board gamers hold the Ascension app is a testament to how badly deck-building games are desired on the iOS platform (as well as the great game itself). Hopefully, the success of Ascension will spur the makers of other great deck building games like "Dominion" and "Thunderstone" to create digital versions.

Luckily, Incinerator is working on the iOS implementation of the popular "Summoner Wars" card game. There is also hope that they will be releasing an update or in-app purchase to unlock the promo cards and newly-released "Return of the Fallen" expansion.

After waiting months for the iOS version of Ascension, fans have their dearest wish: a more-than-competent app with a very bright future.

A+ - Andrew Seal

# Sarah Jaffe sways Off-Broadway

## MUSIC

Last Tuesday, singer Sarah Jaffe and the band Centro-Matic performed at Off-Broadway, a music venue near downtown. The set began with Jaffe's band a little past nine p.m. followed by Centro-Matic around thirty p.m.

Sarah Jaffe and her crew hail from the far southern reaches of the states, all the way from Denton, Texas. Jaffe's musical stylings focus heavily upon folky, feel-good beats with primarily soft lyrical and musical tones. Her band does an excellent job of blending, as lyrics were rarely covered up by an excess of instrumental noise.

The success of Jaffe's

music was evident upon the faces of the crowd that night. Every turn and glance around the venue portrayed content, smiling faces, swaying and dancing to the sweet, liquid, lyrical love Jaffe's band poured from their hearts. With titles such as "Clementine," Jaffe's band managed to build up an air of calm, just before their touring partners, Centro-Matic, took the stage.

Not to be shown up by their peers, Centro-Matic took the stage by storm. Also from Denton, Texas, Centro-matic boasts an entirely different style of music from Jaffe. They focus upon a combination of country and alternative beats, running everywhere from smooth to bouncy.

While the audience was certainly enlivened by the songs tracks laid down by Centro-Matic at Off-Broadway, the band itself had a great deal of energy, as well. From flashy motions involving the guitars and basses, to the perpetual bouncing occasional enacted by lead vocalist Will Johnson, the band portrayed their own passion right alongside the dance floor full of fans.

Off-Broadway itself is a very pleasant environment. The stage is softly lit, and the entire venue is kept under a low lighting as well. This allows for a more conducive environment to strangers dancing near each other, as the lighting actually allows for vision beyond a field of three feet (a problem with

some other venues).

To top this off, for those not interested in dancing, but just wanting a more relaxed viewing and listening experience, an open balcony sits behind the dance floor giving a perfect, front-on view of the stage. The balcony is adorned with a variety of couches, coffee tables, chairs and stools, all of which are cozy options for those with two left feet, a significant other to cuddle with or simply wishing to relax.

As for sound quality, while there are certainly nicer venues in the world, Off-Broadway does just fine. Acoustics are pleasant and crisp, and nowhere in the venue is the sound unbearable or difficult to discern. Naturally, getting right up on the stage may hurt the ears of some but this is to be expected.

Prices at Off-Broadway are reasonable as well. Beverages will not burn a massive hole in the pockets of concert-goers and the door prices are more than worthy of the acts brought to the stage on a weekly basis.

For those unfamiliar with Off-Broadway, it is a cozy venue off of Lemp Avenue, located just south of downtown St. Louis, near the Anheuser-Busch Brewery. Off-Broadway has been home to hundreds of shows over the years, and caters to local as well as out-of-state musicians, ranging from the well-known to the just-hatched. Those looking for a good deal on a wonderful night of music should give Off-Broadway a look, or two, or three, at [offbroadwaystl.com](http://offbroadwaystl.com). At roughly \$10 a show, and boasting generous drink prices to boot, Off-Broadway provides musical experiences any audiophile would appreciate.

- Matthew B. Poposky



Sarah Jaffe at Off-Broadway.

JENNIFER MEAHAN/ THE CURRENT

## LATEST + GREATEST

### Summer Concerts Calendar

*Subject to change.*

*All prices are for advanced tickets.*

#### July 12:

Hellogoodbye at the Firebird, \$15-\$17

#### July 15:

The Get Up Kids at the Firebird, \$18.50-\$20

#### July 16:

Underoath at Pop's, \$17.50

#### July 19:

New Kids on the Block and Backstreet Boys at Scottrade Center, \$29.50-\$89.50

#### July 19:

Ted Nugent at Pop's, \$28

#### July 20:

Streetlight Manifesto and Reel Big Fish at The Pageant, \$25

#### July 21:

We Are the Union, I Call Fives at the Fubar, \$10

#### July 23:

Kottonmouth Kings at Pop's, \$15

#### July 25:

Anabor, Valencia at the Firebird, \$10

#### July 26:

The Dear Hunter, Kay Kay and His Weathered Underground at the Firebird, \$12-\$14

#### July 27:

Journey at Verizon Amphitheater, \$43-\$209

#### July 3:

Warped Tour at Verizon Amphitheater, \$55-\$171

#### August 6:

Ludo, Spark the Rescue, Tommy and the High Pilots at the Pageant, \$15

#### August 10:

In Fear and Faith, Vanna, and A Loss For Words at the Fubar, \$13

#### August 10:

Tally Hall at the Firebird, \$12.00

#### August 19:

The Honda Civic Tour at Verizon Amphitheater, \$28-\$171

#### August 20:

Katy Perry at Scottrade Center, \$45

#### August 30:

Rock Allegiance Tour at Family Arena, \$44-\$335



Optimus Prime in TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON, from Paramount Pictures. Photo credit: Courtesy of Paramount Pictures. © 2011 Paramount Pictures Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Hasbro, TRANSFORMERS and all related characters are trademarks of Hasbro. © 2011 Hasbro. All Rights Reserved.

## ‘Transformers: Dark of the Moon’ surpasses sequel

### MOVIES

“Transformers: Dark of the Moon” pulls out the stops for movie-goers. The audience is taken on yet another ride with the frantic Shia LaBeouf and his friends, the Autobots, as they try to fight off old enemies and uncover a NASA conspiracy.

The movie gives off a mixture of “Armageddon” meets “War of the Worlds” with trendy automobiles, but better. Forget Netflix, this one needs to be seen on the big screen.

This third installment of the Transformers franchise opens with a recently graduated Sam Witwicky (LaBeouf) and his avid search for a full-time job before his parents return

from vacation. Living with his new flame Carly (Rosie Huntington-Whiteley), he gets forcefully sucked back into the madness of Sector 7.

After talks of the previous installment failing to please the movie-goer, director Michael Bay gave Transformers an extensive make-over.

The first change to come with the film was the highly-publicized departure of its female lead, Meghan Fox. Replaced by former Victoria’s Secret model Huntington-Whiteley, fans were skeptical of the model’s transition into the storyline along with her ability to act. While it can be confirmed that she does have an acting bone somewhere in her body, she

is well aware of her actual purpose in the film.

It is easy to condemn Bay for his not-so-subtle motive but he did nothing different than what a “Sexist Hollywood” would have done. It would have been an interesting choice to ask the public who they wanted to see as Sam’s new love interest but likely the male population will have no complaints.

The second change involved time. The character of Sam was aged by about three years in order to get the character out of college. The first reaction is to complain about how his most precious years were stolen from the audience but what was really stolen? Three years of keg parties? Plus, it makes the

whereabouts of Mikaela Banes, Fox’s character, a little more legit. Well, as legit as it can get.

The third change in the film is the reason why this film is highly recommended for those who have been following the franchise. Everything is bigger and better.

Aside from its intro, Bay has something going on in every scene. One of the best scenes, along with many greats, involved the character Sam defying the laws of gravity in a highway car chase.

And brownie points go to production for choosing a recognizable location - Chicago - to shoot the majority of the film. Viewing it from the Midwest while it takes place

in the Midwest is just pure fun.

The only noticeable problem with the movie may lead to the demise of its fourth installment. All of the bells and whistles were pulled out for the betterment of this film.

So, unless Bay has a really unique storyline on the next run, he may disappoint his audience next time. Fortunately, talks of a fourth have yet to come, so in the meantime, he can bask in the glory of what is currently playing.

Unless one needs that extra element of adventure, there is no need to pay extra to view this movie in 3D. The film is just as thrilling in 2D.

A- - Ashley Atkins



A scene from CITY OR LIFE AND DEATH.

IMAGE COURTESY OF KINO INTERNATIONAL

## 'City Of Life And Death' searing, first-rate Chinese WWII historical drama

### MOVIES

"City of Life and Death" is a near-perfect, searing Chinese war movie about the infamous Japanese occupation of Nanjing, pre-World War II. In English, Chinese and Japanese and with stunning wide-screen, black and white cinematography that evokes archival war footage, it is both a striking historic epic and a more personal testament to the horrors of war.

"City of Life and Death" is as good a war film as any ever made.

The film depicts the infamous event known as "The Rape of Nanjing," when the Imperial Japanese army conquered the Chinese Republic's then-capital city. The Japanese killed perhaps 300,000 soldiers and civilians and committed atrocities including gang rapes, in just

six weeks. It was one of the most shocking incidents of the war, a searing memory for China.

While the film has powerful battle action, it also gives a personal view of events through the eyes of a handful of individuals on both sides.

On the Japanese side, events are seen through the eyes of a homesick young soldier, Kadokawa (Hideo Nakaizumi), troubled by all he sees. His story includes his brutal commander Ida (Ryu Kohata) and a young Japanese "comfort woman" named Yuriko (Yuko Miyamoto).

The Chinese story has several threads. One centers on a brave young soldier, Lu Jianxiong (Liu Ye), who leads a band of resisters, including the more fearful Shunzi (Yisui Zhao) and child soldier Xiaodouzi (Bin Liu). Another thread focuses on the Chinese civilians working with the

international community in Nanjing. They include Christian teacher Miss Jiang (Yuanyuan Gao) and Mr. Tang (Fan Wei), secretary to Nazi Party representative John Rabe (John Paisley).

Impressive acting from the appealing cast makes this drama as moving and riveting as it is horrifying and soul-grIPPING. These individual stories are interwoven; but, unlike the hues on screen, nothing is black and white in this dangerous, ever-shifting world.

Director Lu Chuan did extensive historical research, drawing on diaries and correspondence of eyewitnesses and interviews with survivors, on both the Chinese and Japanese sides. The events took place in 1937, before the Nazi invasion of Poland, but foreshadow the genocide and inhumanity of the worldwide war to come.

Cao Yu's sharp black-

and-white cinematography gives the look of archival footage. Wide-screen images add gravitas and the epic scope needed for this subject. Extensive use of hand-held cameras gives footage a documentary feel.

The film is both epic and human in scale, contrasting convincing battle action and sweeping vistas. The director employed 30,000 extras, which made for remarkable action sequences, but there are also intimate moments of human emotion and anguish. In one scene, Japanese soldiers rush into a half-bombed church expecting to confront the Chinese army but find it packed with frightened civilians, mostly women and children.

Locations were carefully chosen to recreate the per-Communists capital. Historical recreations with top-notch production values give the film the look of reality. One can feel the cold

the characters endure in every frame of the chillingly desolate landscape.

Watching this film makes clear why so many Chinese hate the Japanese, but the director wisely chose to balance the human perspective of events. Presenting the horrific events through human eyes on both sides underlines the toxic nature of war itself. Like other great WWII films, such as "Iwo Jima" and "Schindler's List," this drama captures the wartime unraveling of human values and the release of inhuman evil. But ultimately, "City of Life and Death" stands on its own as a masterpiece of cinema. "City of Life and Death," in English, Chinese and Japanese with subtitles, opened July 8 at the Tivoli Theater.

A - *Cate Marquis*

## UMSL graduate earns Emerson Award

**ASHLEY ATKINS**  
Features Editor

Dr. Kristy Tucciarone, assistant teaching professor of media studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, co-chair of the ADDY'S (the toughest advertising competition in the world), faculty advisor to the student advertising club Ad Corps-A Student Chapter of the American Advertising Federation, and devoted mom, was honored this summer with the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award.

*The Current: Where did you seek a higher education and what did you study?*

Kristy Tucciarone: I attended UMSL for my undergraduate degree and majored in communication with a writing certificate.

I attended Lindenwood University for my master's and majored in corporate and industrial communication; and my doctorate degree (Ph.D.) is from UMSL in educational leadership and policy studies.

I was named "Outstanding Doctoral Student 2004-2005."

*TC: You used to work for an ad agency. For how long did you work for this agency and what was the experience like?*

KT: I worked for an agency called CUDA Communications (after

barracuda). The agency was small, so I was able to work in both advertising and public relations. During my time at the agency, some of my duties included: planning grand openings, buying media, designing and implementing employee incentive programs, trafficking accounts to meet deadlines, and communicating with external customers to build a relationship between the customer and the brand. I was at CUDA Communications for about two years. After CUDA Communications, I worked for, at the time, the world's largest direct marketers, DIMAC Direct. I worked for DIMAC for about two years.

*TC: What was the most important lesson you learned in the business of professional advertising?*

KT: Never stop learning and always build strong relationships with your clients.

*TC: Do you still apply the methods you used at the agency to your work with UMSL? How so?*

KT: I apply the standard principles; principles which have been around for over 100 years. However, with emerging technologies, there have been additions to what I teach such as writing for the web or social media.

In fact, I just recently added a new course to the advertising curriculum called Advertising and Social Media.

*TC: What do you like the most about your position at UMSL?*

KT: Hands down - the student body, because the students are driven, motivated, hard-working and committed to their studies. They understand how to balance school and work.

*TC: What was your reaction to the Emerson award?*

KT: Pure honor, because the award was initiated by students, faculty members, community leaders and alumni.

*TC: What does that award represent to you?*

KT: The award represents the value I bring to higher education and students' lives. What an awesome job; I get to touch so many lives.

*TC: Do you have any future goals involving your career?*

KT: I hope to continue my educational career at UMSL and continue to build the advertising program.

# Features



Dr. Kristy Tucciarone, assistant teaching professor, media studies.

Photo courtesy of K. Tucciarone

*TC: What is your own personal goal for your students who will graduate from UMSL in the near future?*

KT: Using the words of David Ogilvy, I hope my students are "ambitious and don't bunt."

*TC: What professional advice would you like to share with them?*

KT: As my students know,

I tell them to get in the game and don't wait for graduation to get involved.

For example, I encourage my students to join professional networks, attend conferences and mingle with professionals, and always shake a hand because that "hand" may be your link to your career and beyond. Thus, many of the ad students are members of the AAF and AAF-Ad Club St. Louis.





The Touhill is one of the many places on UMSL's campus to enjoy the arts and entertainment. The Touhill holds events such as ballets, UMSL's band concerts, operas, etc.

NIKKI VAHLE / THE CURRENT

## UMSL presents varied entertainment options to students

**CATE MARQUIS**  
A&E Editor

Summer is a quiet time for arts and entertainment on the University at Missouri - St. Louis campus. But during the school year, the campus provides its community with a number of options suitable for a wide variety of tastes and interests.

There are professional performances such as plays, concerts, opera and dance by an array of international artists. Art and photography exhibitions along with historical and cultural exhibits are often hosted by expert lecturers.

There are field trips and activities like paintball and intramural sports. Popular entertainment is represented through comedy shows, magic acts, pop concerts and movies. And annually, the campus hosts special events such as Mirthday.

Many of these arts and entertainment offerings are free to students or have reduced pricing for UMSL students. However, finding these events can be somewhat challenging. Here is a quick guide to finding arts and entertainment on the UMSL campus.

*The Current* is a good place to find out about campus Arts and Entertainment. Every week, the What's Happening page lists campus events for the week. The College of Fine Arts and Communications page (<http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/cofac>) is one of the best places to find out art on campus. It has links to the campus art galleries and fine arts departments.

The biggest performance venue on campus is the beautiful Touhill Performing Arts Center ([www.touhill.org](http://www.touhill.org)), located just north of the Millennium Student Center. It offers professional performance, student productions and hosts the annual St. Louis Jazz Festival. Dance St. Louis, which brings the best in international dance companies to St. Louis, presents most of its program at the Touhill, including its annual "Spring to Dance" festival.

Graphic and visual arts are also abundant on campus. Gallery 210 ([www.umsl.edu/~gallery](http://www.umsl.edu/~gallery)), located near the North Campus Metrolink station, has a national reputation. It offers exhibits by top artists in painting, sculpture, mixed media, video art and photography.

Gallery Visio ([www.umsl.edu/~galvisio/events.html](http://www.umsl.edu/~galvisio/events.html)) is the student-run campus art gallery, located on the lower level of the MSC, which also features a variety of art exhibits.

The other galleries are Gallery FAB, in the Fine Arts Building, the Public Policy Research Centers' photography gallery ([http://pprc.umsl.edu/base\\_pages/gallery/gallery.htm#Current](http://pprc.umsl.edu/base_pages/gallery/gallery.htm#Current)) and the Mercantile Library (<http://www.umsl.edu/mercantile>), located in the lowest level of the campus' Thomas Jefferson Library, which hosts exhibits of art and historical artifacts.

There are several campus organizations presenting arts and entertainment programs. The Center of International Studies' Performing Arts series ([www.umsl.edu/services/cis/calendar\\_flier.html](http://www.umsl.edu/services/cis/calendar_flier.html)) offers music, dance and theater performances.

They have cultural programs for Greek, Irish, Japanese and German studies. They also present the annual Africa World Documentary Film Festival and the International Photo Contest.

UMSL offers plenty of lighter entertainment throughout the year. Student Life's University Program Board ([http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/upboard/about\\_us.htm](http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/upboard/about_us.htm)) holds a number of fun events, like outdoor movies, concerts, comedy and magic acts, often at the Pilot House in the lower level of the MSC.

Campus Rec has intramural sports teams ([www.umsl.edu/services/recsport](http://www.umsl.edu/services/recsport)) and RecTrekks ([www.umsl.edu/services/recsport/rectrekks/rectrekks.htm](http://www.umsl.edu/services/recsport/rectrekks/rectrekks.htm)) are off-campus outings, to try things like zipline and laser tag.

# Opinions

## OUR OPINION

### Budget crisis needs solutions, receives partisan demagoguery

The economy may be on the road to recovery following the recent global economic recession, but we're not out of the woods just yet. The financial framework of the country remains fragile and jobs are still an issue. The aspect of the economy that has most people talking at the moment, however, is the budget and the deficit. The budget battle in Congress has been long and bloody with no signs of either side giving ground; while everyone can agree that the budget deficit is a problem, no one can seem to agree on the best way to fix it.

Not to say there aren't a number of ideas, but none of the ideas currently being discussed have managed to generate a consensus, whether due to flaws of ideology or feasibility. Spending cuts are a popular refrain, especially among a certain subset of the political body. It's true; the country is spending too much money, but to eliminate as much spending as some have suggested would be counterproductive and ultimately harmful. Government programs and government spending generate a substantial number of jobs in a wide range of fields in this country, from construction to administration to health care, and advocates of cuts have proven unwilling to allow those cuts to extend to the true budget suckers,

most notable of which is the military and our ongoing war effort. Spending cuts akin to those being proposed by conservatives and Tea Partiers will cost jobs, and without robust job growth, the economy will remain perpetually stuck in a rut.

Tax raises and a hike to the debt ceiling aren't the complete answer either, however. The former especially should be a part of the conversation; it's no coincidence that America's economy was the most robust and fastest-growing at a time when tax rates, particularly for the wealthy, were much higher than they were now. While a tax hike would bolster the revenue stream, though, it would not do anything to address the underlying issues that brought us into this situation to begin with, and neither would a raise to the debt ceiling. The latter especially would be little more than a financial band-aid that does little but encourage the economic movers and shakers of this country to continue in their destructive ways, that had disastrous consequences for many people.

So far we've covered what won't work. In that case, then, what will? A combination of the two – limited tax raises coupled with limited spending cuts – wouldn't be a bad start, provided those cuts were made in the right places. It would also help if the entire

issue hadn't been made into fodder for ideological arguments in Congress (not that that would have been easy for our current crop of politicians). Failing that, instead of limiting ourselves to the pet project of one political party or the other, it behooves us to explore all potential options, leaving nothing off the table. What about tax reform? It's common knowledge that our current tax code is broken, riddled with loopholes large enough for a millionaire to sail through on his yacht. Instead of raising taxes, start closing these loopholes, especially in the corporate tax codes. This would provide a shot in the arm to the revenue stream while not representing an actual tax increase, potentially satisfying both liberals and conservatives (or not, given the current partisan spirit pervading Washington). It can be hard to tell what they will agree on, which only makes it that much more important to paint ideas in a practical rather than ideological light). A problem such as this budget crisis deserves a complex, carefully considered solution, and once again our elected officials are letting us down.

*Unsigned editorials reflect the majority viewpoint of The Current's Editorial Board: Matthew Poposky, Minho Jung, Ashley Atkins, Cate Marquis, Nikki Vahle, Jeremy Zschau and Janaca Scherer.*

## OUT OF LEFT FIELD

### Homeless deserve understanding, not contempt

If you have spent any time at all walking the streets in the city of St. Louis, you have probably seen a homeless person, whether it someone standing at an intersection with a hand-drawn sign asking for charity or a person walking the streets with their few worldly possessions in bags because they have nowhere else to go.

Homelessness is a universal problem, and it is a problem that the more fortunate of us have, by and large, learned to ignore. How many times have you seen someone simply walk by a homeless person on the street without even looking at them? How many times have you yourself done the same thing? Just about everyone has at least once, whether they are willing to admit it or not.

However good we have gotten at ignoring the problem, however, the simple fact is that it is going to get worse before it gets better. Given the state of the economy, more and more people are finding themselves out of work, and with unemployment benefits drying up, it can be a struggle for the long-term unemployed to even keep a roof over their heads. As a result, the ranks of the homeless are growing, which means more and more people are likely to encounter a homeless person at some point in their daily routine.

The issue is this: deep down, people just do not like the homeless.

When asked to form a

concept of what the "average" homeless person looks like, most people will come up with something like the following: a mentally troubled person wearing dirty, ragged clothes babbling incoherently as they push an old shopping cart or haul around bags full of junk. They spend what little money they have on drugs or alcohol, and are just as liable to attack you as they are to accept your help.

With this image in mind, it is not hard to imagine why, most times, passersby will simply walk past such a person, pretending not to hear their pleas for charity. This is not the worst indignity that many homeless drifters have to deal with, however.

Homeless people are often rushed out of restaurants or other businesses, even when they are paying customers, because of some irrational, nebulous fear that they might cause some kind of scene or that their presence could somehow cause distress to other customers.

However, this perception is, in most cases, untrue. While there certainly are a fair number of indigents who actually do, in part or in full, match the description given above, many of today's homeless are average people, hit hard by the economic recession, who, for whatever reason, are struggling to get their feet back under them and who want nothing more than to be treated the same as any other person you might meet.



Jeremy Zschau

It is all too easy for someone who still has their house and their job to dismiss the problem, to say that these people are bad workers or that they are not looking for work hard enough.

The refrain is different from person to person, but the song remains the same: if you are homeless, that must mean you are defective at best, and dangerous at worst. This is, however, a harmful misconception.

Long-term jobless and homeless people are in a bad enough situation to begin with without having to weather the misplaced scorn of people who were lucky enough to be dealt a kinder hand by fate.

This is not to say that people should start falling over themselves to offer charity to every random person they run into on the street.

However, it does not cost anything to show a little basic compassion – especially when you consider that but for a quirk of fate, it could be you in their shoes.

*Jeremy Zschau is the Opinions Editor and a columnist for The Current.*

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

## SCIENCE MATTERS

## Science offers reasons to shop local farmers' markets

There are plenty of reasons to shop at your friendly local farmers' market, many of them delicious. However, there are also science reasons to visit farmers' markets. Here are a few.

1) Health benefits of fresher foods: Although there are few scientific studies on the public health impact of a local, sustainable food system, some health benefits of eating local are obvious. Firstly, fresh foods have more nutrients.

Foods lose their nutritional quality as they age, so the fresher the better. We are lucky because we are in the middle of farmland with farms nearby in both Missouri and Illinois. Other cities do not have the variety of local foods we can get.

Shopping at farmers' markets is enjoyable and relaxing, which is also good for your health. Surveying all the appealing produce can increase the amount of fresh foods consumed.

Seeing the extensive variety of fruits and vegetables as they change during the season will quite likely encourage you to try something new, increasing the variety of what you eat, also a healthy thing.

Locally-grown foods may mean less pesticide use. Many are organic. At the farmers' market, one can ask the farmers about that. Of course, one wants to shop at a real farmers' market, one with real farmers, not just people re-selling food from a wholesaler.

The area's most famous farmers' market, Soulard, actually has few real farmers. Lucky for this campus, the nearby Ferguson Farmers Market has lots of farmers.

Besides fruits and vegetables, the market also sells eggs, honey and meats. It is located north of campus, at 20 S. Florissant Road, and is open Saturday mornings, April to October. The website (<http://fergmarket.com>) has lists of produce in season, events and directions.

2) Environmental benefits of locally-grown and organic foods: Buying locally grown foods means saving on energy and reducing greenhouse gases, because it does not have to be trucked from distant places, even other countries. Buying organic is a bonus, since chemical fertilizer and pesticides are largely petroleum products. Run-off from big farm operations contributes significantly to water pollution.

Buying at a farmers' market encourages sustainable farming practices that are better for cleaner water and air. Keeping farmland as farmland, instead of developing it for housing or retail, reduces environmental degradation.

Farmers' markets are a good place to find grass-fed beef, a most environmentally friendly way to feed cattle - and actually the food they prefer to eat. Cows are adapted to eat grass, converting a plant food we cannot digest into something we can eat.

Feeding cow's corn, something people can eat, is less energy-efficient and large confirmed feeding operations generate waste and pollution. Grass-fed beef is leaner meat, which is healthier too. Free-range chickens may sound fancy but it lets the chickens eat what they prefer and you would rather not eat - bugs. Again, that is energy-efficient.



Cate Marquis

3) Economic benefits: Economics is a science, so let us count economic benefits as well.

Money spent with local farmers stays here, helps keep family farms in business and keeps farmland productive rather than converting to developments, which goes back to the greenhouse gases issue.

Local produce, especially when in season, is surprisingly affordable - one cuts out the middleman (with their extra layer of profit), so shopping at the farmers' market saves money.

Our current food system is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. As such, and detrimentally so, large-scale food production means gasoline for long-distance transportation and petroleum-based fertilizers and pesticides.

Produce is picked early and bred more for durability than nutrition. These big food production operations add layers of cost and often deliver high-calorie, nutrient-poor food.

Shopping at the farmers markets makes sense for health, environment and economic reasons. Help support a return to concerns which are beneficial to the entirety of the community.

*Cate Marquis is Arts and Entertainment Editor and a columnist for The Current.*

## POP CULTURE WITH POPOSKY

## The future cometh! Prepare by dealing with the present

Summer, summer, summer: this summer seems endless. Of course, come fall, everybody will have the same complaints, but for the season in question, rather than any other.

Fall is too long, winter too drawn out, spring never passes swiftly enough, and summer just drags on. This is yet another pattern in popular culture which needs addressing: the inability of today's youth to accept and enjoy the time they are living within.

Everybody has been guilty of this on some small scale or other. Life just does not seem right and something on the horizon (be it a day, week, month, etc. away) seems far more appealing than anything in the meantime.

A "natural" solution to this frame of mind is to begin obsessing over the future occurrence, to the extent that individuals forget to live in the present.

However, this very frame of mind is far more dangerous than any temporary depression of mood which may be experienced due to focusing momentarily upon the negative events currently occurring in one's life.

Take, for instance, the average person who becomes obsessed with a future event in life. They forget to live their lives effectively due to this obsession. That usually is not where this mindset stops, however.

Especially when given

longer time periods of overly-focusing upon a future event, some people actually become further depressed by the wanting of said event than they would have been had they actually focused upon the negatives in their lives to begin with.

Often, this pattern of behavior emerges when an individual feels overly stressed by one or more influences in their daily life. These stressors can be anything, and they vary from person to person. It may be a significant other or it may be school.

This stress may be caused by anything: as simple as family or work. It may be politics, or it may be a drop in the stock market. Whatever the source, it is almost always the suffering of something important to said person which leads to these phases of apathy towards the present and overly-focusing upon the future.

The problem with this way of life really is quite simple: it leads to the furthering of the problems that already existed, more times than not. Granted, for those things entirely beyond one's control, this may not be true. In most situations, however, this concept rings clear as day.

Work is stressful? Be apathetic at work and focus on that new videogame at the end of the month! Oh, now work has noticed immense slips in performance, and wants to fire the person. This may be an extreme example,



Matthew B. Poposky

but those tend to be necessary to get points across.

There are so many better ways to deal with stress in life than to try and pretend it does not exist in lieu of a future focus. Exercise, reading, writing, singing, dancing, playing a game, socializing; these are just a few examples of productive ways one can spend time in order to relieve stress. Stressed times in one's life are not the appropriate moments in which to give up on life until something better comes along. Instead, make life better through actions.

The basic message here really is to just focus upon the present. The future is going to come, no matter what, and it will bring stressors of its own.

Do not allow those stressors to appear when a mountain already exists: deal with stress appropriately, do not simply shove it aside and forget it exists. Other choices oft cause later consequences.

*Matthew B. Poposky is Editor-in-Chief and a columnist for The Current.*

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**  
Let us know at [www.thecurrent-online.com](http://www.thecurrent-online.com)

# Point/Counterpoint



*Are current attempts to block pirated files effective?*

## **PROTECT IP will fail artists just as every other attempt at anti-piracy has before.**

In the economic turmoil that we currently live in, cheap is a key word in almost everything that we buy. So why would the American population not take it one step further and just take things for free?

Piracy is growing ever more popular. Movies, music, TV shows, computer programs: they are all free for the taking if you know where to go on the Internet.

However, “the man” wishes to take away the privileges that a fair few people have worked towards. In an attempt to protect major corporations from millions of dollars in profit loss, the United States Congress and the President have been working to put the Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property (PROTECT IP) Act into full effect.

The PROTECT IP Act will, in essence, block all access to pirating websites, focusing largely on those based outside of the United States.

Sites like The Pirate Bay, Bitjunkie, torrentz

and Openbittorrent will be blocked from use by all American based computers.

However, the PROTECT IP Act is a simple solution to something that is much larger, more in depth and more complex than those sitting in Congress could ever assume.

Blocking these sites will only make it more of a challenge for pirates to find ways to get free movies, music and TV shows to others. After all, were we not raised in a society that requires us to overcome our greatest defeats to produce something better than we could ever imagine previously?

The Act is, in essence, an infringement upon free speech as well. Limiting the choice of Internet websites greatly injures the American ideal of free expression, especially on the Internet.

By blocking these sites, the American government is only condoning what the Chinese government is doing to their people.

Aside from much of the American population opposing the bill, major corporations like Yahoo!, Google,

eBay and American Express all oppose the bill.

Eric Schmidt, executive chairman for Google has stated that his company will fight the act if it is put into affect.

Sure, pirating is bad. Anyone who downloads a free song or movie will tell you that it is not the best idea in the world. But the corporations that are fighting for the PROTECT IP Act are just whining about their cuts in profits.

Maybe it would be a good idea to stop crying your eyes out about all the money you’re losing to downloads and cut the prices of your product. You’re not the only ones hurting in the money department.

Is pirating a problem? Yes. Is the PROTECT IP Act the solution we need to stop it? No. Perhaps this once, the old guys who sit up on Capitol Hill should realize that just blocking these sites is only an invitation for the pirating community to fight back harder. Find a smarter way to fight media pirating; those present do not work.

## **Rally for the creative, the artists; PROTECT IP to aid new artists in growth.**

Make no mistake: the Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property (PROTECT IP) Act is the best thing to happen to independent artists since the creation of YouTube and the Internet.

This Act isn’t about the thug tactics of the Recording Industry Association of America or the Motion Picture Association of America; it’s not about the decline of CD sales or about record executives getting richer and richer at the cost of their recording artists.

It’s about ensuring that the people that create unique, enjoyable content are able to do so— and the best way to do that is to make sure they get paid for their creations.

In a nutshell, the PROTECT IP Act’s intent is to derail those who would willingly access illegal pirating websites, especially those located outside the borders of the United States. Essentially, the act gives the US Department of Justice the ability to get a court order against potentially offending websites

(such as thepiratebay.org) and have access to them technically disabled.

Some say the act is a violation of free speech rights; after all, the U. S. government is out to repress free thinkers and speakers, right? (Never mind that the Supreme Court just favored the abominable Westboro Baptist Church, proving that it values free speech above all else).

But in reality, the act is clearly not. Indeed, it actually helps ensure the creative freedoms and free speech rights of content creators like independent artists and performers.

The Internet can be both a blessing and a curse to up-and-coming artists.

Take geek folk singer Jonathan Coulton. He was an up-and-coming independent musician who managed to quit his day job as a software engineer in order to focus on writing and performing his music.

Was, that is, until he was tapped by Valve Software to pen the now-iconic closing song from the first “Portal” video game. After that, Coul-

ton’s popularity exploded. His music is all over the place: reputable places like YouTube, DailyMotion and Vimeo, but also all over the seedy parts of the Internet like 4Chan, The PirateBay, ISOHunt and Demonoid.

Thankfully, Coulton’s fans seem to have taken a liking to actually supporting him and his music. But imagine if things had been different.

If his fans were rampant music pirates, stealing his music from a torrent site and never paying for it, he would never have been popular, and never been tapped to write “Still Alive” and “Want You Gone” for the “Portal” series.

Sadly, this is the case for newer, independent artists. While the “free flow of information” is a lofty ideal, it’s also a flawed one, and it vastly impacts the ability of performers to keep doing what they love.

Someone created that content, and they deserve to be compensated for it, right? The PROTECT IP Act isn’t about helping the rich get richer; it’s about making sure artists can continue to create!