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THE CAROLINIAN

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF UNCG

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Police simulate crisis on campus



UNCG campus police are on the scene during the Jan. 7 active shooter exercise.

Lili Johnson
Staff Writer

Stephanie Patton
News Editor

Imagine hearing a gunshot from your dorm room. You look outside your window to see a man in front of the dorm holding students hostage at gunpoint. Your fear lessens when you see snipers positioned atop neighboring buildings with the attacker in view.

On Jan. 7, UNCG's campus was turned into a live shooter simulation, complete with law enforcement officials, observers and participants.

UNCG started planning for this simulation in December, after it was made clear by the shooting at Virginia Tech that something of this nature could occur. According to a press release from December, the university expected to use 100 participants. However, in the real simulation over 200

people were involved.

Dr. Hummel, the director of Housing and Residence Life, explained that they had been planning the simulation for a year and a half.

"[The simulation] was very realistic and [executed] in a safe manner," explained Hummel. "It gave the university a chance to practice their communication system and their response."

Students were sent emails from the emergency response system that stated:

"This is an exercise - A shooting incident has occurred at Mendenhall Hall. Law Enforcement Personnel are responding to the area. If you are in the immediate area of the shooting, do not draw attention to your location: Silence all cell phones, radios and computers. Move to a safe location and protect yourself: lock or barricade all doors, stay away from windows and remain out of sight. Take adequate cover and if possible, alert others in the immediate area. If you have any information about the shooter, notify the police immediately. Updated information will be broadcasted over AM 1640 and the University's webpage as it becomes available. This is an exercise."

The simulation began at 9:40 a.m. and the first emergency response email went out at 9:49 a.m. The next email was sent out at 11:12 a.m.:

"This is an exercise - Law enforcement agencies are currently involved in an incident involving an active shooter on campus. If you are in the immediate area of the student dorms or the athletic fields, do not draw attention to your location: Silence all cell phones, radios and computers. Move to a safe location and protect yourself: lock or barricade all doors, stay away from windows and remain out of sight. Take adequate cover and if possible, alert others in the immediate area. If

SEE CRISIS ON PAGE THREE

Three UNCG doctors receive funding

Lili Johnson
Staff Writer

With all of the exciting advances in technology, UNCG is proud to be involved in the race. According to a recent press release, \$850,000 was awarded to Dr. Yousef Haik, Dr. Parke Rublee, and Dr. Nadja Cech for use in their research projects. In total, the university system awarded over \$3.8 million to 18 projects at 13 universities.

Haik is the Director of the Center of Research Excellence in Nanoscience, which started in 2007. As stated by the UNCG website, the goals of the Center are: 1. To develop novel classes of nanomaterials with superior physical and biological properties that can be functionalized for innovative biotechnologies. 2. To recruit, mentor and educate a diverse population of outstanding students at the undergraduate

and graduate levels in nano-biotechnology. 3. To secure patents and transfer technologies that have commercial potential.

Haik was awarded \$200,000 for Rapid Assessment of Food Allergens and Allergy biomarkers and plans to develop a medical device to detect human allergens using saliva samples and identify allergens in consumable food products.

"Allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in the world," explains Dr. Haik of the importance of this project. "Newsweek reported an estimate of 11 million Americans suffer from food allergies. Experts estimate food allergies occurs in six to eight percent of children of ages four and under, and in four percent of adults. Peanut allergies doubled between 1997 and 2002 in children under five."

Parents with children who have

allergies are worried about introducing new food to their children that might trigger a reaction.

Dr. M. Ahmedna from N.C. A&T, Dr. C. Young from LaBauer Health Care, Dr. H. Malkawi from UNCG, and Dr. Haik are developing a device that will allow users, with minimum training on how to use the device, to insert a small food sample and the device will perform an analysis to see if the food contains allergens.

According to Haik, the great thing about this device is that the test can be performed almost anywhere, such as in a restaurant outside of the home. It is also believed to help schools monitor food items before they are given to kids.

Haik hopes that the proof of the concept will be finished in about a year. After that, the first generation device will be completed, and then marketed by NanoMed Inc.,

a startup company located at the North Carolina Nano Accelerator in Greensboro.

The second doctor to receive grant money, Rublee, is a professor of biology and an aquatic ecologist by training. He received \$292,010 for Integration of Novel Technology for Safeguarding Potable water.

"The project will use molecular biology approaches to develop gene probes to water quality bio-indicator microorganisms, and to adapt that to work on real-time remote monitoring stations that have been developed by our partners at NCSU," says Rublee.

According to Rublee, it is important to develop bio-indicators to microorganisms because they respond rapidly to environment change and they may be pathogenic.

Ultimately, the project will develop a suite of probes that can



Dr. Parke Rublee

be used to assess water quality, and monitor water for harmful changes. While there is no acute problem with water quality at the moment, the device in development is a better, more cost-effective way to monitor drinking water quality.

"If successful," explains Rublee,

SEE FUNDING ON PAGE TWO

THE CAROLINIAN
ESTABLISHED 1919
VOL. LXXXVIII
ISSUE 16

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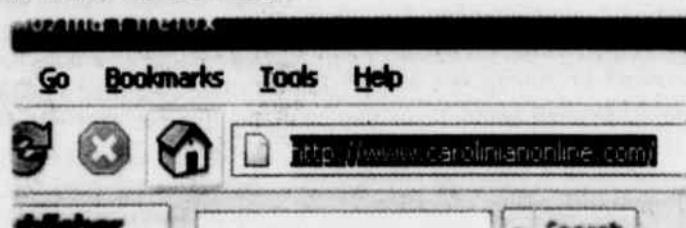
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ON THE WEB AT:



FUNDING FROM PAGE ONE

"the development will produce a product that can be used to prevent degradation of water quality and prevent the exposure of individuals to pollutants and pathogens, thus improving both environmental and human health."

Rublee anticipates having a prototype in about six months, with proper funding, and a device would be possible within about a year. He believes the development of a truly comprehensive and automated system will likely occur in steps and take two to five years, depending on the level of investment.

The final doctor to receive funding is Nadja Cech, principal investigator of her project, as well as an associate professor of Analytical Chemistry.

Cech was awarded \$363,846 for "Production of Echinacea with optimal Bioactivity, Improving market value of a N.C. crop."

As stated in a proposal to the UNC Research Competitiveness Fund, Echinacea is the most used natural remedy for curing colds and the flu. The reason prescriptions have not been being written in the U.S. is results from clinical trials have varied. Some show a positive result while others show no effect at all.

Cech and her team, including Dr. Noah W. Allen from UNCA, Dr. Jeanine M. Davis of NCSU, Dr. Scott M. Laster from NCSU, and Dr. Gregory M. Raner of UNCG, have discovered there needs to be more careful quality control in order to get more accurate results.

The project summary outlines

the long term goal of the group's research as developing "effective therapeutic preparations based on Echinacea grown in North Carolina."

"The major goal of the project is to benefit farmers in the state of North Carolina by showing with growing conditions produce Echinacea with particularly high efficacy," explains Cech.

Cech also believes what they learn should help farmers in the area so they can produce crops with higher market value. Echinacea, she believes, could also be good for treating illnesses such as a cold.

When asked the time period until this project will be completed, Cech says the six-month grant was only the beginning. She expects the project to be worked on for years to come.



Dr. Nadja Cech

WWW.UNCG.EDU

Library hours change

Lili Johnson
Staff Writer

With the start of the new semester, the Jackson Library will be making some changes.

Starting Jan. 14, the first floor of the library will be open 24 hours Sunday through Thursday to UNCG users with ID. The SuperLab, which was previously open until 12 a.m. will now be open until 3 a.m.

Ashlee Robertson, a senior desk worker for the library, explained that the reasoning behind these new hours had to do with a lot of expressed student interest.

"People were always coming up [to the desk] asking us what time the library closed, and asking why it wasn't open later."

When asked why the SuperLab

wouldn't be open 24 hours Robertson speculated that it probably had to do with not having enough SuperLab employees who were available those hours.

Staff Jennifer Morrow and Michelle Courtney explained their concerns about the new hours.

"We're afraid students might get upset about not being able to get up to the stacks, and that they will have to leave while we close."

They explained that closing procedures will have to be performed and then everyone will have to re-enter with their student ID. This is to ensure that only UNCG personnel will be making use of these new hours.

Currently, in order to promote the new hours, bookmarks are being given to those who check out books.

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Texas Virtual Academy lets kids attend public school online

Karen Ayres Smith
The Dallas Morning News
MCT

DALLAS—Going to school now means going online for Victoria McClure-Esqueda.

The Irving 8-year-old is one of hundreds of students across North Texas who have enrolled at the Texas Virtual Academy at Southwest, an online public school that opened to area students for the first time in 2007.

The students work at home and study a curriculum created by a contracted company, but they can earn the same credits as students who attend any other public school in the state.

For Victoria, online learning means studying some advanced fourth-grade courses and, perhaps more important, not slacking off.

"She kind of just decided to zone out at school," said Jenifer McClure, Victoria's mother. "If she's at home, we know she won't be zoning out because she doesn't have that option."

The growing program puts Texas in the middle of a booming national experiment with online education.

Companies across the country have

signed lucrative deals with state and local education agencies to offer curriculum and technology services in exchange for part of the money that typically goes to local school districts.

Advocates and scholars of online education say the technology lets students work at their own speeds, but monitoring student attendance and performance can be challenging when students don't see their teachers every day.

The Texas Education Agency has long allowed school districts to offer some online courses, but this program marks a major shift because the state is now paying a public charter school to educate students who never attend the school building.

The program looks a lot like home-schooling, but it carries far more requirements: Professional teachers monitor students' attendance and academic progress every day. The students must also pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills tests.

Kate Loughrey, TEA's distance-learning director, said TEA is closely monitoring the school's test scores and other factors to see what works. The results could shape virtual education across

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UNCG opens center in Kannapolis

Lili Johnson
Staff Writer

Stephanie Patton
News Editor

According to a recent press release, UNCG's Center for Research Excellence in Bioactive Food Components has opened an office in Kannapolis, part of North Carolina's Research Campus, that will be a temporary headquarters until construction is completed in the permanent laboratories.

The department recently hired Kelly Elliot as an office manager, while they continue interviews for a permanent center director.

The new director will serve as one of the center's two senior research professors. Currently, the department only has an interim center director, Dr. Debbie Kipp who is chair of the Department of Nutrition.

"We're thrilled to be a part of it; it's an exciting opportunity," said Kipp, as quoted on the Human Environmental Sciences' website.

The center will be run by two UNCG senior research professors/research scientists along with their research assistants and staff.

"One of the two scientists would oversee the operations of the center and interact with other directors on that campus," explained Kipp. "We'll also make a major effort to integrate [the Kannapolis] research with our department."

The construction of the UNC Nutrition Research Building is progressing and is expected to be finished in the Spring of 2008. UNCG will occupy 5,000 square feet of lab and office space.



A rendering of the UNC Nutrition Research Building provides a taste of the future for North Carolina.

WWW.UNCG.EDU

UNCG operates as a partner in the research campus with Duke, N.C. State, UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. A&T, and UNC-Charlotte. These six campuses will have programs based at NCRC.

According to the UNCG Center for Research Excellence in Bioactive Food Components website, the center expects to explore cellular and molecular mechanisms of action of bioactive food components in order to have a better understanding of molecular targets for dietary components and to be able to expand fundamental

understanding of benefits to human health and wellness, healthy aging, and prevention of diseases like cancer.

For more information regarding the center, visit <http://www.uncg.edu/ntr/ncrc> or email Dr. Kipp at d_kipp@uncg.edu.

CRISIS FROM PAGE ONE

you have any information about the shooter, notify the police immediately. Updated information will be broadcasted over AM 1640 and the University's webpage as it becomes available. This is an exercise."

The simulation gave police a chance to practice proper crisis procedures and according to Hummel the event was successful.

"Overall we are very pleased with the outcome," said Hummel.

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got so many.**

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VIRTUAL FROM PAGE TWO

the state for years to come.

"We knew as a state that (online learning) is something that can offer terrific opportunities to kids in different situations," Loughrey said. "We're conducting the program so we can learn what we need to learn as a state in order to support and enable quality online learning."

Victoria starts her day around 8 a.m.

A precocious middle child, she plops in front of a computer squeezed next to a television in her family's Irving apartment. The school sent the computer and boxes of supplies at no cost when she enrolled last month.

First up is answering her teacher's question of the day—today, it's in history—designed to prepare her for the upcoming state TAKS tests that all virtual students must take.

Victoria pinpoints the location of the original 13 colonies. By sending her answer, she confirms to her virtual teacher that she is present for the day.

Her dad and at-home teacher, Joe Esqueda, lets her pick her next subject. The school lays out her schedule for the day, but she gets to choose the order.

Her pick, as usual, is math.

She has already studied the introduction to dividing large numbers online, so she moves over to one of several workbooks scattered across a coffee table. Much of her time is spent offline, reading books or doing experiments, for example.

Victoria was a third-grader at Gilbert Elementary, but her placement test for virtual school showed she was ready for fourth grade in some subjects, including math.

Her dad helps with a tough question.

When they both need help, they e-mail her virtual teacher. Or Jenifer McClure fills in when she gets home from work.

"If she is stuck on it, we can go over it 300 times," McClure says.

Victoria must earn at least an 80 percent on this lesson's assessment to move to the next one. She asks her mom for help, but her parents won't assist when it comes to grades.

"It's a test; I can't touch it," McClure tells her daughter.

Victoria will soon get a break for lunch. By the end of the day, she'll have spent about six hours working on her lessons, even literature, which she could do



Victoria McClure Esqueda, 8, ponders a math problem during a morning home school session.

JIM MAHONEY/DALLAS MORNING NEWS/MCT

without.

Most days, she'll also have to run around a track for exercise and attend Girl Scout meetings or outings with other virtual school students to hang out with kids.

"It's fun," Victoria says of virtual school.

That's a big step for a girl who was so bored at school a few months ago that she didn't turn in completed assignments. Her dad found them under the couch.

Still, her parents aren't sure whether it would work for their other two children—Megan, 6,

and Alex, 11—who both do well at Gilbert Elementary.

Victoria "wants to be the center of attention at all times," Esqueda says with a laugh as he turns to his daughter. "Now finish your assessment, baby girl. Now."

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Marketing, Consumerism, and Reconsidering Freedom

"In a place where manipulation of our everyday lives is so common and penetrating, can we really consider ourselves to be free?"

Sam Sullivan
Staff Writer

Upon walking out of my door at 8 a.m., I was greeted by Tony the Tiger's friendly grin plastered on the side of a brand new PT Cruiser. The image just seemed to scream that Frosted Flakes are "Great!" Then, driving down the street to work, two beautiful women cradling bottles of Miller Light stared seductively down at me from a billboard on the side of the road. Somehow I knew that if I drank Miller Lite at the next party I went to, I would meet someone just like them. While reading the newspaper at lunch I discovered the only thing missing from my life were regular trips to the N-Club downtown, according to the advertisement splashed across two pages. After arriving at home around 6 p.m., I sat down to watch the news and found out that, with a new BMW, my coworkers and friends would respect me more, and I would finally meet the woman of my dreams.

Sometimes just going down the street I feel completely consumed by the barrage of mix messages and marketing. Am I really living in "the land of the free?"

Advertising is everywhere; it's something we cannot escape from even if we wanted. According to a study by Yankelovich Inc., we view an average of three to five thousand commercials and marketing messages each day. Many of these are not benign public service announcements that inform us of how we can improve our lives—they are psychological ploys that prey on our fears, our

subconscious desires, and our self-esteem. In fact, marketing specialists hire expert psychologists for this very purpose. They target us as children, and in doing so, trap many of us into the role of loyal consumers until our death.

Marketing to children has escalated significantly in the last decade. Doubling from 1992 to 1997, it has become so pervasive studies have shown that by six months of age children already respond to recognizable brands. Logos and product images are incorporated into games and board books designed for babies. Children learn to associate these images with their parents and pleasurable feelings, thus teaching them to associate these good feelings with the products themselves. These images stay implanted in our minds well into adulthood and have a great effect on our purchasing decisions. One study showed that pre-school children thought that McDonald's, in a McDonald's bag, tasted up to six times better than McDonald's in a plain bag. They also found that basic foods such as milk and carrots "tasted" better when children thought they had come from McDonald's.

During adolescence, these same companies use our developmental vulnerabilities in order to market to us by preying on our erratic emotions or sense of rebelliousness. For example, the cigarette industry marketed to adolescents by using advertising to manufacture the perception of "what" a cigarette smoker looks like. This type of commercial motivated children to smoke in

order to project the manufactured image of a smoker onto themselves. Companies exploit every angle possible in order to maximize earnings, and they do it effectively.

When commercials are aired on television they take a qualitative leap in their effect. Watching television switches your mind from a beta to an alpha brainwave pattern. Beta brainwave patterns help you engage in logical and critical thought. Alpha patterns, however, disrupt your ability to think critically and put you in a hypnotic, dreamlike state. Television essentially makes you highly receptive to subconscious suggestion thereby allowing advertisers to "implant" product memories and images in your mind to make the association with the tone of the commercial (pleasure, fun, comfort, etc).

When we are bombarded every day with sophisticated technology, honed to perfection and aimed at manipulating us and creating the perfect consumer, is it possible to break the mold we have been shaped into when we grow to be adults? Can we learn to separate our identities completely from the products we have been trained to associate ourselves with? These are questions we should be asking ourselves, and, if we cannot come up with satisfactory answers, we should be seeking to create a different world.

We bear no physical chains yet we are immeasurably influenced by sources outside of ourselves. Johann Goethe once said, "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." These haunting words stand

Letters to the Editor

No love for student organizations

My name is Ekatherina Osman and I am a fourth year student at UNCG. After transferring from University of Wilmington, I chose to start UNICEF-UNCG in order to make a positive impact on campus and the community.

I was leading the group into its third year when I missed one of the affiliation meetings. I didn't think it would be such a big deal since my group members and I went to every leadership conference (most being quite pointless and universally dreaded), all of the affiliation meetings, and had completed the required paperwork on time for years (that semester included).

CAP told us we lost our affiliation for the spring semester. I mean, we raise awareness and money for children who are dying in the world. I didn't think the university would basically say, "No, because you didn't turn in pointless and repetitive paperwork this semester, you cannot use any of our resources to help suffering children. Oh, and by the way, your tuition bill is due next week. Cheers."

As I reflect back on college, I have the distinct feeling that the public universities are trying to mold us into robots. How many of us have had a grade drop because we were—gasp—tardy? And for those who want to argue that this teaches discipline, I would like to say, who is actually going to show

up late to their job consistently and think they won't get fired? I mean, are we being taught to tap into our creative and unique intellectual capabilities or are we being taught to show up on time and do as we're told?

This is one of the ways that universities and governments control us so we won't start asking scary questions like, "Why do I have such a huge debt and a low-paying job while a small percentage of people in this country own half of the wealth?" Or, on a smaller but equally significant scale, "Why are tuition-paying students being intimidated by cops while advancing dignified causes such as voter registration?" And, "Why is UNCG promoting these types of actions?"

Rules are there to organize and promote logic (idealistically of course). There is no logic in denying affiliation to student groups whose cause it is to help children because of missing one meeting. There is no logic in harassing student groups, affiliated or not, unless you want to suppress that thing they call democracy.

My frustration, as well as the frustration of other student leaders, advocates, and volunteers is mounting. If nothing develops out of this, just be assured that when we become human rights lawyers, doctors, and NGO Presidents, you aren't getting any of our alumni dollars.

Ekatherina Osman

out in my mind every time I hear a commercial or gaze upon a billboard. We live in a country where everyday is a synesthetic experience. Children's laughter tastes like the slices of a pie chart, and

airplane crashes sound like the beating of war drums. In a place where manipulation of our everyday lives is so common and penetrating, can we really consider ourselves to be free?

THE Carolinian
UNCG's student newspaper since 1919

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Letters may be submitted to:

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Letters submitted by 5 p.m. Friday will run in next Tuesday's edition. Word limit is 250 for letters, 550 for guest columns. Submissions may be edited for length or clarity. NO UNSIGNED SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION. All submissions come under possession of The Carolinian. The views expressed in the Opinions section of The Carolinian do not represent the views of The Carolinian or its staff unless stated.



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Why vote if you're screwed either way?



Lavender Menace

Brook Taylor
Opinions
Editor

While so many are already pumped up for this year's presidential elections, I'm preparing to suffer a year full of frustration and headaches from hearing about it all. Don't get me wrong, I understand the excitement—it's thrilling to be able to stand behind the candidate that you feel will represent you well and bring a much-needed breath of fresh air into the White House. I wish I could be that optimistic.

Instead, I'm a realistic lesbian with same-sex marriage and improved hate crime laws on my mind, and I know there isn't a candidate out there willing to wholeheartedly stand up for me and my queer brothers and sisters. Not one that could actually win, anyway. So where's my incentive to vote?

Dennis Kucinich is giving it a nice shot, though; he is the only candidate who supports full marriage equality. Bill Richardson is another relatively gay-friendly candidate, but neither of these democrats realistically stand a chance against their three biggest rivals: Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and John Edwards.

This is the part where I really become disheartened with our current political climate. These three—the only ones capable of

snagging the nomination of the supposedly progressive Democratic party—are all against gay marriage.

What the hell is that about? After the nightmare the Bush administration has put us through with the Iraq War, I thought we Americans could at least agree on one thing: this time around, we need a progressive, problem-solving president who has advanced beyond the "us versus them" mindset. The problem with all of the candidates who are against gay marriage is that they are stuck in this exact way of thinking.

Plain and simple, denying homosexuals the same rights that heterosexuals enjoy is discrimination. It is an instant demotion to a second-class citizen status. Forget whatever else you've heard—sexuality, like race or gender, is *not* something a person chooses. It blows my mind that such a large percentage of my fellow Americans—and presidential candidates—still think it's okay to deny basic rights to people based solely on who they love.

So what's a homo to do? Well, it might not get us anywhere anytime soon, but at least we've still got the right to vote. Naturally, the democratic candidates are more gay-friendly than their republican

competition—just don't count on them to tell you that.

You see, Clinton, Obama, and Edwards are all so busy wooing the nation with their pretty plans to fix Bush's mistakes that they would rather gloss over the gay issues to avoid alienating other vot-

tance happens is through visibility. Unlike the republican candidates—most of whom have their anti-LGBT stances listed clearly on their websites—the democrats dance all around them, dodging and ducking any queer questions to focus on more "important"

Huckabee the homophobe.

But things could definitely be worse. Even though none of the front-running democratic candidates support gay marriage, all three of them *do* support civil unions and strengthened hate crime and anti-discrimination laws, which is acceptable for now.

At this point, my outlook on the 2008 election may be a little dreary, but I do have a favorite candidate picked out. Based mostly on his inclusion of LGBT issues in his campaign—and yes, you will find that on his website—my support goes to former Sen. John Edwards. In addition to supporting civil unions, gay adoption, and increased protection under hate crime laws, Edwards also supports a repeal of the hideous Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, and he is totally against any constitutional amendment that would define marriage as a union between only a man and a woman.

Personally, I won't be happy until I can legally marry my girlfriend in this country and enjoy all of the benefits that come along with it—

including being able to call our union a marriage. Until that happens, you can count on me always searching for a candidate who can promise the closest thing to it.



Lesbians protesting for their rights. IMAGE FROM PUBLIC DOMAIN

ers. Neither Clinton nor Obama have their stances on LGBT issues posted on their websites. That's a big omission, especially since one of the major ways LGBT accep-

and "relevant" topics because they think they've already got our vote in the bag.

Unfortunately, they're right. It's not like we're going to vote for

A jihad of my own



Brittany Davis

Staff Writer

I went on break at the end of fall semester expecting to have three weeks where I could just relax, stay up until obnoxious times of the morning, have fun and for once not really learn anything. For all my hoping and planning the very opposite happened. I ended up learning more about one of my friends than I ever thought I wanted to know, and I began learning a completely different belief system as well as lessons about respect and some others who, prior to all of this, I called friends.

It started—this whole learning a lot about things I never knew I wanted to know—when my sister told me she was really interested in studying Islam with the desire to convert. While some people would have been scared or worried or trying to dissuade her, I felt so happy and proud. I told her I'd do whatever I could to help make sure she had the correct information that would allow her to learn and practice correctly. Hell, now I had a real reason to bug my friend with all of my questions that I had been too shy to ask.

Maybe I'm weird for encouraging spiritual growth in my sister or for thinking that at 15 someone is old enough to know what they want to believe in terms of religion, but I do feel that way. I don't know if this was one of those fate things or just a really awesome and convenient coincidence but one of my friends is a Muslim woman who, while she

calls herself a new convert (six years), wears hijab (traditional head covering for women), says her prayers, only eats halal meats and feels that it's part of her jihad (religious mission) to educate those with questions or concerns about Islam. I said one thing to her about my sister and I wanting to learn about Islam and I could

anything about the religion that would cause me to stay up all night reading and jotting down questions, I respect the religion and know it to be a very beautiful and peaceful religion. There are some tenants that I don't agree with and I know that in recent years Islam has gotten a ton of bad press and an undeserved bad

reputation, but there are crazies and extremists in any religion who can take something that's absolutely wonderful in its pure state and turn it into something ugly and oppressive.

I suppose that could be a large factor in why some people have said snide little comments about Islam in the past when it's come up in conversations. But lately, it's become personal. My good friend is Muslim, my sister is seriously studying and wanting to wear hijab and cover, and I'm growing to love the religion the more I learn about it. More than that, I'm so proud of my little sister for soul searching and wanting spiritual growth and being honestly willing to commit time and work to study.

So in doing the whole proud big sister thing, I'm already planning ahead for the celebration that will follow after my sister officially takes an oath to Allah and becomes a Muslim in the eyes of the religion. So far my joy and pride in her has cost me some friends. One friend accused her of "doing the stereotypical black kid thing" and another said something along the lines of "doesn't she know of all the wrongs against human rights that Muslims are responsible for?" Both of them were swiftly told to shut up and to never say anything like that in my presence ever again, and then were fussed at until I knew it was best to be quiet.

I understand that everything has stereotypes and preconceived notions that surround it, but to downplay someone's intelligence by accusing them of taking on something so big just to be a stereotype, or to define an entire religion by the actions of a few—and to have that done by people who called themselves

"Maybe my religious mission is to get people to shed stereotypes about religion and to get otherwise intelligent people to stop simply believing bad press, and to question and learn for themselves."

not get the girl to shut up. Her face lit up and she was so happy to let us read her books, try on her hijabs, answer our questions as best she could and most importantly, making herself available to study with my sister. It made me want to cry tears of joy.

Even though I have no desire to convert, there are some aspects Islam that I feel very drawn to and that I feel could have saved me from a lot of sadness and troubles. Even if I didn't find

my friends and claimed to be open-minded—it all just made me livid.

When did respect for people and their intelligence and spirituality go out the window? I admit, I had several misconceptions about the religion but never enough to say such ignorant things. I was lucky enough to be given books to read that answered my questions and eased my doubts and made me more able to encourage and support my sister in the steps she's taking. I'll never understand why we can't just talk and understand and respect each other but we really need it. The lack of respect is doing more than ending friendships.

Maybe my religious mission is to get people to shed stereotypes about religion and to get otherwise intelligent people to stop simply believing bad press, and to question and learn for themselves. Also, I apologize if I misnamed something or explained something in any way other than the right way. I'm learning from someone who is also still learning so please forgive the mistakes I make along the way.

Let's get ready to rumble

From Right Field

Natasha Sell
Staff Writer

I have to admit that towards the end of 2007 I had a bad case of election fatigue. As much as I love politics, I was just as tired as everyone else of hearing what the Clinton campaign was doing to smear Barack Obama or that John McCain's campaign was DOA. With the elections still a year away, the extensive coverage was a bit much. However, the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary results gave me a much-needed double espresso type boost and now I am more excited than ever about the presidential elections this year.

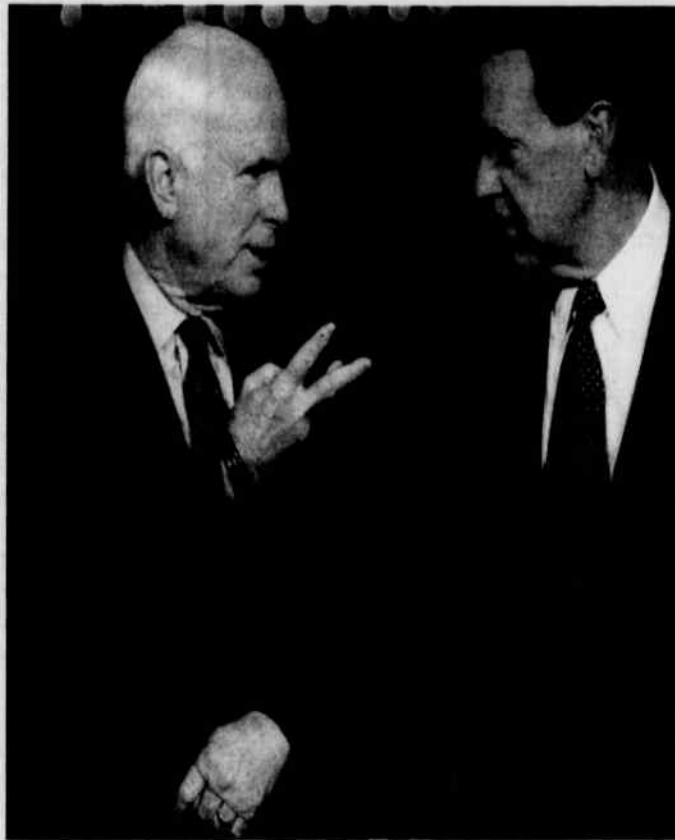
Perhaps part of my fatigue came from the fact that I am a huge supporter of John McCain. Yes, that's right, John McCain. I feel that he is one republican who has shown it is ok to reach across the aisle and foster a spirit of bipartisanship. He also does not cave to every whim of the party and is willing to stand up and say "This is wrong." Ask any of my friends and they will tell you I will defend McCain all day long, even when

they were telling me I would be wasting a vote by voting for him. Well, if I'm wrong then I guess I'd better move to New Hampshire because they seem to agree with me.

See, the problem with this idea of throwing away votes is that if you vote for someone else, just so your vote counts, you are selling yourself short. We live in a society where we get to voice our opinion at the ballot box. If you're not being truthful to yourself and your fellow members of society, what's the point? I'll admit, seeing McCain's numbers drop for a few months was deflating and led to my fatigue with the elections, but I refused to abandon what I believed. In the meantime, I did more research and found another republican candidate I could stand behind as well: Mike

Huckabee.

I was fortunate enough to attend a Huckabee reception last month and was very impressed



McCain and Huckabee.

IMAGE FROM PUBLIC DOMAIN

with the man. He talks and you want to listen; he is that dynamic. Plus, he has truly made himself stand out among such people as Mitt Romney and Fred Thomp-

son by being someone who does not moan and complain, but actually has plans. I am shocked that Huckabee came in behind Romney in New Hampshire. Did anyone in New Hampshire watch the debate? Huckabee was a composed man who was offering viable plans to fix the nation's problems and was always followed by Mitt Romney saying "No, that's not possible."

I don't know about you, but I would rather support a candidate who has plans to fix this nation's problems, not someone who does not. I look at it this way—Kennedy said we would have a man on the moon by 1970. Guess what? It happened! Having a narrow view of the possibilities is not what this country needs. I truly hope that more people begin listening to Huckabee and that as more primaries take place, the results look more like the Iowa Caucuses, with Mike Huckabee sweeping the field.

I was also pleasantly surprised

with events on the democratic side. I will state right here that I do not support any of the democratic candidates. The only one I would have even considered voting for was Joe Biden and he dropped out. However, between the top three runners, I would have to say that in my eyes Barack Obama is the lesser of three evils. I was pleased to see how well he did in Iowa and even more surprised that Sen. Clinton came in third. Granted she only came in one percentage point behind John Edwards, but it still makes a statement. I for one am not surprised by her showing. The media has had her on top for so long that she eventually had to fall. She came back to win the New Hampshire primary, but it looks as if she is not the guaranteed winner she has been touting herself to be, and that she had better watch out for Obama.

Overall, these results have me very excited for the Super Tuesday primaries. Right now the game has changed, and the expectations that we all have are no more. Hillary Clinton is not a sure bet. John McCain is right back in the running. How will it all work out? I don't know but I cannot wait to find out. Let's get ready to rumble.



MCT



"C'mon, Sara. Like you wouldn't consider — even for a second — accepting an iPhone from the devil."

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'Born Standing Up'

Steve Martin's brainy guide to stand up comedy

Levi Asher
Philadelphia Inquirer
MCT

Many comedians have written memoirs, but few have risked much in the effort. It's all too easy to package a stage routine into a book, slap on a grinning front-cover portrait and a catchy one-word title (Seinlanguage, Fatherhood) and hope nobody remembers hearing the same funny stories on "The Tonight Show" last year.

But Steve Martin has never taken the easy way out, and his latest offering will be held to high literary standards by readers who have enjoyed his previous books. These include a collection of Dadaist prose pieces ("Cruel Shoes"), a brainy play ("Picasso at the Lapin Agile"), and, more recently, a wan love story ("Shopgirl") involving a mild-tempered and wealthy adult rather like himself. Having taken that last step toward personal revelation, Martin now dives completely into the memoir format with "Born Standing Up," an autobiography that doubles as a dissertation on how to be funny in front of crowds.

The art of stand-up comedy is the specific focus of the book, which reveals its California-raised and Disneyland-trained author to be an incredible workaholic and a bit of a laugh-o-meter wonk. From his youngest days as an amateur magician he tirelessly studied and analyzed the way audiences reacted to his every move, and he kept careful notes after every performance to help him better calibrate the jokes for the next one. If you ever doubted that there was a method to Steve Martin's madness, you will be convinced otherwise as he ex-

plains why a white suit is the best thing for a comedian to wear on-stage, or finds himself suddenly stopped dead by the existential question of whether the comedy writers of the world will ever exhaust the supply of fresh material (he allows himself to resume his career only after realizing that "comedy is a distortion of what's happening, and there will always be something happening"). His intellectual process is breathtaking to observe, and it's no surprise at all when Martin cites the likes of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Rene Descartes as formative influences, along with a few more predictable choices like Red Skelton, Lenny Bruce, and Laurel and Hardy.

"Born Standing Up" offers a fascinating glimpse of an odd brain doing its work, as well as an enjoyable sweep through America's pop culture past. As a teenager, Martin considered it a big step up when he left his Disneyland magician gig to perform with a comedy troupe at Knott's Berry Farm, and then wandered north to San Francisco to play the beatnik bars. He developed his signature routines years before they became famous on "Saturday Night Live," and perfected them while touring as an opening act for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band or slumming with the guest hosts on "The Tonight Show" because Johnny Carson didn't like his style.

Martin clearly feels more comfortable talking about his career than about his feelings, though he writes of a frustrating relationship with his failed-actor father who didn't like anything he did until "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" in 1993. He suggests that panic attacks and chronic shyness have affected his career path, and de-

scribes moody moments of loneliness even as he is surrounded by beautiful women eager to love him. Martin also expresses some resentment toward his own career, especially after he shoots to fame in the late '70s and discovers that crowds no longer want him to surprise them, but instead want him to play "party host, presiding over a celebratory bash of my own making." His act is built upon confounding audience expectations, but by the late '70s the stadium audiences just want him to deliver the familiar routines. He walks away from stand-up comedy after a bad show in 1981, and the book ends at that point.

"Born Standing Up" does not contain many jokes, though several comedy bits are analyzed as case studies. Martin's sense of humor does peek through the solemn veneer at times, as when he describes a Summer of Love-era San Francisco cafe owner named Sylvia Fennell: "She didn't know much about show business, having once told a ventriloquist to move the dummy closer to the microphone."

Martin is a careful and precise writer, and at moments of inspiration he achieves a swanlike elegance as he glides through his life story. Readers may wish this book were thicker, but Steve Martin will never wear out an audience's welcome. He risks something deeper here by trusting his audience to continue to love him even after he reveals how hard he has always worked to make them do so. They will. Like the timeless "Harpo Speaks" by Harpo Marx, Steve Martin's "Born Standing Up" is that rare thing, an autobiography by a comedian that improves the jokes by explaining them.

Top 10 movies in 2007

John Boschni
Staff Writer

Over 300 movies were released during 2007, and due to my apparent lack of a social life I was able to see most of those that had a chance of being good. Unfortunately, I was unable to make it to see *Alvin And The Chipmunks*, but I have a sneaky suspicion it would have not made this list. Every movie that made this list was worth every penny of the ticket price and then some. However, there are movies I simply love that just missed the list so I have decided to present honorable mentions to the following films, *Hot Fuzz*, *Zodiac*, *Superbad*, *Waitress*, *Gone Baby Gone*, *Enchanted*. The proceeding movies are more then worth the five bucks it costs to rent them from your local video store. Here they are, the best of the best of 2007:

10) *The Bourne Ultimatum*—Paul Greengrass's latest addition to the Bourne series is as close to perfect as any action movie in a very long time. An all-star cast led by Matt Damon and David Strathairn make the action genre smart again. No longer are action heroes gun-toting muscle men with inflexible morals; instead they're human with flaws, and Matt Damon is anything but inspirational. The twists are almost too much to handle, and Greengrass is nothing if not original. Also, Matt Damon kills a guy with a book and a towel. What's not to like?

9) *Sweeney Todd*—This cinematic adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's wildly popular musical is easily the most disturbing film put to music. Johnny Depp stars as Todd, a barber who was wrongfully accused of a crime so that an evil judge (Alan Rickman) can steal his family for his own sinister reasons. Upon his return he finds his wife gone and his daughter a prisoner. He does what any rational thinking human being would do—kill everyone who sits in his barber's chair. All of the actors involved prove that they can sing with the best of them (even Borat). Tim Burton has a very disturbed imagination, but fortunately for moviegoers, it enables him to make incredible movies. My only warning is that if you do not like violence or copious amounts of blood, you might want to avoid this movie and buy the soundtrack instead.

8) *Knocked Up*—Judd Apatow is crowned the king of Hollywood humor with this comedy about Seth Rogan and Katherine Heigl and their experience with an unexpected and initially unwelcome pregnancy. Not only is this one of the funniest movies of the year, it also has an incredible amount of heart. The characters feel like real people, complete with flaws and often glaring imperfections. In an age when movies such as *Who's Your Caddy?* are the bulk of so-

called comedies, this one showed that funny can also have a brain.

7) *Eastern Promises*—This is the best gangster film no one ever saw. The story revolves around Viggo Mortenson, a driver/assassin for a prominent Russian crime family in London, and Naomi Watts, a midwife who finds a journal written in Russian that divulges all the family's secrets. This might be the most insightful film about the interworkings of a crime family since *The Godfather*. Also, the scene where a naked Viggo Mortenson owns two rival gangsters in a bathhouse is nothing short of epic.

6) *Ratatouille*—I am a self-professed Pixar disciple to begin with, but Brad Bird's latest cinematic venture took my affection to a whole new level. A rat with a passion for the culinary arts is neither charming nor humorous in and of itself, but by the end I found myself rooting for this adorable little rodent and his dimwitted human counterpart. It's quite rare that a film can be enjoyed equally by adults and children and still be a movie that puts a genuine smile on the audience's face.

5) *No Country For Old Men*—When it comes to suspense, there is none better than this modern day Western directed by the Coen brothers. Josh Brolin, Javier Bardem, and Tommy Lee Jones star in this nail-biting thriller involving a psychopathic killer (Bardem), a man with the killer's money (Brolin), and a small town sheriff trying to track them both. As the movie progresses the body count rises and the causes of death become more sadistic. The pacing is such that there is never a moment where the audience is allowed a breath. Somehow the Coen's take the backdrop of the desolate Midwestern desert and convert it into the setting for the most edge-of-your seat thriller of the year.

4) *Into the Wild*—Sean Penn makes his directorial debut in this heartfelt tale of a college graduate who hitchhikes his way to Alaska in the spirit of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emile Hirsch stars as Alexander Supertramp, who meets an array of characters including Vince Vaughn and the brilliant Hal Holbrook. Even though Supertramp thinks of himself as the perfect alternative to modern society, he becomes an inspiration to free spirit and detachment from possession. This inspiration makes his inevitable demise all the more tragic.

3) *Before The Devil Knows Your Dead*—When will people learn that robbery is never a good idea? Especially a robbery that involves your parent's jewelry store. This is the premise of 83-year-old Sidney Lumet's latest film. Ethan Hawke and Phillip Seymour Hoffman star as brothers whose robbery

Foo Fighters are Grammy darlings, arena headliners

Jim Abbott
The Orlando Sentinel
(MCT)

Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl and Taylor Hawkins were the most entertaining part of last month's Grammy nominations, stumbling all over the pronunciation of best new artist nominee Ledisi.

Now, it looks like the band's performance could be the highlight of the prime-time Grammy telecast on Feb. 10 (8 p.m. EST on CBS). The Foos will be accompanied by winners of the Recording Academy's second annual Grammy Moment contest, in which aspiring musicians submit clips of their work on YouTube for a chance to play along with the band.

"It looks like a bunch of people," says Hawkins, who admits

that he didn't see last year's Grammy Moment featuring Justin Timberlake. "We're going to get a little orchestra."

"I think its cool, in a way, with a bunch of kids, because it's exciting for them. I'd rather do that than do some mash-up with Jay-Z, with all due respect to Jay-Z. I think this fits more for us."

In addition to playing at the event, the Foos have a chance to add another Grammy to the trophy case. The band scored five nominations, including nods for best album (*Echoes, Silence, Patience & Grace*) and for best record ("The Pretender").

Major-category recognition came as a surprise to Hawkins.

"Just to be nominated is really cool, but I don't really have any dreams that we'll get it," he says. "We're up against people like

Kanye West, and compared with that, it's like 'Who are these guys?' We're really gnarly, you know what I mean."

"We're just a little rock band, but it's always nice to be acknowledged in some way."

Over a decade, Hawkins and his little rock band have transformed themselves into arena headliners, a job made easier by their extroverted leader, Grohl.

The first Foo Fighters album, a Grohl solo project, sold a million copies. The follow-up, *The Colour and the Shape*, doubled that, and the third (*There is Nothing Left to Lose*) won a Grammy for best rock album in 2000.

In 2007, the band played to a worldwide audience at London's Live Earth concert.

SEE GRAMMY ON PAGE 19

SEE MOVIES ON PAGE 19

Click, click, boom: Aspiring artists find fame as viral musicians

Mike Osegueda
McClatchy Newspapers
MCT

FRESNO, Calif.—He didn't think it was going to take off the way it did.

That's what Andy McKee says. That's what they all say.

No more than 14 months ago, Andy McKee was the kind of musician you'd find in most every city in America. He was a guy with a dream. And it was a simple dream really.

"All I've ever said, since I was 14 years old, is that if I can make a living playing guitar, that's all I need," McKee says, from his home in Topeka, Kan. "I don't need a mansion or anything."

Then his little world of giving guitar lessons and playing his own finger-picking gigs ran into a Goliath named YouTube.

Nearly 30 million views later, McKee has found fame—and his dream—as a viral musician.

That same forward-this-to-everyone-you-know Web-surfing mentality has helped bring about a new type of music celebrity, the musician who can do something extraordinary with an instrument, video it and then put it on the Web for millions to watch and comment.

It got McKee onto the front page of YouTube and earned him the title of the No. 1 artist on YouTube—all thanks to his most notable video, "Drifting" a three-

minute instrumental song that has amassed more than 10 million views.

Just a little context on McKee's views: In the 2007 Nielsen BDS reports released last week, the highest number of music video stream was 23 million (Avril Lavigne's "Girlfriend").

McKee's total—though beginning in mid-November 2006—would put him between Justin Timberlake and Shakira on those Nielsen charts.

"I'm playing the guitar in sort of an unusual way," McKee says, asked to explain his rash online success. "That has an appeal to people who had never seen the guitar played that way. And, maybe, the music wasn't half bad

too."

Ah, yes, the quality of the music. This is where the viral musician differs from the Internet sensation—another viral wonder, but one spiked with humor instead of virtuosity.

Thirteen million people may have watched Tay Zonday sing the quirky "Chocolate Rain" this year, but a viral musician he isn't. He's more akin to the William Hung's of the world.

Zonday was able to spin his odd voice and Internet fame into a Dr Pepper commercial. McKee, meanwhile, turned the momentum behind "Drifting" into some national touring, late-night TV appearances and big guest spot.

Vocalist Josh Groban saw McKee's work on YouTube and recruited McKee to play on "Noel," the Christmas album Groban released in October. With 3.69 million copies sold, "Noel" was the best-selling album of 2007.

"I think there's been a void in what the music labels are releasing as far as the talent levels are concerned," McKee says. "There are people who can sing or dance, but how many people are writing or creating their own music? That's why all these musicians are taking off on the Internet."

Another of those is David Sides, a 23-year-old piano player who is a recent graduate of the University of California, Riverside. As a teenager, he gained the nickname "Piano Man" because of his knack for listening to popular songs and

replaying piano versions by ear.

Friends would often ask him to come to their houses and play their pianos. Nowadays, thanks to a different type of word of mouth, he's one of the more popular artists on YouTube.

Sides' shtick is taking popular hip-hop and R&B songs and giving them a classical piano feel. "Mozart gone hip-hop," he calls it.

For a couple years, Sides says, a friend was urging him to record himself and put the videos on YouTube. Sides was skeptical at first, but eventually decided, "Maybe I should do that." In April, he put up videos of his piano versions of hit such as Sean Paul's "We Be Burnin'" and Fat Joe's "Make It Rain."

He has released 35 videos to YouTube with seven of them topping one million hits. His most popular thus far is a rendition of One Republic's "Apologize," which has gotten 2.2 million views since Nov. 7.

"It's definitely a good feeling to know that people are appreciating it," Sides says. "When I first put the songs up, I didn't really know how people would receive them. I know the persona of the piano is mostly classical and jazz. Me playing tunes like hip-hop has opened peoples' eyes. I get so many messages from people like 'I love what you do, I'm taking piano lessons now. It's all exposure—exposing people to what they can do with these instruments.'"

Like McKee's videos, Sides' are simple. Just him sitting at the piano playing. There's no flash. The music sells itself.

SEE ASPIRING ON PAGE 10

Online animation school gaining popularity

George Avalos
Contra Costa Times
MCT

WALNUT CREEK, Calif.—Fast-growing does not always come to mind when applied to educational outlets. But a school in the San Francisco Bay area for character animation fits that description nicely.

Animation Mentor, founded in Berkeley, Calif., by veterans of Pixar Animation Studios and Industrial Light & Magic, teaches students how to create animated characters. The school offers an 18-month Web-based course in drawing characters from the basics to the complex.

Unlike other animation schools, Animation Mentor's teachers don't worry about training students how to use the latest in digital technology, such as the software Pixar uses to create movies entirely on networks of computers.

Animation Mentor also differs from nearly all other such schools in another key aspect: Its classes are offered entirely and solely via the Internet.

"When we came up with the idea for this school, we figured the Internet would work great for our courses," said Bobby Beck, co-founder and chief executive officer of Animation Mentor. Beck teamed up with Shawn Kelly, an ILM senior animator; and Pixar animator Carlos Baena to co-found Animation Mentor in 2004. The company opened its doors in March 2005 and graduated its first class in September 2006.

"With lectures at bricks-and-mortars schools, we found we could only do one or two things really well," Beck said. "We might give a great lecture, but then we were out of time."

By using the Web, Animation Mentor teachers can prepare lectures ahead of time and the stu-

dents can access the lectures at their convenience.

"A student can log any time and they can watch the lectures on their own time," Beck said.

Instructors, which the school also call mentors, can work on their own time. Teachers provide students an "e-critique" of the pupil's work. The instructor, using software developed by Animation Mentor, can electronically draw on top of the student's work, making suggested changes.

Working with small groups of students, the instructors can also conduct a question-and-answer session. The instructors are animators at studios such as Pixar, ILM, DreamWorks Animation, and Blue Sky.

The Internet-based training, which costs students \$15,800, has helped the company's growth rocket higher.

"Growth is very good," said Beck, who worked at Pixar for

SEE ANIMATION ON PAGE 10

Colin Farrell plays against type in new Woody Allen movie

Roger Moore
The Orlando Sentinel
MCT

For an actor of just 31, Colin Farrell has squeezed an awful lot of "bad boy" into his brief career.

Two-fisted movie roles in films such as *Intermission*, *Hart's War*, *American Outlaws*, *Alexander* and *The New World* aren't the half of it. A four-month long marriage, a much-publicized sex video sold by another woman, a stint in rehab—he has worn the "bad boy" label with a just a hint of Irish pride.

But for his first-ever shot at making a movie with Woody Allen, the Dubliner found himself cast against type. As Terry, a mild-mannered mechanic who dreams of settling down with his girlfriend, he's the moral center of *Cassandra's Dream*. Ewan McGregor plays Ian, the overly ambitious, overly striving older brother who gets the duo in over their heads when they take on job they're utterly unqualified for—killing a man who might bring ruin to their wealthy uncle. But Terry, a soft-hearted gambler, is the one who realizes this first.

Farrell is, Sara Cardace notes in her New York Magazine review

of the film, "way more believable as Ewan McGregor's loser sibling than he'll ever be as a bronze god-hero."

We reached Farrell, Irish flip and quite funny off-the-cuff, in New York.

Question: You and Ewan McGregor had to fake a lifetime of being brothers in this movie. What did you do to allow you to pull that off?

Answer: We went bowling. And go-cart racin'. No, seriously, we didn't do anything. I went over to his house in London and we shot the breeze and talked about what it might have been like for these two brothers growing up, you know, tried to find a basis for understanding between them, what the status was in their relationship. Who is the provider and who was the receiver? Just how they related, in broad strokes.

Would how they relate be because of the age difference between them or what? Ewan's character is the guy Terry, my character, went to all his life for advice, for guidance.

Q.: Your first chance to act for

SEE FARRELL ON PAGE 19



(KRISTOPHER SKINNER/CONTRA COSTA TIMES/MCT)

Bobby Beck, CEO of AnimationMentor, is photographed at the company in Berkeley, California, December 3, 2007. Beck, a former Pixar animator, has joined with other veterans of the Bay Area animation industry to develop the online animation training company.

ANIMATION CONT. FROM PAGE 9

about six years. "When we started, people heard about us through word of mouth. With the Internet, things are so viral, that our growth has become exponential."

At the end of its first year, Animation Mentor had 350 students. It now has 700. When it was founded, the company had five employees, including Beck. It now has 28 workers and seeks to hire at least two more, according to a posting on its Web site. The company now occupies 6,700 square feet in Berkeley but is preparing to double its size and move to 14,000 square feet in Emeryville, Calif.

"We broke even our first year," Beck said. "We've been profitable ever since."

Animation Mentor's first four graduation classes produced a placement rate of 74 percent, a figure that Beck calls "pretty high," especially for a relatively new school.

When students graduate, they obtain a certified diploma in Advanced Studies in Character Animation. A catalogue posted on estimated on the school's Web site estimated that the tuition for the spring 2008 term would be \$16,350. The diploma is accredited through the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education.

"Initially, the studios weren't too sure about what we were doing," Beck said. "Now they are very interested. They have hired several of our students."

Mark Paasche, a San Leandro, Calif., resident, started classes in April and is pleased about the experience.

"I was a little skeptical about an online school, but so far the experience is amazing," Paasche said. "It has gone well beyond what I had expected. I never thought I would feel close to a student living in New York or Canada. But we are all in the same boat together. We have all learned from each other."

Some of the most talented animators in the industry help teach the students. Paasche said his training includes instruction from an individual who is a Disney legend and who was mentored by Eric Larson, one of Walt Disney's original "Nine Old Men." These nine were core animators who created some of Disney's most famous movies, starting with *Snow White* and ending with *The Rescuers*.

"It's amazing who does the training, and I'm learning so much," Paasche said. "They critique me, they suggest ways I can improve and get stronger. The teachers will scrub through my shots, frame by frame. I'm learning from top-of-the-line animators."

Matt Strangio of El Cerrito, Calif., landed contract jobs with Industrial Light & Magic and Lucas Games after he graduated from Animation Mentor.

"The best thing at the school was to be able to talk to somebody who had a day-to-day-job working at the animation studios," Strangio said. "Talking

about film-making, stories, keeping within your characters, those are the things I needed in my work. The school brought that out in me."

Strangio was working in the video game business when he was in school. The Web-based schooling fit perfectly with his game industry workload, which fluctuated greatly in its intensity.

"I could go home, watch the lectures when I wanted to," Strangio said. "I have a laptop and as long as I could get an Internet connection, I could get to the classes from anywhere."

Beck said the school he co-founded makes sure its students are trained in the basics of creating compelling characters. Those sorts of skills are essential, even in today's world of digital animation that often emphasizes gee-whiz technologies and touts entire movies created on computers.

"Everyone got so enamored with 3D animation that they think it's the software that does it all," Beck said. "We want to teach what makes the animator really great. That is the part that we really feel is missing from animation education."

And what makes that animator great today? The same thing that made Disney's "Nine Old Men" legends in their field.

"What makes a really great animator is the ability to observe the world around you," Beck said. "Our goal is to create performances that are genuine and real. We want to make the audience believe that these characters are really alive."

CLICK CONT. FROM PAGE 9

"Music today has changed," Sides says. "You hear more catchy hooks and poppy tunes. A lot of times the people who make this music aren't really playing the instruments. The actual idea of musicianship has dwindled. Exposing kids to these instruments is very important to music."

Along those same lines, local musician David Hull had his own brush with viral fame in October, when his video "Mozart A La Bass Guitar" became a hit on MySpace.

In the video, Hull, who plays in the local band Flywright, plays signature Mozart on his bass. It was a technique he worked on for four years before recording. The video sat for a while, collecting hits here and there. It wasn't until he sent an e-mail to someone at MySpace with a link to the video that it made the featured videos page.

Then the views came quick—200,000 in a day. He peaked at No. 3 on the MySpace daily charts. Other video of Hull's started doing well, too.

A few months later, he still feels the effects of his couple of days of viral fame.

"It's brought a lot of traffic to my Web site," Hull says. "I've sold many a transcription of that piece. I've had quite a few sales on iTunes for the band and my solo stuff. In making the video I hadn't really planned on doing that, but it was really cool."

And he's still getting views and comments to this day. A recent one said, "This is one of the most amazing things I think I've ever seen."

"It's really cool to get hundreds of thousands of views in a day," Hull says. "But I'm really happy it's thousands of views a day still today."



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Spartans go on rollercoaster ride over winter break

UNCG's men's basketball team is 9-6 overall and 3-3 in the SoCon this season while the women's basketball team is 3-13 overall and 1-4 in the SoCon

Caitlin McCann
Sports Editor

Will Brinson
Staff Writer

As good as Santa and winter break were to you, they might have been better to UNCG's men's basketball team.

After starting December off with three straight losses, the basketball team reeled off a season high six straight wins before falling to Chattanooga on Thursday, boosting them to 9-5 (3-2) and a second place spot in the North Division of the Southern Conference. The Spartan winning streak came just in time too, as the team is currently on a five-game road trip before returning home to face Elon on Feb. 2.

The Spartans stumbled Saturday night on their road trip, while doing their best N.C. State-at-the-Dean-Dome impersonation in Boone during a loss to Appalachian State 91-68.

In fairness, the Spartans scored 30 in the first half, but it was not enough to dig themselves out of an early 30-8 deficit, despite getting 20 points and nine boards from Kyle Hines. Four players scored in double figures for the Mountaineers, including Jeremi Booth and Ryan Abraham, who came off the bench to score 16 and 15, respectively.

The Spartans failed to crack 40 percent from the floor, while App shot an insanely white hot 58.9 percent from their end in a game that never really got close, except for a moment when the Spartans closed the lead to 11 in the second half, only to see the Mountaineers pull away again. Kendall Toney added 13 for the Spartans and Ben Stywall added 10 as the only other players to crack double figures.

The first game of a five game road trip started in Chattanooga but it also ended the Spartans' winning streak at six as the Mocs won a close battle for the Northern division 78-73.

Stephen McDowell led the way for UTC, who shot 50 percent from the floor. Mikko Koivisto was the Spartans' leading scorer with 20 points, while Toney and Hines both added 17 apiece. Hines extended his nation's leading double digit scoring game run to 64 in the loss and added 10 rebounds. Kevin Bridgewaters and Matt Gwynne added 14 and 12, respectively.

There's nothing remotely "B" about going 10 for 10 from the floor either. That's what Hines did in the Spartans' game against the Citadel, setting a single game school record while leading men's team to an 84-54 shellac-job of the Citadel.

Hines and Kevin Oleksiak were the only two players in double figures, but that was mainly a by-product of an almost awkward 47-18 halftime score that saw the former on the court for just 19 minutes. Austin Dahn led the way for the Bulldogs with 19 points while Tyrell McDowell scored 12 points with seven rebounds.

Oleksiak led the team once again (this time with 29 points, six boards and five dimes) to victory as the Spartans topped Georgia Southern 79-67.

Despite Oleksiak filling up the stat sheet, Hines was the story when the team announced that he would become the first active player to have their jersey retired, as the school plans to do later this season. Hines was strong on the defensive end with steals and three blocks, but had, ironically, his lowest rebounding output of the season, only hitting the glass three times. Louis Graham brought his A-game for the Eagles, scoring 24 points with 10 boards.

The double-digit wins continued at the beginning of 2008 as the men's team topped Central Arkansas 80-62 at home on Jan. 2. The Spartans shot 49 percent

from the floor en route to their third-highest point total of the season, led by Oleksiak, who paced the team with 28 points including a perfect five for five from beyond the arc. Hines doubled up again with 18 points, 12 boards, two steals and four blocks. For the Bears, Nate Bowie went six of 15 for 20 points and Durrell Nevells added 15.

A post Yuletide interstate "rivalry" followed for the team, as the Spartans dismantled UNCW 72-55 at the coast on Dec. 30. Hines and Oleksiak scored 16 helping the Spartans jump out to an 18-point halftime lead.

The score was closer than the game as cruise control allowed the 'Hawks to narrow the gap in the second half. Todd Hendley led all scorers, posting 20 points in the loss. Vladimir Kuljanin had 12 rebounds and Daniel Fountain scored a dozen points for the Seahawks.

A trip to the Big Apple just before Christmas yielded another win for the Spartans as they squeaked by Fordham 58-54 on Dec. 22. Hines netted another double-double (18 points, 10 boards) and recorded three more blocks to make it 20 in four

games. Oleksiak scored 11 with six assists including a three-point play with just less than two minutes to go that gave the Spartans a five-point lead. Benton Butler and Bryant Dunston scored 15 and 10, respectively, for the Rams as the team held off a late rally to get out with a win.

The team began their winter break hot streak with a win at home over Furman. Hines set another school record with seven blocks while scoring 16 points and hauling in 10 boards. He was one of five Spartans to score in double figures as the Spartans prevailed 75-63 over the Purple Paladins to even up their Southern Conference record at 1-1.

The Spartans trailed by four at half but took the lead for good early in the second behind Toney's second half three-point spree. Toney and Stywall each had 10 points with Koivisto scoring 14 and Oleksiak banking 13 in just 15 minutes. Noah States and Alex Opacic were the only Paladins in double figures as Furman fell to 0-8 on the season and 0-3 in Southern Conference play.

The Spartans took a nasty hit when Wofford's Drew Gibson nailed a dagger three pointer with less than five seconds to go as the men's team fell to the Terriers 66-65 in Spartanburg on Dec. 8.

Hines certainly showed up in the loss though, scoring 19 points with 17 rebounds, three assists and six blocks. Stywall was the Spartans' second leading scorer with 11 points.

For Wofford, Shane Nichols led the way with 20 points while shooting 40 percent (four of 10) from behind the arc. Gibson hit three of four from long distance as well, on a night when the Terriers shot better from trey land (41.7 percent) than their full floor percentage (40 percent). Noah Dahlman added a double-double with 12 points and 10 boards for Wofford.

The Spartans fell behind early, trailing 27-14 at the half. Hines had his worst shooting night of the season, going five for 20 from the floor. He certainly cannot take all the blame though—the Spartans shot a paltry 26.5 percent from the field for the game as a team and turned the ball over 18 times leading to 19 of the Hokies' points.

Hines was the only scorer in double figures for a game that got even more out of hand in the second half as Virginia Tech ran away with the lead en route to winning by 28 points. Jeff Allen led the Hokies with 16 points and 12 rebounds in 22 minutes. A.D. Vassallo scored 10 despite shooting four of 16 from the floor.

The Spartans come back closer to home next Saturday as they

square off against Elon in Burlington at 3:00 p.m. and then south of the border for games against College of Charleston and the Citadel before coming back home against Elon.

Women's basketball

UNCG's women's basketball team has snapped their early season losing streak.

The Spartans suffered their most recent loss on Jan. 12 to Western Carolina by a score of 66-53.

Kemena Brooks led the Spartans with nine points and sank her 18th consecutive free throw. Gini Grimsley helped the cause with six rebounds.

The Spartans began the game on a good note by opening with an early 6-11 lead. The game proceeded with a lot of back and forth play with Western Carolina taking the 18-14 lead.

Kendra Smith and Lakiah Hyson, who made her first collegiate start, brought the game to an 18-18 deadlock.

Western Carolina closed the half with an 11-point run and entered the final half of the game with a 38-22 lead.

Western Carolina extended their lead to 44-24 at the start of the second half. The Spartans cut the Catamount lead to 63-46 with offensive showings from Sharniece Wadelington, Jasmine Dixon, Grimsley, and Brooks.

The Spartans got within 13 points of the Catamounts but ultimately lost 66-53.

On Jan. 7 the Spartans fell to the College of Charleston 62-37.

At the start of the game it seemed that the teams were evenly matched, as each team traded points, but after the Cougars went on a 5-0 run that extended their lead to 33-21 the Spartans were unable to catch up.

According to the scoreboard it appeared that the Spartan offense was essentially nonexistent, but in reality that wasn't the case. Grimsley led the Spartans with eight points while Dixon followed close behind with six points. Brittany Frazier also put up some numbers by recording a team-high seven rebounds.

On Jan. 5 the Spartans fell to Georgia Southern at home 63-50.

Brooks led the Spartans with a game-high 17 points. Monique Floyd helped the Spartans' cause by recording 10 points. Brooks and Frazier both had a team-high six rebounds.

Agne Girstauteite gave the Spartans their first lead of the game with a lay-up. Girstauteite's efforts were in vain as the Lady Eagles tied the game 14-14 mid-



COURTESY OF CARLOS MORALES

Kyle Hines tallied his 900th career rebound against App on Saturday. Hines' jersey is scheduled to be retired at the end of the season.

BASKETBALL CONTINUED PAGE 12

...BASKETBALL

way through the first half. Back-to-back three point shots prompted the Lady Eagles to go on a run that ultimately allowed them to go into the second half with a 35-23 lead.

A basket by Hyson and two pertinent defensive plays allowed the Spartans to cut their deficit by a substantial amount.

Despite offensive efforts by the Spartans, Georgia Southern walked away with the 63-50 win.

The Spartans pulled out a comeback win when they defeated Furman 66-54 on Jan. 2.

Brooks led the Spartans with 18 points and Grimsley followed close behind with 14 points. Frazier collected a game-high 11 rebounds while Ashley Ling tallied a career-high six assists.

The Spartans began the game slowly but impressive offensive efforts from Brooks and two back-to-back blocks from Dixon and Frazier allowed the Spartans to make a substantial name for themselves in the first half. Furman's four consecutive baskets put the Spartans behind 24-18 as they entered the second half.

The Spartans took revenge in the second half when they went on an 8-0 run, thus cutting Furman's lead to 38-35.

Improvement in the Spartans' defense and a pair of baskets from Grimsley gave the Spartans the 39-38 lead. A basket from Wadlington extended the Spartan lead to 41-40.

The offense picked up on both ends of the court but the Spartans hit it where it counted by closing the game with five baskets in a row giving the Spartans the 66-54 win.

The Spartans closed out 2007 with a dominating 68-37 win over Chowan on Dec. 28 in their final non-conference match up.

Brooks led the Spartans with 13 points and freshman TaShama Banner exploded off the bench by sinking a career-high eight points in nine minutes. Meghan Chamberlain recorded her 500th career-point along with a team-

high seven rebounds.

In the final game of the Central Florida Holiday Classic on Dec. 20 the Spartans lost a close 76-73 game to Central Florida.

Brooks recorded an impressive season-high 21 points. Frazier tallied 13 points while Grimsley followed closely behind with 10 points.

Floyd ignited the Spartans' spark with an early steal that prompted the Spartans' early 3-2 lead. Floyd also scored five of UNCG's first nine points.

Several Spartan mistakes brought the game to a 43-43 tie in the second half. Three Central Florida turnovers gave the Spartans seven points but Central Florida answered back with a six point run.

The rest of the game was an uphill battle for both teams with Central Florida coming out on top 76-73.

On Dec. 15 the Spartans dropped their SoCon opener against Wofford 58-44.

Frazier led the way for the Spartans with 10 points. Brooks and Ling each had six rebounds in the loss.

The Spartans suffered a 62-53 loss against Longwood on Dec. 5.

Frazier tallied a team-high 13 points along with seven rebounds. Hyson had a career-high nine points.

The Spartans snapped the losing streak that had been plaguing them all season on Dec. 3 when they beat High Point 74-64.

Brooks set the tone with 15 points. Both Frazier and Floyd recorded 11 points and Frazier added a team-high nine rebounds to her tally.

The Spartans return to action when they hit the court to take on Chattanooga on Monday, Jan. 14 at 7:00 p.m. The Spartans then come home for a three game home stand on Friday, Jan. 18 against Davidson at 7:00 p.m. and then Appalachian on Monday, Jan. 21 at 3:00 p.m. in Fleming Gym.

Wrestling team hits the mat running

Caitlin McCann
Sports Editor

UNCG's wrestling team hit the mat hard over winter break and are now 3-3 overall and are 1-0 in the SoCon.

On Jan. 6 the Spartans opened their 2007-2008 SoCon season with a 35-3 win over the Citadel. The Spartans won nine out of their 10 matches.

Senior Mark Ring came out with the first win for the Spartans when he beat Keith Koziel with an 8-0 decision.

UNCG's Byron Sigmon tallied his third fall of the season when he pinned the Citadel's Brenden Price in 2:20.

Mikal McKee had his ninth win this season when he got a 15-6 major decision victory over Derek Sickel.

The Citadel's Darius Caldwell recorded his team's only victory when he pulled a 3-1 win over the Spartans' Nick Clark.

Nationally ranked Daren Burns took a 3-0 decision over John Buck.

The Spartans' Ryan Hsu scraped away with a close 4-3 win over Aaron Brown.

Mitchell Johnson continued the Spartans' domination over the Citadel when he defeated Tyler Sim 6-4.

Ben Wilmore shutout Mike Fenton with a 7-0 decision.

Marcus Hannah closed out the day for the Spartans when he beat Derek Royster 8-6.

On Dec. 29 and Dec. 30, the Spartans held their annual UNCG Southern Scuffle.

The Spartans took fourth place while Minnesota walked away with the championship title.

Hsu, Jeff Hedges, and Kane Smith each had an eighth-place finish, while their teammate Burns placed fourth.

On Dec. 16 the Spartans traveled to Ohio to participate in the Ohio Duals where they fell

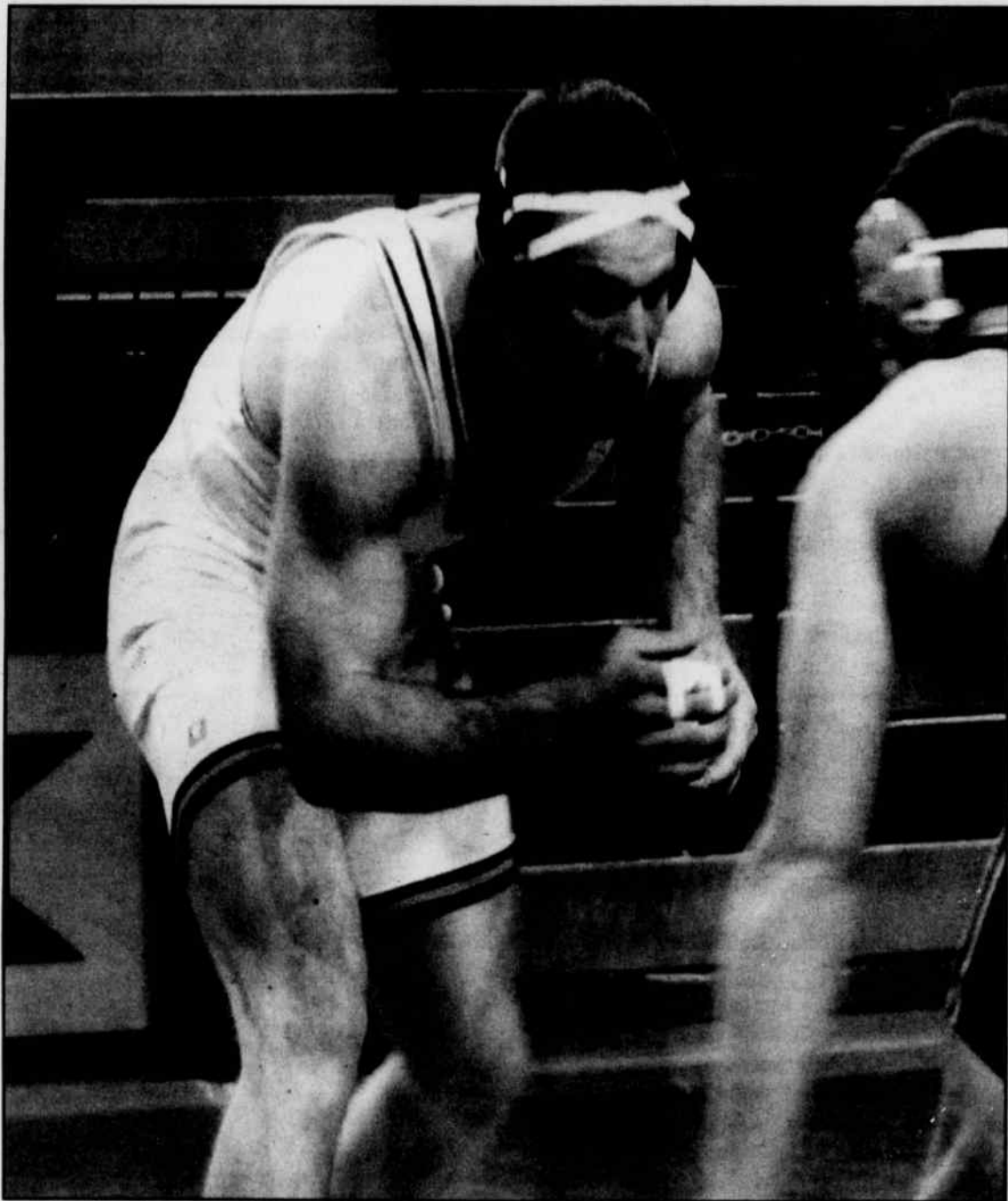
39-6 against Ohio State, lost 35-4 against Pittsburgh, suffered a close 20-15 loss against Findlay, and defeated Ohio 27-16.

Burns pinned Ohio's Chris Lammarino in 1:54 and Ohio State's John Weakly in 2:24. Burns then proceeded to defeat Pittsburgh's David Crowell in an 11-2 major decision. He closed out his days with a 3-0 decision over Findlay's Dan Stevenson.

Mitchell Johnson went 2-2 on the afternoon with wins against Ohio's Heath Allen and Findlay's Alex Shumaker.

McKee went 2-2 with a 10-5 win over Ohio's Ryan Knapp and an 11-5 decision over Findlay's Jeff Hevelka.

The Spartans will return to action when they take on VMI on Wednesday, Jan. 16 at 7:00 p.m. and Davidson on Sunday, Jan. 20 at 1:00 p.m. at home in Fleming Gym.



COURTESY SPORTS INFORMATION

Daren Burns is currently ranked 11th in the InterMat/NWCA/NWMA.



COURTESY SPORTS INFORMATION

Kemena Brooks sank her 18th consecutive free throw against western Carolina.

Game Time

Wednesday, Jan. 16
Wrestling
vs VMI
Fleming Gym
7 pm

Friday, Jan. 18
Women's tennis
@ North Carolina
3 pm

Women's basketball

Saturday, Jan. 19
Men's basketball
@Elon
3 pm

Men's tennis
@ NC State
6 pm

Sunday, Jan. 20
Men's tennis
@Clemson

The Spartan Sports Schedule

noon
Wrestling
vs Davidson
Fleming Gym
1 pm

Wrestling
vs Virginia
Fleming Gym
5 pm

Sunday, Jan. 20
Women's basketball
vs Appalachian
Fleming Gym
3 pm

Email your game times to carolinian_sports@yahoo.com

I don't give a F— about corporate sponsors, B—

Quoting Isiah, sports-humans, blogs and some such

The Sports File

Will Brinson
Staff Writer

Isiah Thomas finally won something. Well, technically he has now won 11 things over the past six months. Nine games for the Knicks, one huge public relations nightmare in the form of his trial (okay, maybe that's not a "win"), and one SHOTY award from Deadspin, a sports commentary website, which may or may not be classified as a blog.

And yeah, it is completely acceptable and totally understandable if the following questions—"Aren't I sick of Isiah Thomas?", "Why should I care about a blog?" and "What the hell is a SHOTY?"—just popped in your head.

First of all, we are all very much sick of "Zeke." He is a horrible coach, a seemingly worse human being, and despite being possibly the best pure point guard in the entire worldwide history of basketball, apparently a horrible judge of talent and manager of players. But the worst part is that he is now an extended coach, meaning that James Dolan, possibly the worst owner in any major sport right now (the exhumed corpse of Marge Schott included if you want), somehow thinks that Isiah is going to turn around the franchise. Either that or he hates money and firmly believes that by keeping Thomas around and in charge, he can sink the value of the Knicks to a heretofore unseen level of embarrassing "value."

Isiah's 2007 was not what you would call spectacular, or even good. In fact, ridiculously out of control and moronic would be a better fit. The only way it could have ended worse? The Knicks getting the first overall pick and giving it away (it was closer than you think). He was sued for sexual harassment by a former employee, Anucha Browne Sanders. And her testimony alleged that he said brilliant things and wowed not only the people who pump money into Madison Square Garden but the fans as well. You know, brilliant things like, "B---, I don't give a [blank] about corporate sponsors." And "I don't give a [blank] about ticket sales." The latter is embarrassingly obvious, not only in his personal behavior since taking over the Knicks, but in the team's performance; they are 9-26 with the fourth worst record in the NBA. No, go ahead; feel free to play the allegedly card here. I certainly will not take offense. I am, however, mildly offended by the notion that Isiah thinks it is less problematic for a black man to call a woman a "bitch" than a white

man. That's right. Well, his exact words were, "I'm sorry to say, but I do make a distinction...a white man calling a black female 'bitch,' that is wrong with me. I am not accepting that. That's a problem for me." But when deposed as to whether he had a problem with a black man doing the same thing, he said, "Not as much."

I mean, I don't even take beef, if you will, with the racial implications of the statement. Whatever. We deal with those enough in our society without having to worry about what white men versus black men can say. I have a huge problem that he thinks it is okay, under any circumstances, for anyone to call anyone else "bitch." Unless you're talking about your female dog or maybe even if you are a Texas fan and mentioning Mack Brown's relatives who have sticky fingers and lack the brain capacity to stay off the field. Then I suppose it is okay.

But even with my personal feelings on racial implications, gender discrimination and general stupidity aside, the Knicks have been nothing short of a poorly-run, half-ass attempt at a one and a half ring circus, ever since Isiah arrived. They were certainly not in great shape before, but it is a downright freaking disaster. They have a team full of bad apples, so to speak, especially after trading for Zach Randolph and burying themselves under horrible contracts. And remember, we have not even covered the Stephon Marbury dismissal (no, wait! He's back! What? He's gone again? Oh. Good. He's back. I guess.) turned into harmless publicity nightmare.

My point though, is that 2007 was Isiah Thomas' year. You do not always have to be "great" to get recognized, although you at least have to be proficient at doing whatever it is that you do. And in Isiah's case, that's being a complete and utter disaster, both on and off the court, and in and out of the courtroom. Which is why he won the Sports-Human of the Year award, courtesy of the several hundred thousand of people that read Deadspin on a regular basis. Which actually brings me to my penultimate (and somewhat nerdy) reason for discussing the Knick fiasco and oddly acronymic awards: 2008 is going to be the year of the sports blog.

I am in no shape or form trying to tell you that these poorly named websites that function as a legitimate form of literary medium are going to eradicate newspapers and the mainstream media. It simply will not happen. The mainstream media is "old money." They have too many

resources to ever actually be challenged. But that does not mean that the little guy will be unable to make strides and get recognized. And while reading sports blogs seems uber-nerdy at best, if you take time out of your busy daily workload to peruse some of them, you will find a shockingly vast and impressive array of opinions and a wealth of information that you simply cannot get from the mainstream media. There are lots of print journalists that do a very good job at writing on important issues. But there might actually be many, many more that do an absolutely horrible job. And for years, there has been no particular corporate watchdog to actually patrol what these staunchly embedded journalists have to say (and yes, I realize there's probably some hefty irony laced somewhere here if you happen to be reading this in printed form). That's the most particular manner in which the sports blog has affected the journalistic culture.

Suddenly, when Woody Paige writes that Goose Gossage should get in the Baseball Hall of Fame because he met him once in 1974 and he was a nice guy despite what people had told Woody, well, I am sorry, but that is total and utter malarkey. Who cares? But thousands and thousands of people read these ill-advised opinions each day but rarely have the option of actually critiquing them.

But this critique of mainstream media, while a relieving aspect, by these up and coming websites is just the tip of the iceberg. Members of the media are finally beginning to recognize the revolutionary change in journalism and are slowly but surely beginning to realize that "accredited" sports blogs deserve respect. Brian Cook of MgoBlog.com and AOL's Fanhouse broke the news—nationally, mind you—that Lloyd Carr was retiring. It might have seemed obvious, but he came out with the announcement before ESPN or any other major publication, even if they did not feel the need to cite him. Am I saying that some random sports blog is going to break the news that Isiah Thomas is getting canned in the next week? Probably not, in media market that is New York City and with the scrutiny under which the town holds the Knicks. I am saying, however, that you should re-consider laughing at the notion I'm feeding you here. And I am also asking that you sling a little DAP this way when 2009 rolls around and you've actually begun getting your well written sports news information from somewhere that you had not heard of two weeks ago.

Playoffs? You kidding me?

Ryan Hecht
Staff Writer

The beginning of the year is the best season for sports in America. College football bowl games are finishing up. College hoops are gearing up for conference play. The NHL and NBA are approaching the mid-season. NASCAR is not on "SportsCenter." Most everybody who cares about sports loves January. That is, except for Jim Mora.

A former NFL coach who is better known for his actions after games than during them, Jim Mora has to hate the NFL playoffs. After a loss in 2001 while coaching the Indianapolis Colts, Mora was asked about his team's chances of playing after the regular season and famously shrieked, "Playoffs? You kidding me? Playoffs? I just hope to win a game!" Ever since then, frat boys and radio personalities have imitated Mora whenever the word "playoffs" is used. Mora probably has nightmares of the word "playoffs."

Ironically, Mora is now working for NFL Network as an analyst covering the playoffs. Whether or not Mora really cares, at press time there are seven teams remaining in the playoffs, just hoping to "win a game" and, ultimately the "Big Game." Here are each team's chances of winning the Super Bowl, ranked from "most likely" to "potential Disney movie":

1. New England Patriots: Obviously a great year for the Pats, going 16-0. I'm not worried about Tom Brady or his excellent receivers. I don't worry about Belichick, who is the best coach in the league. I worry about the Patriot's defense. Their 3-4 base includes aging linebackers who struggle against the run. Their secondary has made several average quarterbacks look great this year. Weather is also an issue. They will play three games in chilly Foxboro in order to get to the Super Bowl. If it's too cold, or snowy, their offense will rely more on the run, which has been average all year. Likewise they will need to stop the run, which is their Achilles heel on defense. The Patriots should win their fourth championship in seven years, but they aren't as invincible as their record indicates.

2. Indianapolis Colts: Faced with multiple key injuries and playing in the league's toughest division, Tony Dungy has done his best coaching job of his career to get the Colts to 13-3. This is a scary team and no one is talking about them. Payton Manning is still the best QB in the league. Reggie Wayne can be very dominant as can running back Joseph Addai. It will be interesting to see how effective Marvin Harrison is coming off that injury. The Colts defense is fast and mostly under-

rated, but they can be beaten on short curl routes and runs to the sides, as they have young cornerbacks and outside linebackers. This team is hungry for a repeat.

3. Green Bay Packers: Perhaps the most unlikely team this far in the playoffs, the Packers are well-balanced in all phases of the game. Brett Favre is having a record-setting year and one of his best in his famed career. His receivers are the most dangerous in the NFL after the catch, especially Greg Jennings. Ryan Grant is running very well for an undrafted rookie third-stringer. The defensive front seven is very talented and Charles Woodson and Al Harris are great corners, but their safeties are young and vulnerable to the big play. If Favre plays smart and makes good throws, like he has this season, the Pack should be able to overcome their youth to get to the Super Bowl.

4. New York Giants: Yes, the Giants have lost to the Cowboys twice already this season, and yes this game is at Dallas, but New York hasn't lost on the road since that first game of the season at Dallas. Their defense is playing as good as any group right now. Brandon Jacobs is a big, strong back who is dangerous as a receiver out of the backfield. Eli Manning is certainly inconsistent, but has played two very strong games in a row. Watch out for this team. Dallas is in for a tough game.

5. Dallas Cowboys: "America's Team" might look very average if Terrell Owens can't play with his ankle injury. Tony Romo has looked great this year, but he is still dating that distracting bimbo, Jessica Simpson. Marion Barber doesn't get enough snaps to be the dominant runner he should be and the defense gives up way too many yards.

6. San Diego Chargers: Finally, they win a playoff game! I think if Antonio Gates is out, Phillip Rivers will have a long day against the Colts. He did look good against Tennessee, but his inconsistency is worrisome. LT struggled last weekend they need him to have a big game against the Colts to have any kind of success. If their defense blitzes like they did against the Titans, they could create enough pressure to cause turnovers and carry the team. In the end, there's just too many "if's" with this team to count on them to beat the Colts.

7. Seattle Seahawks: Matt Hasselbeck needs to be near perfect for the 'Hawks to have a shot. Their run game is almost nonexistent. They averaged over 100 yards rushing this year, only because they play in the worst division in football. Your grandma could jump 100 yards in a sack against the St. Louis Rams. The defense is pretty stout (Patrick Kerney is a monster), but I just don't think they'll have great success playing at Lambeau Field in January.

Enio the playoffs folks!

How To: Stick with your resolution

Crash Course

Rachel Feinberg
Staff Writer

The beginning of a new year means a fresh start to many people, which is why it is an ideal time to make resolutions that will help make your life easier and more positive. Whether it be to "go green" and stop using so much plastic, to go to the gym four days a week, or to pay off those credit card bills, many people vow to make changes that are difficult to implement and find that after a few months, the resolution has all but been forgotten. Keeping the difficulty of keeping resolutions in mind, here are some helpful tips that may help you achieve what you have resolved to do.

—**Keep it real:** Don't make a resolution that you know you can't keep to. If you've been making the same one year after year and never kept to it, maybe it is unrealistic and you should alter it a bit.

—**Break it down:** Don't set a big goal, set smaller ones. For instance, if you're hoping to lose 25 pounds this year, break it down into two pounds per month. It makes it more manageable.

—**Keep it simple:** Don't try to change everything all at once. Trying to lose weight and quit smoking at the same time is too much. Pick one to attack at a time.

—**Have a buddy:** If you and your friend both want to quit smoking, help each other through it. Call each other when you're having a craving to talk it down. It works the same with losing weight; go to the gym together.

—**Tell everyone:** Telling others your plans will help you. You'll want to prove it to someone other than yourself. Also, your friends and family will help by supporting you through it.

—**Keep a schedule:** If your goal



PUBLIC DOMAIN

is to lose weight, put your exercise routine into your schedule. Actually write it down, it helps make it stick.

—**Reward yourself:** People learn best through rewards. So if you make it to the gym every day you said you would for a month, reward yourself by buying something you've wanted for a while.

—**Track your progress:** If your resolution is to eat better, for example, keep a food journal. Writing it down and having record of it helps you to control your eating habits.

—**It's ok to slip:** If you couldn't help yourself and had that cigarette you didn't mean to have, don't give up. Just try harder the next time to keep your mind off the temptation.

—**Stick to it:** Experts say it takes 21 days for a new activity to become a habit. It takes six

months for it to become a part of your personality. So don't give up if you don't see progress in two weeks. Good things take time.

—**Keep trying:** Just because society makes New Year's resolutions on Jan. 1 doesn't mean you have to wait until the New Year to begin one. You can start to change the things you want whenever. So if you slip up completely, just start again.

The top four resolutions made each year are to increase exercise, be more conscientious about work/school, develop better eating habits, and quit smoking/drinking/drug use. On average only about 20 percent of people actually stick to their New Year's resolutions. Don't let the statistics get you down—if you follow these tips, you can follow through with your resolution, too.

Take it off, baby!

Feelin' Naughty

Madison Landreth
Staff Writer

The sun was beating down on my car as I drove down highway 87, and my friend and I were discussing our lack of money as we passed the Paradise Club. I was always told that the small black building tucked in the woods was full of old overweight women, although I had never discussed this with anyone who actually went to the club. "What if we become strippers?" my friend asked. Since I am only 19, my age prevents me from working as a stripper in Alamance County, but my older friend can. Although she had no intention of working at the club, we ventured in to see what it was like.

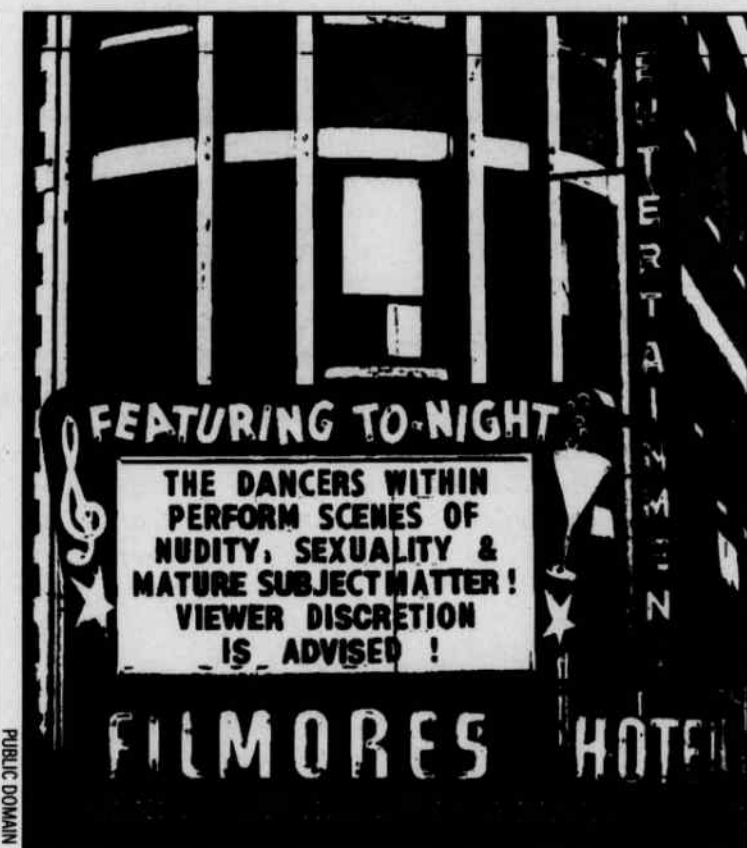
When my friend told the owner that she was interested in a job, he showed us to the big wooden bar and pushed an application in front of her. I scanned the small room. The club had no customers and no dancers at the time. The décor gave the feeling of the basement at your friend's house where all the wild parties happen. Wooden tables with office chairs pushed underneath were

Paradise Club I don't think that's true. What is the harm in taking off your clothing? Many countries have dancers in pubs. The courts in Norway ruled in 2006 that stripping is a form of art.

Before making a final judgment about stripping, I thought it was only fair to dig into the history of exotic dancing.

There are many tales about how stripping began, but one of the earliest is the ancient Sumerian tale about the goddess Inanna. It is said that as she descended into the Underworld she had to remove a piece of clothing at each of the seven gates. As the tale passed through the generations, a dance was created to embody Inanna's journey. Other possible influences include cultural dances performed by the Ghawazee and "discovered" by the French in the 1800s, and the Middle Eastern tradition of belly dance.

Through the years dancing while removing clothing spread throughout the world. It reached America in the early 1900s and was popularized through burlesque theaters, where the concentration for dancers was the removal of their clothing, though generally it was more as more of a tease than going fully nude. Today, though some cities allow



PUBLIC DOMAIN

scattered around. In the center of the room there was a platform encased by wooden railings. Behind a small runway was a stage backed by mirrors. There were also two mini stages on each side of the room.

While there is plenty of money in stripping, the owner said, the true moneymaker is the couch room. He showed us a small room to the side of the stage shielded by curtains. The room has several small couches and an ashtray. The dancers bring clients in the room for a private lap dance. The private dance runs a client 20 dollars per song. The bar gets six dollars and the rest goes to the dancer. The owner began to show us pictures of his girls, who were not old and overweight, showing who worked when. My friend told him that she would think about it.

I always thought that stripping was an awful way to make money, but after my visit to the

strippers to be completely nude, most require them to leave on some type of bottoms. I think the key to making judgments is knowledge and experience. Now that I have true information from the club, and history, I can firmly say that I do not believe there is harm in exotic dancing. Whether or not stripping is right or wrong is a moral decision, and although I cannot say what is right and wrong for everyone, I have gained a new respect for dancers. The profession may not be suitable for everyone but for some it is a golden ticket. And for those of us who will never get into the field of exotic dancing but are interested, it could be something to spice up the love life a bit. Try doing a dance for your partner one night. The anticipation that your partner gets will boost your confidence and make for a very spicy night. Have fun and be safe.

All In A Day's Trip

Lindsey Hughes
Staff Writer

Have these cold winter days held you captive in your house, bored and depressed? Maybe you should consider taking a little trip to one of North Carolina's exciting ski and snowboard destinations. When many people think about winter sports they think that they will have to travel across the country to get decent skiing, but in reality there are some great destinations located right in our own backyard.

All of the locations mentioned can be visited in a long day trip, though it may be better to take a couple of days to make sure you enjoy everything without feeling rushed and too tired to drive home.

If you have a day or two, take a scenic drive up to Wolf Laurel Ski Mountain, located right outside

of Asheville in Mars Hill, North Carolina. Wolf Laurel boasts a variety of runs open to both skiers and snowboarders as well as runs specifically for snow tubing.

Another great North Carolina ski destination is Appalachian Mountain, which is conveniently located in Blowing Rock. Appalachian Mountain is ideal for a day or weekend trip because its small size makes it is entirely possible to experience all that it has to offer in the span of a day. Appalachian Mountain has an ice skating rink available for figure skating if you aren't really a skier and are going with a group of friends, or if you just want to take a break from skiing midday.

Slightly off the beaten path, you can also find Snowshoe Mountain, a charming West Virginia resort and haven for snowbirds. Snowshoe proves to be the perfect spot for an east coast ski

vacation. Snowshoe Mountain is ski and snowboard friendly and offers different activities for everyone involved. Because of the longer distance, you may want to consider staying a while longer. The mountain is larger and will keep you entertained for many runs.

When planning your ski getaway, whether it is for a day or a week-long trip, make sure to get tickets in advance to ensure you are getting the best deal possible. Many companies offer discounted lift tickets through their websites, and an Internet search will yield other sources of discount passes. Also make sure to ask for student pricing and group deals and discounts which your wallet will thank you for.

Don't forget your friends, either. If you plan on making it

Ski N.C.

SEE SKI, PAGE 15

Knocked Up: The new little black dress

Ryan Hecht
Staff Writer

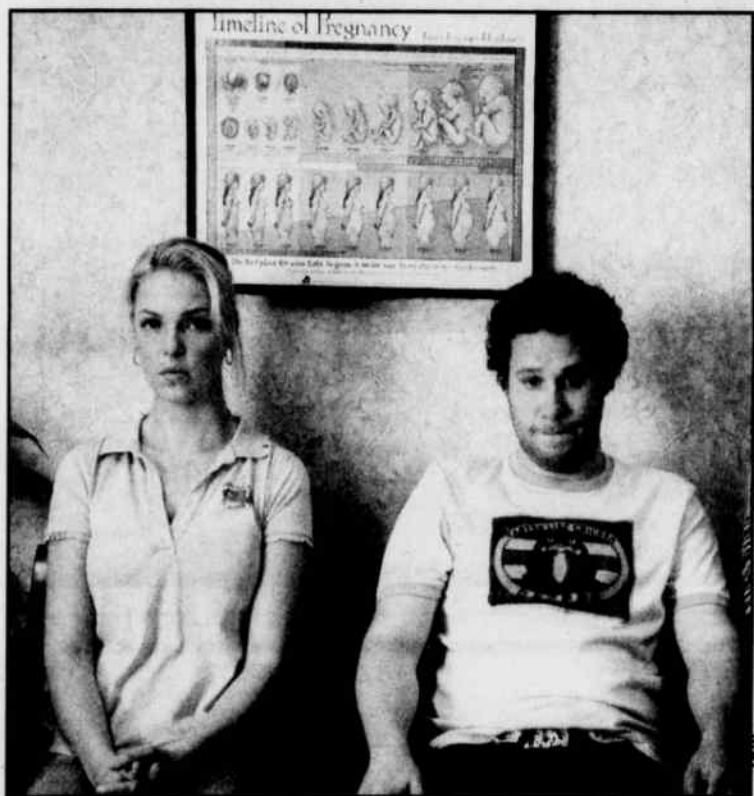
So much of what happened in the media last year seemed like a bad dream. Had SportsCenter turned into America's Most Wanted? Was Chris Daughtry's album *Daughtry* truly the top selling record of the year? And how do you explain David Hasselhoff's drunken video?

While the above media-exploited events of the past year were shocking, more predictable was the biggest fad of 2007: being single and pregnant. It is a trend that was years in the making. Last year represented the first increase in teenage birthrate after 14 years of decline. The increase in teenage births seemed to correspond to the number of celebrity births in 2007. With the paparazzi glorifying each new Hollywood mommy, filmmakers also made single pregnant women this year's superheroes.

The single pregnant women craze seemed to start with celeb-

This year's vast media attention to single pregnant women sheds light on the fact that these women are popularly proceeding with the pregnancy and not having abortions. In *Juno* the abortion clinic resembles a tattoo parlor and in *Knocked Up* the process is jokingly called a "shmashmortion". Having an abortion is made to look unethical and depressing while keeping the baby is potentially fashionable. These movies wouldn't be quite as funny if these sentiments weren't expressed in the real world.

A natural reaction to this year's wave of single pregnant women is the realization that our generation is in the process of maturing along with our teen idols. It's acceptable that Justin Timberlake will be a dancing Mouseketeer till he's 75, but we can't all do that forever. At some point we grow up. We are at that juncture where we see our own friends get married and have families. It's kind of scary because it is real, which I guess makes pregnant celebrities



rity attention, as with previous fads like Uggs and oversized sunglasses. And unlike those fashions, "baby" would end up being an attractive accessory. Halle Berry and Jessica Alba were still as sexy as ever with their new lovely baby bumps. Naomi Watts and Brooke Burke made having children look easy and beautiful (and occasionally breezy). High-five to Nicole Richie, who finally put on some weight... by carrying a baby. True, plenty of married celebrities popped out kids, but never before had so many single pregnant women been cast into a positive spotlight.

Furthermore, wildly popular movies this year were about single pregnant women. *Knocked Up* is less about the lead woman and more about a bumbling slacker who gets drunk, impregnates said bombshell, and then turns into a sweet, lovable guy as he accepts his fate as a father. The other films, *Juno* and *Waitress*, focus on the pregnant female and the confidence she gains as an independent single child bearer. All three films make strides in the right direction towards respecting the young unwed woman with child.

and *Juno* something to nervously smile about.

So what about Jaime Lynn Spears you might ask? Certainly the recent media obsession of the pregnant 16-year-old might put a blemish on an otherwise great year for pregnant singles. But honestly, before this incident who even knew Britney had a little sister? Jamie Lynn Spear's pregnancy is only relevant because Britney is such a mess and finding flaws in the Spears family is akin to finding Waldo. Except more fun.

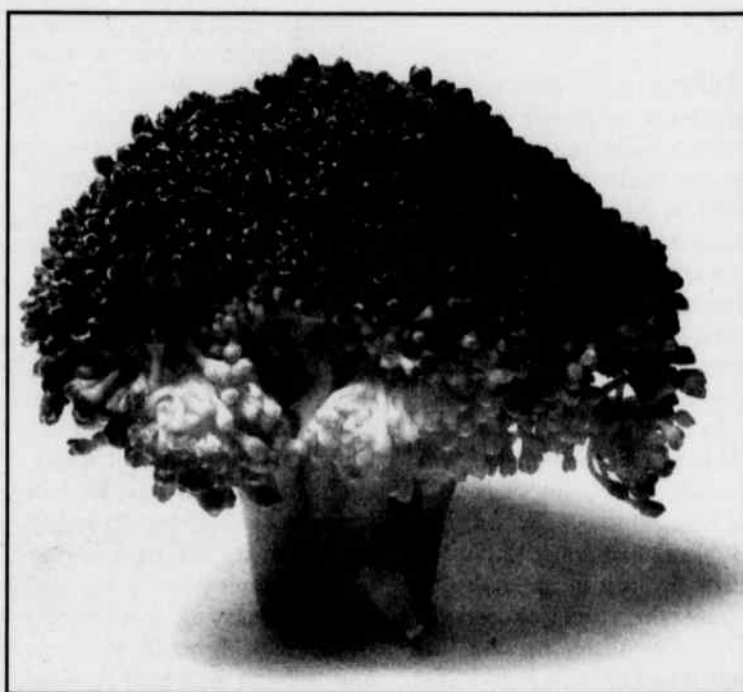
I realize I have taken a lighthearted spin on the very serious issue of the increased teenage pregnancy rate. It's likely that the increase in teen pregnancies is a partial result of the positive spin the media has generated this year for single pregnant women, along with the Bush administration's funding of "just say no" education finally catching up to a generation raised by the "Easy Button". But what the media has done this year is show that in these years of terrorist attacks, school shootings and Ugg boots, being pregnant and single isn't the worst thing in the world.

Resolve to eat well

Good Eats

Annaleigh Wilke
Staff Writer

If you are one of the many who made a New Year's resolution to stay trim and healthy, you may find that it is difficult to find healthful versions of the foods you love. It can also be hard to determine the nutritional content of home-cooked meals. This week, we've included nutrition information for the recipes, each of which has less than 250 calories per serving. If you really want to watch what you eat, take an extra step and prepare each of the ingredients yourself so you know exactly what goes into your meals.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Chicken and Spinach Pasta with Sun-Dried Tomatoes

- 1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil
- 2 1/2 cups hot and cooked Farfalle pasta
- 1 cup cubed and cooked chicken breast
- 1/2 cup fat-free Caesar salad dressing
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 10 ounces frozen spinach, thawed, drained, and patted dry

Drain the tomatoes in a colander over a bowl and reserve 1 tablespoon of the oil. Combine all of the ingredients in a microwaveable bowl; stir or toss to combine. Microwave on high for about 2 minutes or until warm. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition per serving: Calories- 240; Fat-4.2 grams; Protein- 16.5 g; Carbs- 34.4 g; Cholesterol- 22 mg; Fiber- 3.9 g

Green Veggies with Sesame-Ginger Dressing

- 2 cups green beans
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1/4 cup water

Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/2 teaspoon grated fresh ginger or 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

Whisk the ingredients for the dressing together and set aside. If you purchased frozen vegetables, follow the directions on the package to prepare them in the microwave.

If the vegetables are fresh, start out with the green beans and the water; put in a bowl covered with a paper towel or plastic wrap for 2-3 minutes on high. Now, stir the beans and add the broccoli. Cover again and microwave for 2-3 more minutes. Next, drain the vegetables and mix in the dressing while warm. Serve warm or chilled. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition per serving: Calories- 42; Fat- .8 grams; Protein- 2.5g; Carbs- 8g; Cholesterol-0mg

SKI CONTINUED

more than just a day trip, renting a cottage or chateau and splitting the cost multiple ways will probably come out to being less than a couple of nights in a hotel room, especially at a ski resort. To save money try going on a weekday as opposed to a busy weekend. Know that if you plan your trip during a holiday, you will most likely be waiting in lines and fighting the crowds.

The most important factor to consider is the weather. Check the snow report online to see condi-

tions prior to leaving for your trip. Most, if not all, east coast resorts make their own snow, so there will always be something on the ground, but that doesn't mean it will be easy or fun to ski on.

If the weather is nice enough, also consider hiking, mountain biking, climbing, and even rafting while you are in the mountains. North Carolina's wildlife is not only beautiful, but a great source of exercise and fun. Start reaping the benefits of residing in this great state and get outside this season.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Poor etiquette on the rise, workplace experts say

Robert Rodriguez
McClatchy Newspapers
MCT

FRESNO, Calif.—If you've ever overheard a co-worker's loud cell phone conversation, noticed underwear peeking from the tops of his or her pants, or become nauseated watching one talk with a mouthful of food, you are not alone.

Etiquette experts say a lack of social graces and general rudeness has become all too common in the workplace.

"I have seen some people walk through buffet lines stacking their plate 3 feet high," said Maria Everding, founder of the Etiquette Institute in St. Louis. "Or you see others trying to drink out of a coffee stirrer because they think it's a tiny straw."

The lines between what is acceptable and unacceptable is blurring as a new generation of employees enters the work force, bringing with it their use of personal technology—cell phones and MySpace, for example—and a more casual attitude and fashion sense.

The boon in bad manners has been good for the etiquette business, whose experts are finding their talents in demand. Businesses are also discovering that polishing their employees' behavior pays off in increased productivity, better sales and a more cooperative workplace.

Everding, who has taught etiquette for more than 20 years, trains and certifies at least 10 consultants a month, up from an average of four just two years ago.

"There is definitely job security for me," Everding said.

The push for a more civil and refined workplace is also taking hold in the California's San Joaquin Valley, where at least four

companies provide business-etiquette training. The list includes Tiffany Smith of Visalia, Joan Wynn of Clovis, Robin Germain of Fresno and Cynthia Merrill of Fresno.

Often they're hired to provide one-on-one coaching as well to help companies become more professional. Advice is given on everything from table manners to how to dress appropriately.

The trend doesn't surprise Fresno State business management professor Julie Olson-Buchanan, who says companies want to reestablish the ground rules for how employees and managers conduct themselves at work, especially the use of technology.

Twenty years ago most people would have frowned at someone carrying on a loud personal conversation while in line at the grocery store. But cell phone conversations go on all the time now, including at work.

"There has been a slow erosion of what is OK and what is not OK and it is happening with clients, customers and co-workers," Olson-Buchanan said. "It is hard to balance work and personal life, and the use of cell phones allows us to easily slip back and forth all the time."

Generational differences among workers also can create conflict. What may be acceptable to a younger employee, such as text messaging a friend while at work, may not be acceptable to a Baby Boomer, Olson-Buchanan said.

Rude and disrespectful treatment also has the potential to bring down morale and reduce productivity.

"When you are treated badly at work, it stays with you and you carry it home," she said.

Disrespectful treatment at work

was one of the reasons why Smith of Visalia, Calif., opened her business, Premier Etiquette Training and Consulting, about a year ago. A 15-year veteran of the sales and marketing industry, Smith once worked for a boss who routinely berated employees.

"We were all hard workers and team players, but nothing we could do was good enough," Smith said. "It killed the morale in the office and caused us to run and hide. No one should be treated that way. It was completely inappropriate."

Smith used that hard lesson as motivation to help employers and their workers understand how to treat each other with respect.

"Etiquette is not just about manners, but it's principles to help people build stronger relationships," said Smith, who trained at the Emily Post Institute. "Relationships are key to our life both on a personal and professional level."

Smith said her clients include schools, businesses and individuals, some looking for ways to present themselves more professionally. Simple issues such as wearing the appropriate clothing can dictate how a person is perceived by the public and co-workers, she said.

Well-intentioned efforts such as "casual Friday" have backfired in some offices where employees push the limits of good taste.

"It is time for some employers to reinforce the dress code," Smith said. "One of the worst examples I have seen are g-strings hanging out of the back of someone's pants."

Germain, owner of Fresno, Calif.-based Academy of Modern Etiquette, said another common business-etiquette mistake is failing to introduce a person's busi-

ness associates.

Germain said you should never assume everyone knows each other in an office. Simple introductions help build communication and show respect.

"You never know when that person you introduced could be your next boss," she said.

Germain said she also helps business clients improve their dining habits and provides tips

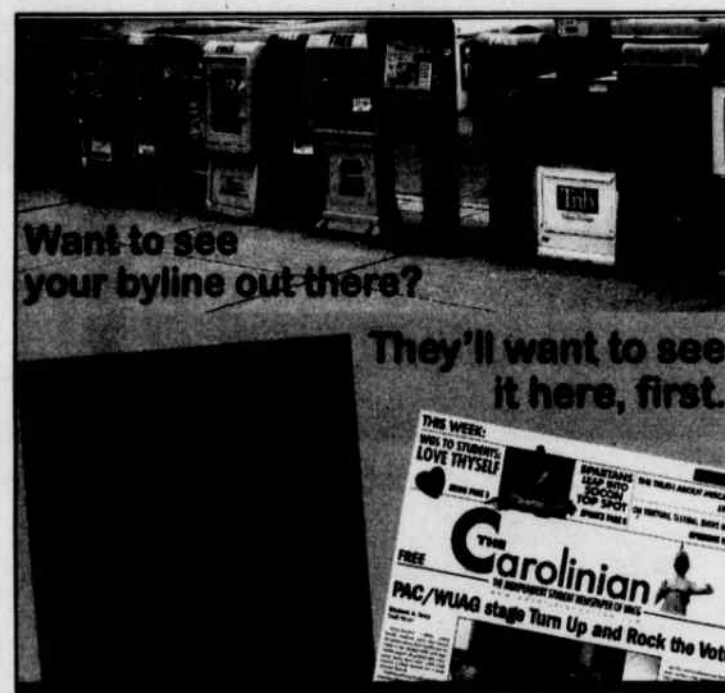
for a successful business lunch. She recommended checking out the restaurant first, becoming familiar with the menu and, if possible, making payment arrangements ahead of time.

Avoid restaurants where waitresses are known for revealing outfits.

"Your business will not be the focus of your guest's attention," Germain said.

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SUDOKU

EASY

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HARD

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WWW.PRINTSUDOKU.COM

Sudoku is a logic-based puzzle. Fill each 9X9 square grid so that each row, column, and 3X3 square grid contain the numbers one through nine without repeating. There is only one solution possible for each puzzle.

Calendar of events

To add an event to this calendar, email the information to: carolinian_calendar@yahoo.com.

Lectures, Speakers, and Readings

Jan 16. Artists Gallery Talk:
Lead Pencil Studio (Arts)

4:00 p.m. Weatherspoon Art Museum. 2008 Falk Visiting Artist, Lead Pencil Studio, talk about their UNCG residency and latest installation on view at the Weatherspoon Art Museum through April 13, 2008. Free. More information: (336) 334-5770. weatherspoon.uncg.edu

Art

Art Exhibition: Tim McDonald. All day event. Elliott Center Gallery, EUC. McDonald, graduate of East Tennessee State University and professor

at Framingham State College in Massachusetts, presents recent works on paper. Reception to be held on January 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. For more information: (336) 334-5090. www.uncg.edu/art

Jan 16. Painting and Drawing Student Exhibition. All day event. Gallery at the Gatewood, Gatewood Studio Arts Building, Highland Avenue. Through February 8, 2008. Free. More information: (336) 334-5090. www.uncg.edu/art

Through May 4: ReVisions: The Appropriated Image. All day event. Weatherspoon Art Museum. "ReVisions" focuses on art that uses images from the news, commercial art, cartoons and even from old master paintings to both comment on and question how elusive the meaning of

art can be. For more information: (336) 334-5770. weatherspoon.uncg.edu

Concerts and Live Music

Jan. 15. Carla LeFevre, soprano. 7:30 PM. School of Music Recital Hall. The program will include a variety of art songs in Spanish, German, French, and English, performed by Carla LeFevre, soprano, and Inara Zandmane, pianist. Cellist Robert Moody will assist. Mr. Moody is conductor of the Winston-Salem Symphony.

Tickets: \$10 Adults, \$6 Seniors, \$4 Students, \$3 UNCG. UNCG Box Office: (336) 334-4849. www.uncg.edu/mus

Jan. 16. Neil Berg's 100 Years of Broadway. 7:00 p.m. Carolina Theatre, 310 S. Greene Street,

Greensboro. Broadway classics as well as the newest hit shows will delight you in this spectacular tribute to some of the biggest moments from the greatest musicals of the century. Tickets: \$18.50-\$30.50. Tickets are subject to a \$1.50 per ticket Carolina Theatre restoration fee. UNCG Box Office: (336) 334-4849 or Carolina Theatre: (336) 333-2605. ucls.uncg.edu

Misc.

Jan. 16. VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood will hold its first meeting of the semester at 7:30 p.m. in the EUC Birch room.

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Fishermen seek sushi jackpot

Javier Serna and Mike Zlotnicki
McClatchy Newspapers
MCT

MOREHEAD CITY, N.C.—The sun put a glaze on the Atlantic about 13 miles out to sea and Buddy Harris' reel zipped, singing a song fishermen love to hear. The line peeled out into the cold waters.

Harris ripped the rod and reel from a holder and handed it to his mate, Joey Piner.

The men didn't speak.

They could only hope.

Bobbing there in the Atlantic, they were chasing a massive but elusive fish—the giant bluefin tuna—that was found only in the past decade in large numbers off the coast of North Carolina.

But now, each year starting in mid-December and running through the end of January, fleets of fishermen that include Harris and Piner spread out from Morehead City, Southport and all along the North Carolina coast, braving choppy waters and shifting shoals in search of bluefin tuna.

It's not easy. The giant bluefin typically weighs more than 300 pounds and stretches 8 feet from nose to tail. Many are much larger.

Chris Elliott, 32, of Beaufort, is a professional bass angler and a saltwater fishing guide; but in the winter, he fishes for bluefin. Just before Christmas, he landed a giant one weighing 478 pounds minus the head, guts and tail.

"It doesn't get any bigger, badder or stronger than that rascal. It's like walking an elephant on a leash," he said.

To land a bluefin is to hit a sushi jackpot. Within hours of a catch, its prized red flesh will be rapidly shipped across the globe to be eaten in the restaurants and apartments of Tokyo and across Japan and Taiwan. Even with middlemen skimming profits along the way, a lone average bluefin will bring \$2,500 or more for the men in North Carolina who catch it, enough to pay the bills.

The pursuit of the bluefin has created an angler's gold rush on the Outer Banks during what were once deserted winter days. Fishermen rent hotel rooms, buy supplies and pay for char-

ters. How long it will last no one knows.

The migratory paths of the bluefin are not completely understood. The rules for catching them might change, or the fish might go elsewhere. These possibilities increase the drive in North Carolina to catch them now.

With his line singing and zinging late last month, Piner slid the massive fishing rod into the fighting chair. He started cranking in the reel. Harris kicked the boat's engine into idle.

It was a tuna, all right.

But not a bluefin.

The men had hooked up with a false albacore, a sleek, green cousin of the bluefin that weighed about 10 pounds. To them, it was essentially worthless.

"Albie," Piner cursed.

The giant bluefin is a legend of the water.

Warm-blooded, sleek and powerful, it can cross the Atlantic in mere weeks. Its distinctive, blimp-shaped body with fins shaped like boomerangs has graced art and Roman coins. Aristotle was fascinated by them. Armies of the middle ages were sustained on dried bluefin.

Yet for all its power and magnificence, the species is in peril, officially classified as overfished. By some counts, the bluefin tuna population has fallen 90 percent in the past three decades.

And North Carolina fishermen are now part of a debate that has roiled the international agencies that watch over the stocks. The issue traverses the planet, from the Japanese demand for the sashimi-grade sushi the bluefin yields to the fishing practices in the Mediterranean, where bluefin have lived in abundance.

Caught in the middle are U.S. fishermen and monitoring agencies, which have generally followed a controlled plan to limit the catch and help rebuild the bluefin numbers. To keep one, American anglers need a federal permit and must follow a slew of rules.

The state of the bluefin is not good, said a leading expert on the fish, William Hogarth, an administrator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who is past chairman of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. He is also past

chairman of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, a multinational group focused on commercial bluefin interests.

"The stock is in terrible shape," he said in a phone interview. "In most scientists' opinions, it's about to collapse."

In October, Hogarth helped force a vote on a moratorium that would have halted bluefin fishing in Mediterranean and European waters. It failed.

He acknowledged he wanted to focus attention on overfishing and depleted stocks by pushing for the moratorium in a part of the world where researchers are alarmed by the fishing practices, which include widespread netting.

"Bluefin tuna are a magnificent fish and a very economically important fish and just a prize," he said. "To let them go down the tube is just irresponsible."

Some North Carolina bluefin fisherman said in interviews they support more limits on the catch, as long as other countries comply with regulations. Many think that won't happen.

For North Carolina fishermen, the bluefin was largely a myth until a confluence of events in the mid-1990s. On this side of the Atlantic, the bluefin had historically been caught off New England and Canada.

But by the mid-1990s, fishermen were reporting more and more catches off Hatteras. Then regulators agreed to extend the fishing season to allow for a North Carolina commercial catch—and people came to hunt.

In the entire decade of the 1990s, commercial fishermen caught only about 40,000 pounds of bluefin in North Carolina.

In 2000, they tripled that. The catch has increased since.

On a very busy winter day, there can be up to 200 boats off Morehead City targeting bluefin. On a typical day, about 100 are in the hunt, some from New England ports.

Buddy Harris and the Offshore III—a creaky boat he and his father built four decades ago—are usually in the mix. Harris, 64, who lives in the Marshallberg community near Beaufort, has made money guiding duck hunts, building boats and catching fish



Shane Brafford, captain of the Fight N Lady, and first mate Rick Evans (background) check the horizon as they troll for bluefin tuna 10 miles off Cape Lookout in North Carolina.

for commercial markets, a fading industry in the state.

Harris pilots the Offshore III in stained jeans and an old hunting jacket. The boat's edges are worn. The carpet is stained. At certain speeds, smoke coughs from the engine, forcing passengers inside. The washroom reeks. It's a worthy vessel.

Harris' boat is part of his family. "It's been used all my life," he said.

Harris charts the boat for a fee when he can line up customers, ensuring a guaranteed payday. Most charters will charge \$1,000 or more for a full day of bluefin fishing. If they catch a keeper fish, the trip is free and the captain keeps the fish and the cash it brings. And many flock to these boats just for the chance to hook a bluefin.

Otherwise, Harris and others strike out for tuna on their own.

Catching bluefin can be the difference between survival and being forced to give up a way of life, he said.

"Tuna can be \$20,000 in the winter," Harris said. "I'm trying to make a living."

But there are no guarantees. Striking out day after day hurts—fuel, bait and supplies cost money.

"You don't come out here many times and not catch fish before you start falling behind," said Shane Brafford, captain of the Fight N Lady, another boat in the Morehead City fleet.

The best day of the season so far, a sunny day in late December, saw about 30 bluefins landed among roughly 100 boats, according to the state Division of Marine Fisheries.

Catching bluefin requires strength, patience, smarts and the equipment to match the fish's great size. The standard reel is the size of a bowling ball, the biggest made in the sport fishing world. The reels are mounted to 6-foot fishing rods that look like broomsticks.

It can take hours to reel in a bluefin, fighting the whole way. When it's at the boat, the danger increases as the men try to harpoon or gaff the fish and pull it through an open "tuna door" at the rear of the boat.

Some who have tried to bring the fish in by hand have lost fingers and more. In 2004, a New

Jersey man drowned after his harpoon line tangled on his left leg. The fish dragged him into the Atlantic.

"These fish are very big and very powerful, and if you don't do it right, they'll hurt you," said Ron McPherson, an Atlantic Beach charter captain who is targeting bluefin commercially for the first time this winter.

One day in December, Buddy Harris and mate Joey Piner, 23, a fifth-generation commercial fisherman from Carteret County, were one of the last boats out.

All fishermen have theories about where fish will be. Harris looks at water temperatures and for schools of baitfish: Many small fish stack up along the shoals and shipwrecks off the Outer Banks.

The bluefin won't be far, he reasons.

Harris found luck, catching one that weighed 170 pounds after it was gutted. He returned the next day to find 60 boats at his spot. He left, unwilling to maneuver in a crowd.

Two days after Christmas, Harris was back at it, chartering a trio of anglers from the Midwest.

They had planned to fish with another charter and target lesser fish in the Intracoastal Waterway, but the captain of that boat canceled. So they booked a half-day trip on the Offshore III.

"Now we're going after the big fish," said Phillip Ernst of Minnesota, who was visiting family in nearby Swansboro.

It was a first bluefin hunt for Ernst and his son Scott and son-in-law Tim Quinlan of Pennsylvania, and there was plenty of anticipation.

About four hours into their trip, a bang let out. One of the rods had a fish on.

Harris lowered it down to Piner, who put it in the fighting chair. Scott Ernst fought the fish for minutes.

The action brought excitement, but Ernst realized he was fighting no giant of the sea.

"Albie," Piner said. "It's in the tuna family."

It had been more than a week since Harris had boated his last bluefin.

"One of these days, they'll start biting again," the captain said. "Who knows when that'll be?"

His hunt would go on.



Don Atkins, owner of Fight N Lady, wiggles his way into a set of bib pants as the boat makes its way in the pre-dawn darkness to search for bluefin tuna in the waters 10 miles off of Cape Look in North Carolina.

CHUCK LIDDY/RALEIGH NEWS & OBSERVER/MCT

CHUCK LIDDY/RALEIGH NEWS & OBSERVER/MCT

GRAMMY CONT. FROM PAGE 8

"It all comes down to Dave," Hawkins says. "He's really turned into a terrific frontman, who can really command the attention of an arena and a stadium."

"Did you see the Live Earth concerts? Purely from a performance standpoint, Dave stole the show, much the way Freddy Mercury did at Live Aid."

Much the same way that Grohl, in a 2000 opening set for the Red Hot Chili Peppers in Orlando, made his way to the arena floor and climbed into the lower-bowl seats.

"He's a ham," Hawkins says. "He's just made for it. There's no way he was going to be concealed behind a drum set for his whole life. No way."

In the studio, Grohl's songwriting has pushed the band into heavier rock material, without losing the knack for melodies that characterized the Foo Fighters when it was Grohl's own post-Nirvana solo project.

On *Echoes, Silence, Patience & Grace*, radio-friendly rock songs such as "The Pretender" share time with more subtle material

such as "Ballad of the Beaconsfield Miners" and "Statues."

Songs such as "Come Alive" are exercises in tantalizingly slow builds, a concept that Grohl used as a musical theme for the album.

"There are lots of songs on the record that take you on little journeys, and that's the same thing that happens on some of my favorite songs ever," Hawkins says, citing "Stairway to Heaven" and Yes' "Awaken," among others.

"I love all the prog-rock stuff; love all the big conceptual stuff. 'Come Alive,' I don't care what anybody says, is one of our top-five songs."

So far, the band has been slow to incorporate it into concert set lists.

"Dave's nervous that people don't care about it and aren't that interested in it," Hawkins says. "And really, it's taking a chance when playing a song like 'Come Alive' and 'Statues.'"

"It's like, 'OK, you've got to come with us and trust us.' A lot of people just came to hear 'Monkey Wrench' and 'Everlong.' Those will be in the set, but at the same time I like taking those chances."

On the other side of the coin, critics have complained that the Foo sound has become formulaic as the band has emerged as a reliable radio fixture.

"This will sound sort of pissy," Hawkins says, "but a lot of the major reviews in Spin and Rolling Stone say 'Sounds like the same old Foo Fighters' and it's like 'What do you want us to do? Rap or play techno music? What's gonna be new to you guys?'"

"We're not working to impress Rolling Stone or Spin, but it makes me wonder, 'Did you hear 'Statues'? Did you hear 'Come Alive'? To me, those are departures."

On the new album, one thing is the same as ever: finding the best songs.

"It doesn't matter if it's nine soft-rockers or nine hard-rockers or whatever. Dave, and the band and I still think in terms of albums and not ringtones."

"You hope even if it's a small percentage, that someone will sit and listen to the whole album as a piece of music."

MOVIES CONT. FROM PAGE 8

goes awry and their mother dies. In an attempt to cover their tracks they dig themselves in deeper and deeper until... well... you get the idea. The characters are so flawed the idea that they are somehow good is ridiculous, but they demand sympathy from the audience. I wanted to walk onto the screen, slap the characters and yell, "Stop!" It's as heartbreaking as it is brilliant, and even though it is devoid of any explosions it is still the most rapturous movie of the year.

2) *Juno*—Yet another movie that makes pregnancy funny, but this time with it's with a teenager. This is by far the funniest movie of the year yet oddly realistic. Ellen Page is Juno, the indie rock chick with a hard edge attitude and the snappy one liners to match, who gets knocked up by her best friend (Michael Cera). During the successive nine months she meets the adoptive parents (Jason Bateman and Jennifer Gardner) and as Juno puts it, deals "with things way beyond her maturity level."

This is the best written movie of the year and the directing, acting and music are simply stellar. If you can only see one movie in theatres right now see Juno.

1) *Once*—Not only is this my favorite movie of this year but one of my favorite movies of all time. The story revolves around two Irish street musicians who meet and grow close over a week of making and recording music.

To be honest I don't really know why I love this movie as much as I do. Perhaps it has to do with its simple nature (virtually no characters have names), or the perfect chemistry between the girl, or its incredible music. All I know is that when the movie ended I was so blown away I could not move from my seat until the credits were done. I was not alone; no one else moved either.

It is a completely new type of movie musical with no imaginary orchestra and complete strangers don't sing in perfect harmony and dance together. This is a movie all should see and I hope all will love.

FARRELL CONT. FROM PAGE 9

Woody Allen, and he's cast you against type.

A.: I know! The reason you do this, and it's a stock answer, but there you go. You do this to work with Woody.

I got to read the script before we went to work and I definitely loved the character, who's a bit different, for me, kind of the conscience of the piece. I love the journey he goes on. It's a fall from grace story, a grace that's not realized. He's got it all. They've got it all. Only looking back, after things have turned to (garbage) does he realize, in a moment of clarity, that they did have it all, or everything they needed in life. But they reached too far, stepped over their own moral boundaries.

I don't know if there's a message in there. I suppose it's about how to reflect on your life, not by looking backward, not thinking too much about what you don't have, but by focusing on where you find yourself in the present.

Q.: But Woody doesn't let you be funny.

A.: I know, I know. Could've been a comedy, which would've been a whole new level of nervousness, trying to make Woody Allen laugh.

Q.: But you can be funny. We've all seen it.

A.: Haha! So I'm told. Every few years. By some crazy person.

When I read the script, though, it was pretty clear that it doesn't have any comic ambitions at all, this piece. A tragic melodrama is what we went for.

I don't go into this with an objective or a goal to get anything specific from it. I just wanted to have a decent working experience with a true legend of the business, to do a good tale, well told.

That's who Woody Allen is to me. First and foremost, he's a great storyteller with a keen eye for human behavior, the folly and the tragedy of existing in this world. With that in mind, knowing his body of work, his reputation, when you get the opportunity, the majority of actors just jump at it. It's as close to a no-brainer as I've had in my career. I didn't care if he was offering a comedy or a drama.

Q.: So you knew his reputation. Famous for the way he treats the script (not a big fan of improvising), the way he shoots (lots of wide "master" shots, quicker than shooting many close-ups), for his phobias about germs and water and the like. I'm watching the scenes with you and Ewan on a sailboat in the middle of a bay, and thinking, "How many life jackets does Woody Allen have on in that chase (camera) boat?"

A.: A chase boat? Are you kidding me? I think he was on shore with a pair o' binoculars. OK, maybe it was a very, very high-powered telescope, so that he could do a little bit of lip reading.

Him, on the water? I don't know. Seasickness would've been the least of our worries!

Q.: At least you looked at home on the water, tiller in hand, wind on your beam..

A.: What's a tiller? No idea what you're talking about. Was that the thing I had in my hand? Steering the boat? Haha! Oooh, it was grand. We went out a couple of times on a boat with these lads in England on a very big bay and learned how to keep the bloody thing in a straight line for 40 seconds at a time. Because that's all it took per take. Forty seconds. After 40 seconds, we'd be pointed who knows where? The magic of the movies!

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