



One of Clark Hall's entrances, marked with caution tape and warning flyers during the asbestos removal.

Sarah Myers/ The Current

## Clark Hall undergoes asbestos removal

*Asbestos remediation projects are ongoing process around campus*

**HEATHER WELBORN**  
Staff Writer

Clark Hall was loud with student whispers last week as apprehensions rose over the asbestos removal taking place in the stairwell. On March 4, the north stairway entrances were individually taped off, bearing signs ominously declaring DANGER: ASBESTOS. Also posted was the extension for Jerry Goodwin, manager of environmental health and safety at University of Missouri-St. Louis, who was eager to address student concerns in an interview.

Goodwin's department is responsible for compliance with environmental and safety regulations and the proper removal of hazardous materials generated on campus.

"Our goal is to keep students, faculty and staff safe," Goodwin said, explaining that asbestos removal is a common and highly regulated procedure and no one was at risk as long as they stayed out of the active work area.

UMSL conducted dozens of asbestos remediation projects like this one last year in several locations across campus. The

EHS department oversaw the asbestos removal at Clark Hall, which was done by outside contractors and completed within 48 hours. The contractors are highly trained and certified by the state in asbestos containment and remediation and followed strict procedures required by state and federal law. Steve Struck of the EHS department typically oversees asbestos remediation projects, but he was attending five days of asbestos training and certification classes last week.

Asbestos is a common construction material, especially in older buildings. It is a naturally occurring silicate mineral and was formerly used in products as common as brake pads and oven mitts. Its strong fibers and fire resistance make it an effective insulator and sound buffer. Asbestos was also used in floor tile, adhesives, pipe insulation, hotplate wiring and even decoratively in homes in "popcorn" ceilings. Its use is not entirely banned.

The danger of asbestos lies in its physical condition. If

it is "friable" or easily broken into smaller particles — as can happen in building remodeling — it has the potential to become airborne. If inhaled, the fibers can become lodged in the lungs. Exposure to asbestos fibers leads to an increased risk of lung cancer, asbestosis or mesothelioma later in life, leading the EPA to regulate its use in 1973. Since then, federal and state laws have provided clear guidelines governing asbestos risk and removal. If the asbestos is not friable or if it is sealed or coated, it poses no threat and can be safely left in place.

The asbestos was removed from the fifth floor ceilings of both stairwells in Clark Hall last week after maintenance noticed flakes of the mineral near the skylight during a routine building inspection. Goodwin explained that while the department usually waits until spring break or weekends to begin new projects in high-traffic areas, the decision was made to address it immediately and remediate it as soon as it

could be scheduled.

The chemical remediation procedure is highly regulated and very specific, and removal requirements are posted on the Environmental Protection Agency's website. Removing the asbestos itself is the easy part and was completed in about an hour. Goodwin said the set-up and tear-down of the job took nearly three times as long as the chemical clean-up.

Every inch of the fifth floor stairway was covered in protective plastic to prevent accidental contamination. Workers wore respirators as they worked on scaffolds eight feet up to essentially vacuum up the asbestos. After scraping the powder into a funnel suction pump, it is run through an attached High-Efficiency Particulate Air filter, trapping the contaminant before it reaches the air. Unlike some other hazardous wastes on campus, asbestos is not combustible and is sent to a special landfill for disposal instead of undergoing incineration.

The fifth floor stairway was also kept at negative pressure with an industrial blower and filtered flex tube, preventing air from the workspace from releasing into the environment. This "negative pressure" environment was maintained during the job and overnight until an industrial hygienist took air samples early Tuesday morning. The tests yielded no asbestos contamination, and the area was re-opened for public use. Then the south stairway was closed, and the process was repeated.

Goodwin would like to reassure students of their safety on campus. In addition to the regulations followed by his department, UMSL is also subject to surprise inspections by the EPA and Missouri Department of Natural Resources. These visits ensure university compliance with environmental standards. Students are encouraged to contact his department with any questions or concerns regarding environmental safety on campus.

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"What's Current" is the weekly calendar of UMSL campus events and 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 thecurrenttips@umsl.edu, with the subject "What's Current." No phone or written submissions.

## MONDAY, MARCH 11

### Monday Noon Series: Privacy in the Internet Age

Charlie Miller, computer security researcher, discusses the history of threats to Internet privacy from the earliest-beginnings of the world wide web to social media today, 12:15 -1:15 p.m. in 402 J. C. Penney Conference Center. Miller currently works at Twitter as security engineer, having previously worked at the National Security Agency. For information, contact Karen Lucas at 314-516-5698

### Distinguished Speaker Series: Brian F. Lavin

Brian F. Lavin, president/CEO, NTS Development Company, speaks on "Public-Private Partnership's Maximum Value for a University Foundation," 5:30 - 7:15 p.m. in Millennium Student Center's Century Rooms. The purpose of the Distinguished Speaker Series is to feature a leader of notable achievement to talk about topics pertinent to business. For information, contact Malika Horne at 314-516-4749.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 12

### 2013 UMSL Women Trailblazers Award Ceremony

UMSL's 18th annual Women Trailblazers Award Ceremony takes place at 2 p.m. in the MSC Century Rooms A and B. This year's theme is "Women Inspiring Innovation through Imagination: Celebrating Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." Guest Speaker: Dr. Patricia Wolff, founder and executive director of Meds & Food for Kids. For information, contact Kathleen Falcon at 314-516-5695.

### Movie: 'Dead Man Walking'

Inspired by the true story of Sister Helen Prejean's relationship with a condemned man, this provocative examination of crime, punishment and redemption stars Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn star and is directed by Tim Robbins. The screening, 7 - 10 p.m. in MSC Pilot House, is part of Criminal Justice Awareness Week and Social Justice Month. Sponsored by the Catholic Newman Center, with the collaboration of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, who will lead a Q&A after the film. For information, contact Rachelle Simon at 314-385-3455.

### University Jazz Ensemble concert

The UMSL Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Jim Widner, presents a night of great jazz, from Count Basie to Stan Kenton, 7:30 p.m. in Touhill Performing Arts Center's Anheuser-Busch Performance Hall. For information, contact Touhill Ticket Office at 314-516-4949.

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

### UPB Life-Sized Clue

UPB offers a chance to play the classic board game as one of the pieces and figure out who got murdered and how they did it, noon - 3 p.m. on third Floor of MSC. Chance to win a new iPad for filling out a survey at the event. For more information, contact Charlie McDonald or other UPB member at 314-516-5531.

### Veterans: Warriors Arts Alliance Coffeehouse

The UMSL Veterans Center will host the Warriors Arts Alliance in having a coffeehouse session from 1-3 p.m in the lounge. Veterans can come in and write about their experiences, using any format and about many different topics. For information, contact UMSL Veterans Center at 314-516-5705.

## Campus Crimeline

### LOST PROPERTY - MILLENNIUM STUDENT CENTER

March 1 - Report #13-087.  
An UMSL student reported the loss of a parking permit prior to affixing it to their vehicle. Disposition: Report taken.

### SUSPICIOUS PERSON - SETON HALL

March 3 - Report # 13-088.  
UMSL Police identified a former student that had previously been reported as a suspicious person. Disposition: Informational report taken.

### THEFT - WEST DRIVE GARAGE

March 5 - Report # 13-092.  
An UMSL student reported the theft of their parking permit from their parked vehicle. Disposition: Report taken.

### ASSAULT - MARK TWAIN GYM

March 5 - Report # 13-095.  
UMSL Police are investigating a report of an assault following a basketball game at the gym. Disposition: Report taken.

### 'Neither Jew nor Greek - Greek Jews after the War'

This lecture, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. in MSC Century Room A, examines the varied ways in which Greek Jews experienced World War II, and describes the particularly difficult circumstances in which Greek Jewish survivors found themselves afterward. For information, contact Bob Ell at 314-516-7299.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 14

### Pi Day

UMSL Math Club celebrates Pi Day 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on the MSC Patio. Contests include M&M Jar Contest and a Pi Recitation Contest. Person who can recite the most digits of Pi wins a tablet. Other prizes include a Kindle and gift cards. Free T-shirts. For information, contact Jessica Bleile at 314-640-0594.

### Feminist Film Series

Part III of the award-winning documentary, "Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women World-Wide" will be shown at 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. in the Gender Studies offices, located in Lucas 494. Free popcorn; BYO soda. For information, contact Sally Ebest at 314-516-6383.

### Jubilee Lecture Series: The Rise and Fall of Civilizations

Department of Anthropology, Sociology, and Languages presents an evening of archaeological lectures titled "The Rise and Fall of Civilizations" 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. in J.C. Penney room 202. Dr. Michael Cosmopoulos, Hellenic Government-Karakas Foundation Chair of Greek Studies and professor of archaeology, will present "The Emergence of States: The UMSL Archaeological Expedition in Greece." Dr. Michael Ohnerson, assistant professor of anthropology, will present "After the Fall: Cultural Continuity and Ritual Sacrifice in West Mexico." For information, contact Beth Landers at 314-516-6546.

### 'Four by Tenn' theatrical performance

In celebration of Missouri's own Tennessee Williams, the Department of Theatre, Dance and Media Studies will present selected scenes from the playwright's most compelling work, March 14-17 at 7:30 p.m. and March 16-17 @ 2 p.m., in Touhill PAC's Lee Theater. For information, contact Touhill Ticket Office at 314-516-4949.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 16

### The Civil War & The Railroad

John W Barriger IV, the great grandson of a Civil War Officer, will talk about the importance of railroads during the Civil War, 2 p.m. in the St. Louis Mercantile Library, T.J. Library lower level. For information, contact Valenda Curtis at 314-516-7248.

## SUNDAY, MARCH 17

### UPB Easter Eggs Hunt

UPB hosts a chance to find eggs, get prizes and have fun. For information, contact Charlie McDonald or other UPB member at 314-516-5531.

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## News at Noon discussion tackles 'Gay Cure' myth

KARLYNE KILLEBREW  
STAFF WRITER

News at Noon, a monthly current events discussion and lunch co-sponsored by The Current, focused on "The 'Gay Cure' Myth: Tales of a Resarch Failure" for its student-faculty discussion on March 6 in the Millennium Student Center Century rooms.

James Linsin, Psy.D., Counseling Psychologist/Coordinator of Outreach at UMSL Health, Wellness & Counseling Services and Emily Strang, MA, Doctoral Student in Clinical Psychology led a discussion of a New York Times article titled "Psychiatry Giant Sorry for Backing 'Gay Cure,'" while the about 100 students present enjoyed pizza, provided courtesy of the New York Times.

The New York Times article was written by Benedict Carey chronicling the published apology from psychology giant Dr. Robert Spitzer and his shifting professional beliefs prior to it concerning whether homosexuality is "curable," a viewpoint promoted by some members of the religious political right, or simply a non-pathological individual difference like being right or left handed.

Strang offered some historical background on the topic, before Linsin took over leading the discussion.

In the 1970s, homosexuality was considered a mental disorder. A comparative study, done by Spitzer between acknowledged health disorders such as alcoholism or depression and homosexuality, determined that it was not.

The former two caused "marked distress or impairment, while homosexuality did not," Spitzer found. When helping to re-write the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual, he had the word "homosexuality" removed from the list of mental disorders and replaced on a list of "sexual orientation disturbance," which referred to people whose orientations caused them stress.

While many members and allies of the gay community were reported as having celebrated this occasion, considering it a "civil rights breakthrough," many people who identified themselves as ex-gays were enraged by the fact that they were being denied acclamation for what they considered to be their personal achievements.

A procedure referred to variously as "reparative therapy," "sexual reorientation" or "conversion therapy," and sometimes dubbed the "gay cure," claims to "cure" people of homosexuality. People who believed that they had successfully been participants in such proceedings were convinced that they actually do work and that they could be "cured" of being gay.

This thinking presented the problematic implication that being gay is wrong or that something must be wrong with certain people because they are gay, Linsin noted.

Despite the pivotal role Spitzer played in destigmatizing homosexuality in the scientific realm, a later study he conducted seemed to support the effectiveness of a "gay cure." After being a revered figure in the psychology, Spitzer's sudden seeming reversal on homosexuality threatened his standing in his field.

As Spitzer had begun to look at the topic, he questioned if there was anything worth examining in the theory of conversion therapy. Could people really be changed from gay to straight? Spitzer conducted a survey of 200 men and women who had undergone the therapy and conducted phone interviews with them discussing sexual urges, feelings and behaviors both before and after the therapy.

When he went to publish the results, Spitzer refused to let the study be reviewed by his peers. However, he could not stop them from publishing their own critiques. In the words of Dr. Jennifer Siciliani, whose human sexuality class was present for this event, it was simply bad science. Spitzer's contemporaries even thought



Dr. James Linsin leads a student-faculty discussion of so-called "gay cure" at the March 6 News at Noon. MICHAEL PLUMB/THE CURRENT

so. As Strang said at the beginning of the forum, sexual orientation flexibility comes in the form of identity, arousal and attraction. Spitzer's test only observed self-identification, Linsin noted.

The apology, however, became necessary when Spitzer acknowledged the damage he had done by empowering individuals who tend to distort and decontextualize science in favor of their own agendas, reinforcing their heavily propagated beliefs that being gay is wrong or hints at a deficiency within a person.

The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality teamed up with socially conservative groups and ran what Carey's article called "aggressive campaigns, taking out full page ads in major newspapers trumpeting success stories." In Finland, a politician used these exact test results to argue against civil unions.

These efforts had devastation impacts on some participants. Gabriel Arana, an ex-therapy patient, spoke with Spitzer years later, detailing

how therapy simply hindered "his self-acceptance as a gay man and induced thoughts of suicide ... but at the time when I was recruited for the Spitzer study, I was referred as a success story. I would have said I was making progress."

Spitzer responded saying, "You know it's the only regret I have; the only professional one."

Each table of people at the event given a list of questions concerning the topic and asked to discuss them among those at the table. Linsin then asked tables to share their answers to these questions, which sparked generation of ideas on topics as diverse as whether or not reparative therapy should be legal to whether any of this would even seem as heinous if they simply changed the titles of the processes. Hands went up, and people defended their claims.

Despite the many twists and turns the conversation took, the focus never shifted from the importance of the consequences that issues such as these have on the communities that they affect.

## Jubilee Flashback

The Current has been part of the university since 1966. For the campus' fiftieth anniversary, we are reprinting selected articles from our archives. This article originally ran on March 11, 1976.

### Women's Day features veteran feminist Luscomb speaks for Women's Day

Thomas Taschinger

The UMSL campus celebrated International Women's Day, March 8, by featuring a most distinguished lecturer, courtesy of the Feminist Alliance. Florence Luscomb, a spry 89 year old veteran of the feminist movement, spoke before a crowd of 300 faculty and students in Lucas Hall. Her topic was "Serf to Citizen: How Women Became Members of the Human Race."

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, before the American women's movement started," she began in a clear strident voice, "women had few, if any, rights. When a woman married her property was ceded to her husband and her husband could claim her salary or give away her children.

"A man was allowed to beat his wife with a 'reasonable instrument', once defined as a stick 'no thicker than a man's thumb'. It was considered immoral for a woman to speak in public like this. The famous feminist Lucy Stone was once expelled from her church for giving a public lecture against

slavery."

Luscomb explained that the American feminist movement grew out of the Abolitionist cause. Yet even male Abolitionists refused to seat eight American delegates at an international anti-slavery conference in England in 1840 because they were women. The Quakers were the only group that believed in sexual equality in that era, she said.

"The first national conference on feminism in America was held in Wooster, Massachusetts in 1850," she continued. "At this point the three main leaders of the movement were Lucy Stone, Susan Anthony, and Elizabeth Kay Stanton. Gradually some of the worst oppressions were removed; women could attend public schools and their children could not be taken away from them by their husband.

"I was in the third generation of the movement, but one great oppression remained: women could not vote. America was supposed to be a democracy, yet women, along with criminals and the insane, could not vote. Well, we didn't like that company!"

Luscomb, who graduated from MIT as an architect, has pri-

(continued on page 8)



PRO-WOMEN WOMAN: Veteran feminist Florence Luscomb, now 89, spoke at UMSL during International Women's Day, March 8. [Photo by Jeanne Mongold.]

(continued from page 1)

marily devoted her life to the cause of feminism. Indeed she helped organize the League of Women Voters and was active in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. But her concern for social justice extends to all the oppressed, not just women. She has worked with the ACLU, the NAACP, and numerous other peace and disarmament groups around the world. She visited China in 1962 when such visits were frowned upon.

"It took 42 years of devoted campaigning to win for women the right to vote in a single state, namely Wyoming in 1890," she said. The momentum for women's suffrage was in-

creasing every year. By 1917, twenty-seven states allowed women to vote. Women were now a political force, both parties had to pay attention to them. Luscomb, who saw the famous feminist Susan Anthony lecture when she was five years old, worked many long and hard hours for women's suffrage. During one campaign in Massachusetts in 1915 she made 222 speeches in 19 weeks.

"Finally women in the whole U.S. became free, self-governing citizens," she said, "when the state of Tennessee ratified the 19th Amendment in 1920. Yet even today the struggle is not over. The greatest discrimination is against working women.

Women, who comprise 46 per cent of the work force, make only 59 per cent of the wages men do. Black women make only 49 per cent. This means women are being kept in low paying jobs and aren't being promoted to higher paying and more interesting jobs.

"Out of 5.5 million children under six, there are day care facilities for only one million," she continued. "America must pass the ERA, because all citizens are supposed to be free and equal. Men will find they have a stake in this too, for men and women will have a greater comradeship in the struggle for peace, justice and social equality."

## Three international students come to UMSL to study language



Mohannad Almohanna, Mohammed Tuman and Abdullah Ateeq.

ANYA GLUSHKO FEATURES EDITOR

Living at University of Missouri-St. Louis does not strike most students as a challenge or a major change. However, UMSL is highly diverse and helps to educate students from many different parts of the world. The various makeup of the population enables students and professors to expand their horizons and learn more about other cultures and their ways of life.

Three students from Saudi Arabia came to UMSL in January to study English. Mohannad Almohanna, graduate, banking

and finance, is working on his first year of graduate studies. He plans to stay at UMSL for the next three years to finish his education. Abdullah Ateeq, freshman, English, and Mohammad Tuman, freshman, English, plan to stay at UMSL for the next eight months, then return to King Saud University to become interpreters.

"We want to learn the language from native speakers and get to know a new culture and traditions," Almohanna said.

Sometimes it can be challenging for international students to

ANYA GLUSHKO/THE CURRENT

understand the language and the culture. "When someone comes to a new country, he will face difficulties, but he will get over it. When someone does not have the skills to speak English, they will use body language to communicate ... Food is different. Clothing is different, too. In Saudi Arabia, we wear thobe, robe[s] made out of very soft fabric, generally cotton. We wear different colors in winter season, but we wear just white color in the summer season, because when the sun comes to your thobe, it will make you extremely hot; white will reflect the sun," Tuman said.

For footwear, sandals — made out of leather or other natural materials and usually handcrafted by older men — are preferred. Local produce is more affordable on the market than the produce that is exported from other countries such as Italy and France.

"Most of the people are friendly and helpful. Every country had good people and bad people, but most of the people there are friendly as well as here ... There is one religion, Islam. There are some rules in Islam. For example, when you smile to other people, you are giving them a gift," Almohanna said.

There is one month when all Muslim people fast. This tradition only goes for adults, starting at 15 years old. From sunrise to sunset, men and women go without consuming any food or drink.

"When we fast, we will remember the poor people, and we will live their experience ... They do not eat, they do not have money ... After this special month ends, we must give them money, food and supplies ... You can buy toys to make kids happy," Tuman said.

"One holiday that we celebrate lasts three days after this special month of fast, and at that time we have feasts. All the relatives come together and

are celebrating with us. Even when they are in other cities, they come to one home and sit together ... The families in our country are not like here; they are much bigger. Our average family size with relatives is about 30 people," Tuman said.

"There is no racism in our country; black, white, they are all the same. We are all human," Tuman said.

"I pray five times a day. Each prayer is about three minutes. When your praying time comes, you have to close shops and stores to respect the time of prayer," Ateeq said.

This is a custom in Saudi Arabia only. "My mother is from Dubai, so whenever I went there, the bells called, but nobody closed their shops," Tuman said.

"In America, the most famous sports are football and hockey; in Saudi Arabia, the special sport is soccer. The kids are crazy about it. They play and play it every day," Tuman said.

Almohanna, Ateeq and Tuman are enjoying staying in Oak Hall at UMSL. They are eager to discover the culture of St. Louis. "The food at UMSL is really good. I like the dining hall. The shuttle is very convenient, too, and MetroLink is, as well. It can save you some money. It is awesome," Ateeq said.

## Social protest poetry read at Monday Noon Series

ALBERT NALL STAFF WRITER

Members of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures in the University of Missouri-St. Louis Departments of Anthropology, Sociology and Languages recited poetry rooted in various forms of social protest on March 4 from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. in the J.C. Penney Conference Center. The audience of approximately 40 was treated to refreshments during the event, which was part of the Monday Noon Series for Spring 2013, sponsored by the Missouri Arts Council.

After the introduction by Karen Lucas, assistant director for the Center for Humanities, and Maria Balogh, assistant professor of Spanish, the recitation began with Dr. Maria Kouti, a lecturer who read a couple of poems in Greek by Manolis Anagnostakis. Anagnostakis was a Greek poet as well as a Marxist.

Anagnostakis was at the forefront of the Greek Civil War, in which the Greek army fought against the Greek Communist Party. The Greek Civil War had political dimensions in the issues of martial law and human rights

violations, as well as torture and oppressive regimes, Kouti said.

"Anagnostakis believed that history could not be counted or discounted. Whether you are for or against a cause, Anagnostakis contended that a decision was a matter of conscious self-determination and must be carried out one way or the other," Kouti said. Kouti recited from a couple of other poems written by Anagnostakis.

Dr. Liz Fonseca, assistant professor of Spanish, then read work by Chico Buarque de Holanda, a musician, writer, activist and dramatist from Brazil.

"Greek and Latin theater and poetry was ingrained in the quest for social justice and often had double meanings that were personified by symbols due to censorship and silence," Fonseca said.

Dr. Margaret Phillips, associate professor of Latin, cited from one of the most prominent tragedies in Greek literature, "Medea," written by the poet Euripides. Euripides was ahead of his time in the

influence of modern drama, comedy and romance. Euripides inflamed Ancient Greek society with his sympathies toward the oppressed in social culture, especially women.

"Medea," which was written in 431 B.C.E., tells of the marriage between the sorceresses Medea and Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, a band of heroes in Greek mythology. Jason expresses his intention to leave Medea and marry Glauce, the daughter of Creon. Creon, aware of how scorned Medea is over the loss of Jason, intends to send Medea into exile.

Medea succeeds in persuading Creon to hold off on the banishment for one day and plots revenge against Creon and Glauce. Medea acts by poisoning robes for her and Jason's unnamed children as a means of hurting her husband and as bait for Glauce.

The literature authored by Euripides was based on the issue of dowry and its effect on women of that time, Phillips said. The husband was viewed as the master of the woman and her body, according to

Phillips.

"Men often ranted about how hard they had it because they had to fight wars. The women of Ancient Greek mythology thought to the contrary. These women preferred being behind a shield to bearing children," Phillips said.

Kersten Horn, assistant professor of German, read from "Silesian Weavers," an 1840s tale of the miserable life of a German weaver's family. Dr. Elizabeth Landers, assistant professor of French, then told the tale of Rene Depestre, a Haitian revolutionary who led student riots in the late 1940s that led to the ouster of President Elie Lescot. Depestre is the founder of Cassa de Las Americas publishing house and wrote poetry about the economic exploitation of black slaves in the Caribbean. Landers read from *Minerai Noir*, which was published in 1956.

Balogh substituted for Elizabeth Eckelkamp, with the Center for International Studies giving a reference to Tanka poetry, which originated in

the ninth and tenth centuries and is one of the major genres of Japanese literature. Balogh said that Tanka was widely published in the wake of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami in 2011, which is ingrained in the lore of those who survive disasters. Balogh read "On the Sidewalk," a poem that the professor wrote.

Professor Fushun Le, a Chinese lecturer, closed out the presentation with a discussion of the Song Dynasty that controlled China from 960-1127. Le gave a profile of Du Fu, who was described as the Sage of Poetry during the Tang Dynasty a couple of centuries earlier.

Heller McAlpin, a book critic, and Martha McPhee, a novelist, will be making an appearance in J.C. Penney Conference Center 202 on April 5 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. McAlpin and McPhee are being sponsored by the Greater St. Louis Humanities Festival 2013. For more information about festival events, go to [mohumanities.org](http://mohumanities.org).

# Artist discusses 'Dream Blisters' at Visio

HEATHER WELBORN STAFF WRITER

Local artist Robert Treece premiered his new series, "Dream Blisters," with a reception at Gallery Visio on March 6. The exhibition, featuring a variety of Treece's work, was billed as "large-scale paintings depicting surreal dreamscapes ... said to be manifestations of the unconscious mind."

Alternating between photorealism and surreal abstraction, Treece manipulates multimedia on massive canvases, entrancing viewers with multiple layers of texture, vivid pigments and distorted detail. The resulting images are insane, inspiring and intuitive. While each piece is itself a visually hypnotic experience, seeing them all at once gives the series a synergistic effect that is simultaneously familiar and bizarre.

In his exhibition essay, Treece noted that the shift between real and surreal is essential to his technique, each style influencing the other. While realistic ideas form instantaneously, a product of formality and patience, surrealist projects are indeterminate, evolving independently from logic. Treece attributes his skill with composition, color arrangement and "terror management" to his surrealistic tendencies.

"I saw and see fear and discomfort as being far more beneficial to the creative process than comfort and encouragement," Treece said.

Treece began experimenting with oils in his youth after seeing a mud puddle catch the sun in the streets of

Chicago, forming a liquid rainbow. He now re-creates that effect by intricately layering acrylics and paper images on canvas, as well as other nontraditional items. For example, when asked if the "blisters" in his nine "Dream Blister" titles were tissue paper, Treece said they were formed with a toy balloon-blowing kit.

"I left a canvas outside with these on it for years, and when I looked at it again, the material was the same as it was when I applied it, so there's an archival element to it, as well."

Another viewer inquired about the significance of the image distortion in his works.

"If it's aesthetically pleasing, do it," Treece said. "There's a dialogue going on, but you don't need to know that; you just have to enjoy looking at it."

When asked about his color choice, which one viewer described as "energizing," Treece credited his work as a color matcher for contract painters.

"Colors bounce off of each other," he said. "They talk to other colors."

Treece works with a printer union in St. Louis, trading labor for the use of massive canon copiers. He takes collage pieces and smears them as the copy is processed, producing a single warped image that he incorporates into his art. There is no guiding symbolism, and all design decisions are made on instinct.

Commenting on his artistic process, Treece admitted that his



Treece discussing his work at Visio. ritual depends on timing as well as mood.

"It's a slippery thing," he says. "Sometimes, a lot, it's just work. Other times, it's transcendental, and I don't even feel I'm a part of it."

Treece sees the process as specific and labor-intensive, with each piece taking upwards of six months to complete.

"Pretty fluid, pretty organic," he said. "In the beginning, I organize, but sometimes I stretch the canvas and go all caveman on it."

"It's hard to say how long they take. I start, but then I live with it for a while, and my cat crawls all over the canvases. I hope nobody who buys my art is allergic to cats, because if so, they're so screwed," Treece said.

HEATHER WELBORN/THE CURRENT

When asked if he kept a tidy work environment, Treece laughed, explaining the condition of the ramshackle building he uses as a studio.

"It should be condemned," he said, though admitted he is free to experiment. "I went in there one day with a hose, an ax and 20 gallons of paint. I hosed the canvases down so the colors would work together. Then I used the ax to bash a hole in the floor for the water to drain into."

While the inspiration is illogical and organic, the execution is well-informed, with formal expressions of color palette and composition. Treece's style progression has become more precise as he continues to paint, noting that his process is no longer "hit or miss." He plans to

travel overseas with friends in the near future as a fine art field study.

"We're going to Istanbul first. Islamic art is amazing. It's like shoving your fists into your eyes as hard as you can. Just incredible," Treece said.

As the discussion came to a close, Treece offered a blunt word of advice to aspiring artists.

"Artists know what they are. If you have to decide to become an artist, you should go be an accountant instead," Treece said.

"Dream Blisters" runs until April 10 at Gallery Visio, located on the lower level of the Millennium Student Center. Treece's newer paintings are also on exhibit at Vino Gallery in the Central West End until May 4.

# 'Oz the Great and Powerful' is good, not great

CATE MARQUIS EDITOR IN CHIEF

The new 3D movie "Oz the Great and Powerful" is a good, but not great, homage to the classic "Wizard of Oz."

This Disney prequel focuses on the wizard, Oscar Diggs (James Franco), a young magician and conman who goes by the nickname Oz. Oz plies his trade with a dusty traveling circus in early-twentieth-century Kansas, but he isn't much

of a magician. His greatest skill is not misdirection, but seduction of a string of young women. It is his major occupation despite his stated ambition to achieve greatness by becoming a combination of Harry Houdini and Thomas Edison. While fleeing the wrath of a jealous strongman whose wife succumbed to his charms, he hops into a hot-air balloon just in time for a tornado to

whisk the magician away to the Land of Oz.

In magical Oz, he meets a trio of witches, Theodora (Mila Kunis), Evanora (Rachel Weisz) and Glinda (Michelle Williams), the first of whom quickly falls for him. On the Yellow Brick road, Oz meets a flying monkey (voiced by Zach Braff), a fierce, non-cowardly lion and a porcelain doll called China Girl (Joey King), a fresh character from the L. Frank Baum books who is not in the famous film.

Director Sam Raimi's film is best when it pays homage to the 1939 original. Opening in black and white, with credits that are a delightful mix of pop-up-book and early stage effects, it switches to eye-popping color when the wizard is swept into the wonderful world of the Emerald City. Like the original, some characters have counterparts back in Kansas, and references to the original film are sprinkled throughout.

The grandfatherly wizard that Dorothy met is transformed into a young self-centered playboy who uses the same tricks on every pretty face he encounters and otherwise seems to just drift along through his life like his balloon. He plays along when the citizens hail him as the prophesied Wizard of Oz and offer him riches but is considerably more reluctant when, like Dorothy, they expect him to defeat a wicked witch. A running theme is whether the magician wants to be a good man or a great one, but figuring out who is good and who is wicked in the Land of Oz is a more challenging that it first seems.

Visually, the film is impressive throughout, especially as the characters travel through the magical land. The effects at the film's climatic showdown are particularly impressive and may be worth the price of admission alone for effects fans.

The film has visual delights,

but where the film falls short is in the characters and originality. Supporting characters are little more than cookie-cutter types, and there are too many formulaic bits instead of believable interactions. Plus, one cannot help but long for more tongue-in-cheek humor, more "Pirates of the Caribbean"-style campy fun and less pat sincerity. The cast is talented enough, but Raimi does not ask enough of them. Consequently, the film seems to drag a bit when there is a pause in the action.

The script has some clever twists and plenty of entertaining action, but this story is nowhere near as original as the musical "Wicked," a prequel to the same tale.

"Oz the Great and Powerful" is a good homage to a great original. Worth the trip mostly for visual effects fans, it is entertaining enough and has some clever references to the original. But it is no match for the original's standing as a classic.



Oz (James Franco) and Theodora (Mila Kunis) in Disney Studios' "Oz the Great and Powerful." © 2012 Disney Enterprises, Inc.

## UMSL finishes above .500, aims for Western crown

LEON DEVANCE SPORTS EDITOR

The University of Missouri-St. Louis women's basketball team played their final game of the season against Missouri S&T in the Deaconess Great Lakes Valley Conference playoffs, losing in the first round.

After two injuries plagued seasons at 10-17 under former coach Lisa Curliss-Taylor, the ladies finished with a 15-12 overall record in 2012 and a conference record of 8-6 under first-year coach Katie Vaughn.

A healthy roster, a system that the players like and understand, spacing, and ball movement are key aspects in Vaughn's system. The players had the freedom on the court to make decisions, and this, along with consistent knockdown shooters making

outside jumps and strong inside play, were the biggest reasons for the above-.500 record this season.

Now another question arises with the ladies. Can UMSL win the GLVC Western Division crown next year?

UMSL graduates four seniors this May. Devonna Smith, senior, sociology; Angela Johnson, senior, criminal justice; Molly Barnes, senior, educational studies; and Deaven Omohundro, senior, elementary education, have exhausted their eligibility. The biggest UMSL losses next fall are Smith, a double threat as a prolific scorer in the paint and in rebounding, and Johnson, who is a consistent outside shooter, skilled ball handler and plays excellent defense.

Of the four teams that finished ahead of UMSL in the Western Division in 2012 -- Maryville, Quincy, William Jewell and Missouri S&T -- the best record in the West was Maryville's 13-5 in the conference and 11-3 in the West. Quincy finished two games and William Jewell one game ahead of UMSL. Quincy finished in the conference at 12-6, and William Jewell was 9-5 in the division. UMSL tied Missouri S&T and Quincy at 8-6 in the Western Division.

William Jewell with Chelsea Meeks, Quincy with a sophomore-dominated roster and Maryville all return quality rosters and should compete for the Western Division Crown. UMSL should compete and return to the roster next fall

that includes Jessica Zavoral, junior, business; Kelly McGovern, sophomore, special education; and Hazaria Washington, junior, communications. Another year of experience will help the development of Tierra Snow, sophomore, business; Jazmine Smith, freshman, psychology; Logan Sims, freshman, biology; Morgan Settle, freshman, elementary education; Alexis Lawrence, sophomore, business finance; and Kelsey Sikes, freshman, media studies.

One key for UMSL next fall will be to start the season with a quick start, as the ladies stumbled toward a 4-7 record before conference play started against Southern Indiana. Another key will be to avoid scoring droughts,

as UMSL went with too many stretches as teams went on runs to put UMSL into a hole too deep to escape from. More depth to the roster could improve the scoring options Vaughn has during games.

The wish list for Vaughn this off season should include recruiting another double-double player who can score in the paint, control the glass and stop the opposition's low post player from scoring, recruiting a good on-ball defender, and adding scoring from the bench.

If Vaughn can acquire those assets, then UMSL might be able to squeeze another win or two next season and finish in the upper half of the GLVC Western Division.

## FEATURES

### Simone Weil documentary screened for Social Justice Month

ALBERT NALL STAFF WRITER

A documentary profiling French philosopher and social activist Simone Weil was aired in the Pilot House in the Millennium Student Center at 7 p.m. on March 5. The film documentary and a discussion afterward were sponsored by the University of Missouri-St. Louis Catholic Newman Center along with collaborating student life organizations on behalf of Social Justice Month and Social Responsibility Awareness Week.

Weil would eventually become involved in political activism during such conflicts as World War II and the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s. She worked as a laborer and assisted in the trade union movements. Most of Weil's writings did not become noticed until after her death from malnutrition in August 1943. Weil refused to eat anything more than the minimal rations out of devotion to World War II soldiers. A study by the University of Calgary found that over 2,500 works were written about Weil. Nobel Prize-winning journalist Albert Camus described Weil as "the only great spirit of our times."

Julia Haslet, a visiting associate professor of film and video production at Hunter College in New York, produced "An Encounter with Simone Weil" in 2010. The film premiered at the Inter-

national Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam and was broadcast in Europe and the Soviet Union, where it has been translated into over 15 languages.

There are many questions that linger as to how social justice is defined in contemporary times. After the film aired, this issue was taken up by a panel discussion that was held by Rachele Simon, a minister in the Catholic Newman Center. She was joined by Amanda Wells, a graduate teaching assistant of English; Kevin Lepore of the Philosopher's Forum; Laura Kuehling, a graduate assistant in the history department and Laura Kristich of Psi Chi, the Honors Society in psychology.

Simon expressed disappointment that there was not as much diversity at the Weil film as the organizers had hoped for.

"We invited each department and organization that was represented to send someone from their group for the documentary," Simon said, adding that "social justice" is a broad term.

"The point of airing 'An Encounter with Simone Weil' was not persuading anyone of anything, [but] rather to have people ask themselves the questions about how we are connected as human beings, all of us, all races," Simon said.

"I don't know that there

ever is a clear definition of social justice. We do recognize that there are varying definitions of social justice requiring individualized action," Kuehling said.

One of the concerns expressed by the panel was getting students to attend events, especially those that express viewpoints that are not always shared by all of the UMSL community.

"We did not leave anyone with the impression that the documentary on Weil attempted to convey a certain brand of social justice. The purpose of sponsoring the film was with hopes of stimulating an intellectual conversation regarding dominant questions currently surrounding social justice," Kuehling said.

"Connecting with an issue or an event creates conversation in a community, and conversation is the foundation for social justice," Wells said.

Other Social Justice Month-themed events include viewings at the Pilot House of "Dead Man Walking" on March 12 at 7 p.m. and "Give a Damm?" on March 19 at 7 p.m. On March 20 and 21, there will be a Shantytown event from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. to promote homelessness awareness.

For more information on the above events, contact Rachele Simon at (314) 385-3455 or rachelle@cncumsl.org.

### Comedian Chad Daniels delights at Pilot House

ALBERT NALL STAFF WRITER

There is a story told on comedycentral.com about the comic who appeared at the Pilot House on March 7 at 7 p.m. Two teenagers in the mid-1970s decided to skip their prom and go necking instead. This was likely to be the first joke told by the comic Chad Daniels, who was born to the teenagers who skipped their prom.

Daniels' appearance was sponsored by the University Program Board of University of Missouri-St. Louis. In 1998, an open mic night at the Minneapolis ACME Comedy Company led to Daniels being the house emcee at the Westward Ho Comedy Gallery in Grand Forks, N.D. He performed six shows a week and hosted karaoke after every show. Daniels appeared on "The Late Late Show" with Craig Kilburn and Craig Ferguson and on the "Tonight Show" with Conan O'Brien. Daniels performed in the Aspin Comedy Festival, and his half hour "Comedy Central Presents Special" was voted number five of all time by the network. Daniels has also recorded musical material from his CDs "You're the Best" and "Busy Being Awesome."

Most of the audience of 75 at the Pilot House, which consisted predominantly of young students, most likely experienced Daniels the way his publicists would have liked for them to. These people were greatly impressed by Daniels' onstage swagger and collection of penetrating boisterous material that bullies the audience into loving

him. To this group, Daniels was the cool parent that they wished that they had, and he created great zest among them by helping them to transition into adult maturity.

This loyal following was into Daniels despite a malfunction with the mic that caused the comic to drop it and continue the performance in a whisper. The audience was lured into Daniels' edgy style and in an uproar after a member of the UMSL audiovisual staff gave the comic a new microphone. For those difficult parental figures in the audience (if there were any), Daniels was simply too lame, confused, cluttered and not up to his press.

Part of the reason for the big turnout for Daniels was due to the business volume at the nearby Subway, as evidenced by students taking in sandwiches and drinks during the performance. A comic does not disrespect his audience and the business establishment that supports him by making defamatory references to Subway, which was out of place in his routine.

Daniels did not help his cause by frustrating the objective of parenting. Parents are expected to find out about their children's sexual perversions in the customary way: by snooping around the kid's room and confiscating items in it. The children are then supposed to wail "I HATE YOU!" to the parents and slam doors. Children do not disclose sexual secrets in a matter-of-fact way to the parent so that the parent can

release them to the audience the way Daniels did.

Prostate cancer awareness for men is supposed to be an enriched experience and not a gruesome reminder of the inner working of the human anatomy and how it smells during a colonoscopy, according to Daniels.

The small minority who were not at all awestruck by Daniels generally sat politely through sophomoric material that ranged from tired and hackneyed ethnic jokes to poor attempts at "redneck" humor. Further, there was too much redundancy of expletives throughout the entire performance. Those who would have liked to have put out an advisory alert on Daniels based on his press were more bemused than intimidated and took some of his references to "raping babies" for a rather vague interpretation.

Over 25 years ago, Andrew Dice Clay's style of explicit humor and misogyny irked audiences and generated great social controversy. For Daniels, the reaction to those not impressed by warmed-over revisionist-style humor is no more than a jaded reaction. The very same materials based in sexuality and politics that got comic pioneer Lenny Bruce arrested for obscenity in the 1960s merited a yawn at best in response to Daniels.

Daniels can be seen at the St. Louis Funnybone Club from March 28 to March 31, after an appearance at Monmouth College in Illinois.

**COLUMN Science Matters**

## Has the time come to label GM foods?

**CATE MARQUIS**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Is it time to label genetically modified foods? The issue is the right of the public to know what is in their food versus manufacturers' concerns that labeling creates a negative impression about GM foods. Until now, the latter has had the upper hand, but perhaps now it is time to balance that equation.

Whole Foods, a major grocery store chain that stocks many organic foods, has announced a decision to label the GM foods they carry, in response to customer demands. This practical business decision is running up against the wishes of another large corporation, Monsanto, who has poured countless dollars into fighting any labeling of GM foods.

Monsanto's concerns won the legal and governmental argument when GM foods were first introduced. The company successfully argued that labeling then-new genetically-modified crops would create a prejudice in consumers' minds against GM foods. Labeling would make it look like there was something wrong, perhaps even dangerous, about the new GM products, the company's lawyers argued. Further, Monsanto maintained that there was no proof that GM crops posed a danger, that they were safe. Opponents noted that there was no proof of undesirable effects mostly because no experiments testing whether human consumption of GM foods posed any long-term health threats had been conducted. A lack of proof that something is harmful is not the same as proof that something is safe, opponents countered.

Proponents of labeling lost that argument, but there was a concession of sorts from the company. Although Monsanto maintained that the only likely impact of GM foods was an increase in food allergies, there was a compromise initially that genetically modified crops would not be used in foods for human consumption. However, it was not many years before unlabeled GM crops found their way into foodstuffs on grocery shelves and the unenforceable restriction ended.

Hence we all became subjects in that experiment in the human health impact of GM foods when they found their way into American foodstuffs. Food al-



lergies do appear to be on the rise. Whether that is linked to GM foods is unknown, because that study has not been done. It is hard to trace exposure to GM foods when they are not labeled as such.

While the U.S. has taken the "there is no proof of harm" approach and allowed GM foods, the European Union has taken a cautious approach by banning GM foods. Europeans generally have a different attitude toward food and food purity than Americans. Their more cautious approach has allowed them to watch the results of the de facto whole population experiment here.

Whole Foods, responding to the demands of their customers, may shift this matter in the direction of choice. The decision moves this debate from a legal one between a corporation and citizens' groups to one between two corporations with conflicting business interests. Whether food giant Whole Foods' actions will embolden other grocers and food manufactures to follow suit in defying the powerful Monsanto company remains to be seen.

Has the time come to recognize people's right to know about which foods are genetically modified and which are not? These are no longer new, unknown products, and Monsanto's argument of an unreasoning fear of the unknown harming a new product no longer seems to stand up.

People have a right to choose whether to eat organic or non-organic foods, and there is a labeling process for organic foods. Shouldn't people have a right to choose non-GM foods, too? Exercising that right means having a way to identify which foods are genetically modified, even if that means labeling foods as "GM-free." Labeling GM or non-GM foods is a matter of freedom of choice, but also a matter of a free marketplace.

**COLUMN The Chopping Block**

## Excessive cost of textbooks is detrimental to higher education

**HUNG NGUYEN**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

While John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" did not get re-written in last semester's English literature course and economists did not meet up to change the rules for constructing supply and demand curves, the chances are that within a semester or two, students will end up paying for a new edition of the course text. The high cost and frequent version changes in textbooks hurts students who are already struggling to pay for the growing costs of tuition.

The constant growth in both science and humanities scholarship and new approaches for introducing concepts are often cited as reasons for edition upgrades. This would be a good argument for upper-division undergraduate and graduate-level work, where the frontier intellectual climate is more fluid and dynamic. But students in introductory prerequisites and survey courses also face the same problems. These courses introduce fundamental concepts, and so it seems unlikely that within the space of three years — or in some cases, one year — that the field will undergo a major paradigm shift to warrant a complete revision of an introductory text. Small details such as a new discovery not treated in the text, or even a different way of thinking about a concept, can be discussed by the instructor. As these are often few and far in between, they do not form a substantive basis for a new version.

Publishers and writers have little incentive to end this practice,

though, since introductory-level courses represent a large portion of the market. A typical introductory English composition, chemistry or biology course can have enrollment upward of 100 students, while a senior seminar may have a substantially smaller fraction, often in the teen, if not single, digits. At large universities like University of Missouri-St. Louis, where multiple sections of introductory courses are offered, these numbers can dramatically increase, each student representing a potential few hundred dollars in profits.

With the advent of Amazon and other venues for acquiring older editions, publishers have gotten creative in deciding what changes are made. Full chapters, chapter sections, questions and homework problems are often moved around in the new editions. As new teaching modules are designed, these changes are sometimes warranted. But more often than not, the changes serve no real purpose except to ensure that the text is markedly different from previous versions. New versions of the exact same schematics and shifted page numbers serve little, if any, function except to disorient students trying to save a few hundred dollars. Students have found some financial relief in sympathetic professors who will provide alternate reading and problem lists for older editions and charitable classmates who will allow cross-referencing, but this is by no means an easy and standard practice.

Students who cannot afford

the full price of course texts often buy digital editions, rent books or do not purchase texts at all. Yet digital editions are often still quite expensive despite the printing discount, and students are then limited by their personal computer or tablet device. Renting enables students to pay a portion of the actual cost to use the book for a set number of days. This solution means that students will lack a resource to refer to in later courses when they are grappling with more advanced concepts. Damaged or lost books are associated with fines equal to or greater than the original book cost. In not buying the text, students miss full explanations in the reading and homework problems and questions that may not be extensively treated in the lecture, but will appear on exams. Students are severely disadvantaged and can face failure in these instances.

Students acknowledge that publishing and textbook writing is a business where profit is paramount. One would even argue that the work that goes into writing a textbook is enough to warrant charging such high prices. This business model, however, is ultimately harmful for higher education in America. It further exacerbates the situation created by the high cost of tuition. It changes higher education from being trajectory-changing opportunities by intellectual ability to whether or not students can find scholarships, which are few and selective, or sign the big check or loan contract each term.



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