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THE MINARET

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New Hire, Seasoned Journalist

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Harry Potter Celebration Lacks Magic

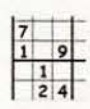
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Blue Light Stations Lack Reliability


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Spartan Shortstop Follows Family Legacy

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 Campus Calendar
and Sudoku puzzle on
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Palm Residents Test New Wave of Updated Apartments



Photo courtesy of Regina Gonzalez

Students moved into the newly built Palm Apartments this semester and are enjoying the new furnishings despite some of the noisy construction.

By MADISON IRWIN
News Writer

The long-awaited new residence hall, Palm Apartments, is finally complete. The days of taking a shuttle bus to class are finally over for some previous Barrymore Hotel residents. Although Palm Apartments was built to house upperclassmen, the freshmen who were living in the Barrymore Hotel were pulled onto campus to live there for the semester.

Construction of the new dorm began with the demolition of the southern wing of Residential Community in May 2014. Contractors are still making finishing touches and installing landscaping for the apartments which should be completed in the next few weeks, according to Eric Cardenas, the

Director of Public Information and Publications at UT.

"The new residence hall and the rooms within were designed by a committee that included architects, contractors and university staff," including Residence Life and Residence Hall staff, Cardenas said. "The design was based on current trends in university housing, as well as feedback from current and former students about what they desire in residential living." The design was also intended to increase student collaboration and engagement.

This is the only residence hall that has a laundry room on every floor. While the laundry rooms are completed and functional on floors two through six, the rooms on floors one and seven should be completed



See PALM page 5

Spartans Slim Down to Suit Up for Spring Break

By BIANCA LOPEZ
News Writer

Everybody wants that beach body for spring break, but not everyone is willing to commit to what it takes to shed that winter (albeit a 70 degree winter) weight. Luckily, UT offers a variety of opportunities for students to get fit before springtime rolls around.

The Office of Campus Recreation features the "Spartan Slimdown," among other programs as a way to encourage students to commit to physical activity and healthy eating. The program serves as a unique way to work out with the support and advice of health professionals.

The Spartan Slimdown is available to full-time undergraduate students who are serious about losing 15-20 pounds to get to a healthy weight. As

an incentive to continue the program, \$30 of the \$60 fee is returned to the participants upon completion.

Melissa Levy, student coordinator of fitness and a junior majoring in human performance, heads the Spartan Slimdown, along with working as a personal trainer and instructing spinning, strength training and total body conditioning classes at the McNiff Fitness Center.

"This year it is my first year running [the Spartan Slimdown] so I have incorporated some of my own ideas into it this year to make it as beneficial as possible to those participating in it. I have also hired three great trainers to help out, Joel Metzger, Brandon Boston and Daniel Indorato," Levy said. "I got into personal training because I want to help people change their lifestyles to

"The best thing to emphasize after that program is to just keep continuing until your goal. It's not like a year-long thing, but they give you an idea of what you should do."

Atakan Keskin

become healthy, happy and feel confident. Seeing people reach their health goals is so inspiring. I'm excited to see how successful this year is."

Applications were due Jan. 30 along with a \$60 fee and a 250 word essay describing why the candidate

should be selected for the program. The program requires participants to be beginner exercisers and should be able to meet for weekly weigh-ins and group workouts, along with three unsupervised workouts per week.

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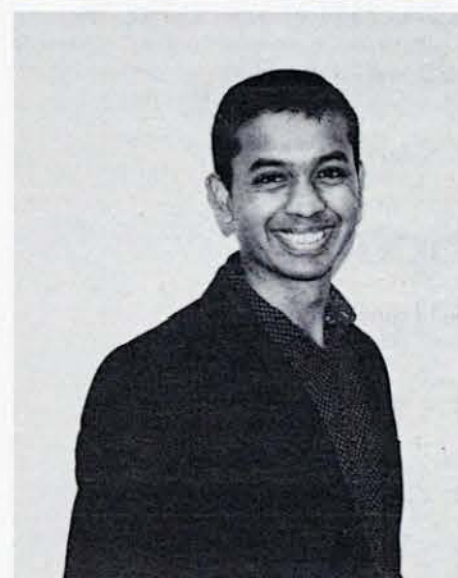
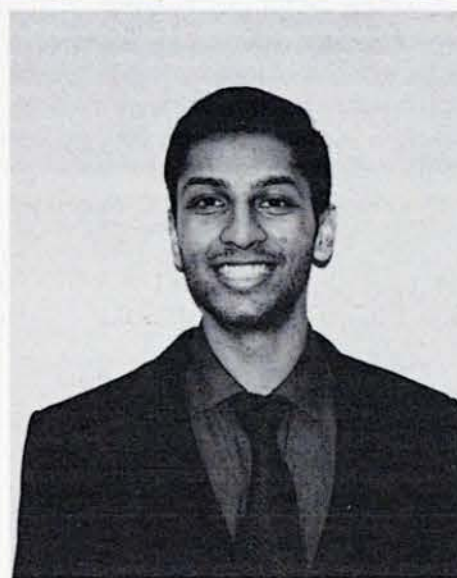
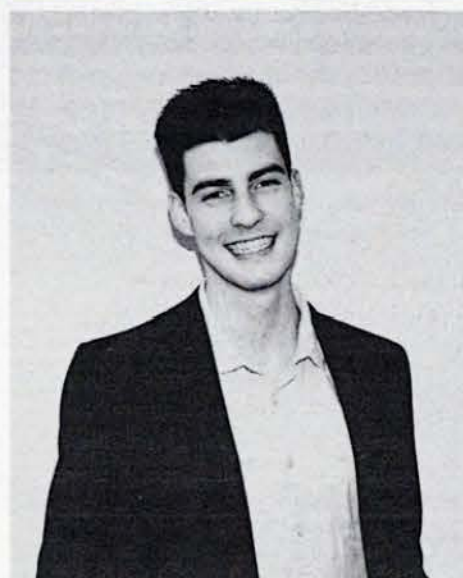
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Spartan Entrepreneurs Aim to 'Bamboost' Early Childhood Education



HOME OUR MISSION PRODUCTS ABOUT OUR TEAM CONTACT US BLOG SHOP CART



Caio Amaral (left), Bijen Patel (center), and Gopi Balasubramanian (right) are three of the UTampa students who founded Bamboost.

By KAI MILLER
News Writer

If you had the opportunity to change the world, what would you do? For five UT students, the answer is quite simple — create a line of eco-friendly bamboo fiber products. The group of aspiring entrepreneurs plan to integrate bamboo into urban slums as a means of providing both sanitation and education for children, a task that has earned them recognition as Hult Prize semifinalists.

Founding team member, Bijen Patel along with the efforts of Vignesh Parameswaran, Trent Lott, Gobinath Balasubramanian and Caio Lombardi Amaral created “Bamboost,” a multi-tier startup, seven weeks ago in an attempt to bring about social change. The enterprise involves selling bamboo-fiber diaper liners and toiletry bags to families in urban slums around the world. The biodegradable liners help improve overall sanitary conditions and combat infant mortality.

“Two million children, in India alone, are dying every year just because of unsanitary conditions in slums,” Patel said. “But, we have found a way to reduce the cost of [sanitary] products by more than 75 percent.”

Last semester, Bamboost presented their business model at the Hult Prize competition and advanced to the regional finals where they will compete for a chance to win \$1 million in capital to turn this proposal into a reality.

“We are really driven by the Hult Prize money,” Parameswaran said. “But by the time we finished doing our market research 100 kids have died. So, we had to figure out what we really could do for those kids.”

The Hult Prize is a startup accelerator for social entrepreneurship, which brings together college students from around the world to solve the world’s most pressing issues. This year’s theme, selected by former president, Bill Clinton, is “Early Childhood Education in the Urban Slum and Beyond.” UT was one of approximately 75 colleges and universities chosen to host a local edition of the Hult Prize, allowing the winning team to bypass the application round and go straight to the regional competition.

Faced with the task of educating 10 million children by the year 2020, the Bamboost team knew that curriculum had to be the core of their business model. In addition to combating sanitation issues, Bamboost aims to provide children under the age of six with a free educational toolkit. With every purchase of a bamboo-fiber product, families will receive complimentary bamboo-based educational toys such as books, building blocks and puzzles.

The Bamboost team, which is comprised of students from India, Brazil and Florida, wants to initially focus their efforts in Brazil and India. Amaral, a junior and international business major, will be

spearheading Bamboost’s involvement in the favelas (slums) of Brazil.

“I have spent 14 years of my life in Brazil, and connecting with the people of the favelas,” Amaral said. “I would love to change the quality of their lives.”

Following an upcoming regional competition March 13-14, in Boston, six finalists will spend six weeks at a summer entrepreneurial program hosted by the Hult International Business School to hone their business plan and concept. A final round of competition will be held during the annual Clinton Global Initiative meeting in September 2015, where the winning team will be announced and awarded the \$1 million prize.

Although the Bamboost team is hopeful that they will come out on top during next month’s regional competition, the chance of rejection still lingers. However, the five students aren’t going to allow that to deter them from following through with Bamboost. On Jan. 21, the Bamboost team launched a kickstarter campaign for their educational toolkit in an effort to continue building their social enterprise.

“I think eventually if we build a successful enough business model it will fall through,” Amaral said. “Money follows passion.”

Kai Miller can be reached at kai.miller@spartans.ut.edu

New Hire, Seasoned Journalist: David Wheeler

By **ARIEL HERNANDEZ**
News Writer

David Wheeler knew he wanted to work in journalism since he was five. Back then he used to pretend he was a TV reporter for NBC News. Now at 37, Wheeler has gone on to write for some of the most recognized names in the news business, including *The Atlantic Magazine*, CNN and *The New York Times*.

This fall he will begin at the University of Tampa as the newest faculty hire in the journalism program. Wheeler is currently a journalism professor at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky, about 30 minutes outside Lexington.

"I am impressed with the students," Wheeler said of the University of Tampa. "Just teaching one class [at UT], I was amazed at how much the students knew about journalism. I can't wait to meet everybody; I am really excited. It's an honor to teach with people of that quality and caliber."

Wheeler attended Asbury University where he studied media and journalism. He wrote for *The Asbury Collegian*, the student newspaper, an experience that "solidified" that journalism was what he wanted to do. He enjoyed telling important stories and the social life that came along with it.

"I felt that the journalism students understood where I was coming from," Wheeler said. "I loved being around other thinkers, writers, and storytellers."

After obtaining both his masters and bachelors at AU, he worked for a small-town newspaper until 2006 when he not only decided that he would go back to AU to teach, but also to pursue his PhD. Along with working at Asbury and finishing his doctorate degree, Wheeler regularly freelances for publications in the U.S. and abroad.

Not only has Wheeler traveled for his own stories, but he has also traveled with some of his students as well.

"I love taking students on trips,"



David Wheeler will bring his professional knowledge to UTampa's Journalism Program in the fall semester.

Photo courtesy of Jessica Wheeler

Wheeler said. "I've taken students all over the U.S., as well as France, Germany, Austria, Italy and England."

Wheeler also took some students to cover the 2012 Olympics in London. While there, they made videos that were aired on local TV stations.

Although traveling is something that Wheeler loves, he said moving from Kentucky to Tampa is "bittersweet."

"I will miss my family and the great people/friendships," Wheeler said.

"But my wife [Jessica Wheeler] and I are excited to be moving to Tampa."

He's looking forward to learning from his new students, building friendships with his new colleagues and enjoying the warm weather all year round. Next semester, Wheeler will teach First Year Writing, Introduction

to Journalism and Multimedia Journalism.

"Wheeler is a very lively and enthusiastic guy," said Kathleen Oschorn, who serves as interim coordinator for the journalism major. "Considering that we have a terrific journalism program with great journalism professors, I'm sure he'll be a great addition and will contribute to the program."

Wheeler hopes to be a great professor for his students at UT by preparing them well for a career in journalism.

"The fact that he has background working for famous publications, such as the New York Times, is going to be very beneficial to any journalism student," said junior journalism major,

Ann Marie Distasi. "We can get direct feedback, and see what he did in his career that we can use to make ourselves better journalists."

While working at UT, Wheeler will continue as a freelance writer. He believes that no matter where you are, there are always story opportunities.

"If too much time goes by and I haven't written an article or worked on a multimedia project, I get antsy," Wheeler said. "Wherever you are, there are always story opportunities."

Ariel Hernandez can be reached at ariel.hernandez@spartans.ut.edu

INFORMATION



POLICE BEAT

Reports compiled by Zoe Fowler

Free Snickers Bars, Anyone?

On Jan. 27, a vending machine was located unsecured and reported to company.

MISSION COMPLETE

On Jan. 27, unknown person(s) removed textbooks from a professor's office undetected.

Hope It Wasn't a Bentley

On Jan. 28, a student reported that her vehicle was struck by another vehicle parked in the garage.

Pre-Gasparilla Festivities

On Jan. 29, a university student was found to be both under the influence and in possession of alcohol while the attending class.

This Happens on the Daily

On Jan. 31, a room search with RAs present resulted in drug and alcohol violations.

But Were They Clean?

On Feb. 1, a university student reported two pairs of pants missing from her laundry bundle. It is unclear as of now if they have been stolen or not.



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Two Committee Chairs Chosen

Lesley Rowland is now the Community Standards Committee Chair. Alana Boyles is the Sustainability Standards Committee Chair.

Leadership Awards Night 2015

Nominations are due by March 4 and applications are due by March 18.

Recycling Pilot Program

Student Environmental Action Coalition's Recycling Pilot Program is coming Fall 2015 in Vaughn.

Raised Wages Aid Working UTampa Community

By IRENE S IDEDE
News Writer

The new year was marked with resolutions and celebrations all over America, but a number of states ushered in 2015 with a raise in job income. Last year, minimum wage workers across the US spoke through protests in order to change the amount of income they were receiving, according to USA Today. The federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25, according to the United States Department of Labor. States like Oklahoma, South Dakota and Nebraska were just a few to raise their minimum wages. Florida was also one of the states to participate, raising it from \$7.93 to \$8.03, an increase of 12 cents.

"We cannot raise the price of labor and expect the price of other goods to remain the same. It's simple supply and demand," said Cassidy Fitzpatrick, a junior economics major at the University of Tampa. "With the minimum wage being raised, then the prices of other goods will also rise as well to keep the markets in equilibrium. This will be a negative

impact on workers."

The University of Tampa's assistant professor of Economics, Josh Hall explains that the minimum wage increase is not a longterm solution in solving the inequality gap and that it may actually increase the unemployment rate. He expressed that because of this, firms reevaluate their recruitment decisions out of fear that an employee would be too costly.

"If you think about increasing the wage rate, more people are gonna wanna work," Hall said. "But from a firm's point of view, they will be like 'you are too expensive and we don't want you to work for us,'" Hall said.

The increase of minimum wage in certain states was intended to help low income workers earn more money, in order to sufficiently sustain themselves in the current economy. The minimum wage increases were said to give raises to three million workers within the US in 2015, according to CNN.

"It's hard when you're not making enough money to support yourself, especially when you're just making a few dollars an hour, when it feels like you're working 12 hours in an 8

"Minimum wage is not just for 16-year-old workers. There are families with men and women over 30 that are living on minimum wage."

Josh Hall

hour day," said Jacqueline Adams, a cook at UT's Deli service. "I wish the minimum would be increased even more, because I would like to make enough money to pay my bills. You have to get health insurance, life insurance, pay the bills and something's got to give in order to pay that."

The minimum wage increase over the years in different states, has also led to an increase in the purchasing power, or the number of goods or services that can be purchased with a unit of currency. Hall reassures that this has led to a decrease in the value of the earning in 2015 as

compared to 1980.

"Minimum wage is not just for 16-year-old workers. There are families with men and women over 30 that are living on minimum wage," Hall said. "When they get that money they're going to want to spend it whether it's for food or for buying new clothes or books for school."

Irene Sidede can be reached at irene.sidede@spartans.ut.edu

Students see results with fitness program

From SLIMDOWN Page 1

The applications defined the Spartan Slimdown as a "...nine-week fitness and wellness program designed to provide a safe, effective and fun way for students to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle through exercise, education, and behavior modification."

Last spring, Atakan Keskin, a junior international business and finance major with a minor in economics, completed the Spartan Slimdown after deciding that he needed to make a lifestyle change.

"I used to be a football player. At that time, I was like 230 pounds. Then I got injured and I had the surgery and I couldn't play football anymore," Keskin said. "I wanted to focus on education, but a lot of schools turned me down because I was injured and then I gained even more weight. I was like 255 pounds. Then I was like, well maybe I should go to the gym, and the first day I

went there was a flyer about the Slimdown."

Before participating in the Slimdown, Keskin displayed his dedication to fitness by losing about 20-30 pounds on his own. During the Slimdown, he lost an additional 25 pounds. Keskin has kept off 80 pounds in total since then.

Keskin credits the support and focus from the trainers and dietician for much of his success. They gave him diet plans, a calorie counting app, and workouts to adhere to throughout the program and afterwards.

Keskin continues to work out at the gym every day. He even shared some words of encouragement for anyone considering making a lifestyle modification:

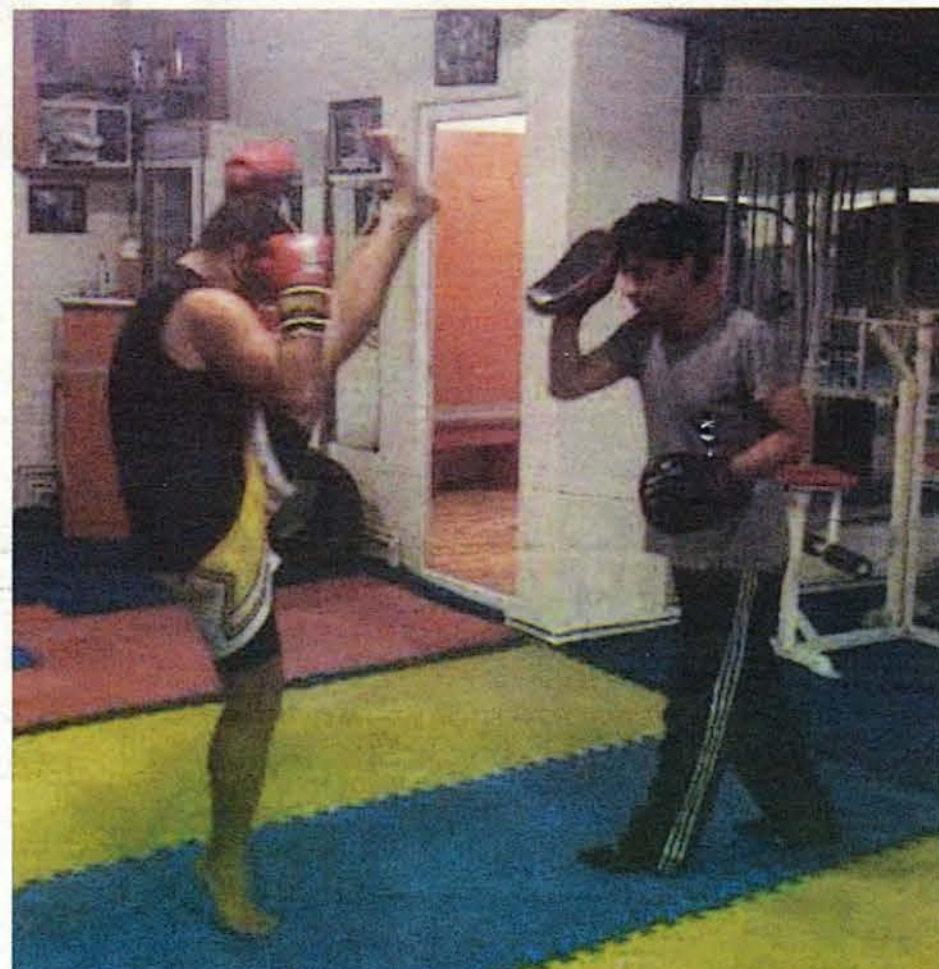
"The best thing to emphasize after the program is to just keep continuing until your goal. It's not like a year-long thing, but they give you an idea of what you should do," Keskin said. "They really push you towards your goal. I really recommend the program. You get two personal trainers and a dietician and you lose weight."

Students have other options to

get over their hibernation aside from the Slimdown. Many students take advantage of the McNiff Fitness Center throughout the school year, attending a variety of classes and groups that the center offers.

"I workout for self-confidence and to look good, I guess," said Amy Nilsen, a junior nursing major. "I'm more awake, I'm more alive, I'm more alert. It just makes me feel good after."

Bianca Lopez can be reached at bianca.lopez@spartans.ut.edu



Atakan Keskin went through the Spartan Slimdown program and continued the workouts until he reached his goal weight. Keskin lost a total of 80 pounds since he started the program. Photos courtesy of Atakan Keskin

Appartments approved by students

From PALM page 1

by the end of this week. Each room is suite-style with a common living room, kitchen, bathroom and four single rooms. There is one suite on floors two through seven that houses five students and includes one double sleeping room.

But the real question students want to know is this: What's it like living there?

Amanda Halek, a freshman business management major, likes living in the appartments because she feels more a part of the campus community.

"I hated living in the [Barrymore] because I felt so disconnected from everything," Halek said. "Being on campus makes such a difference. And the dorm itself is beautiful. I like the fact that I have my own room and can really personalize everything."

Ishmael Moya, a freshman allied health major, said his favorite feature is the kitchen.

"I love to cook, so having my own big kitchen is definitely a plus, especially for those nights when I'm not in the mood for anything on campus," Moya said. "I also love the view from our huge common room window. So far, I really have no complaints."

Although many students are satisfied with Palm Appartments,

those living on the seventh floor have complaints about the construction. Julie Dwyer, a freshman international business and finance major who lives on the seventh floor, said it has been interfering with her studies.

"There's almost never a time when men aren't doing work in our common room," Dwyer said. "We've also gotten some jealous seniors who are drunk knocking on our door, asking to come inside and check it out. But other than that, I'm happy with the dorm. I'm sure that it will be better once everything is fixed and fully finished."

The residence who moved from the Barrymore did not have to pay an increase in room and board. Housing fees for next year have not been proposed to or approved by the UT Board of Trustees, according to Cardenas. They will be announced after the March Board of Trustees meeting. Plans for the next phase of the Palm Appartments have not been finalized. However, Rescom will be a part of the upcoming 'continuing student room selection' process for the 2015-2016 academic year.

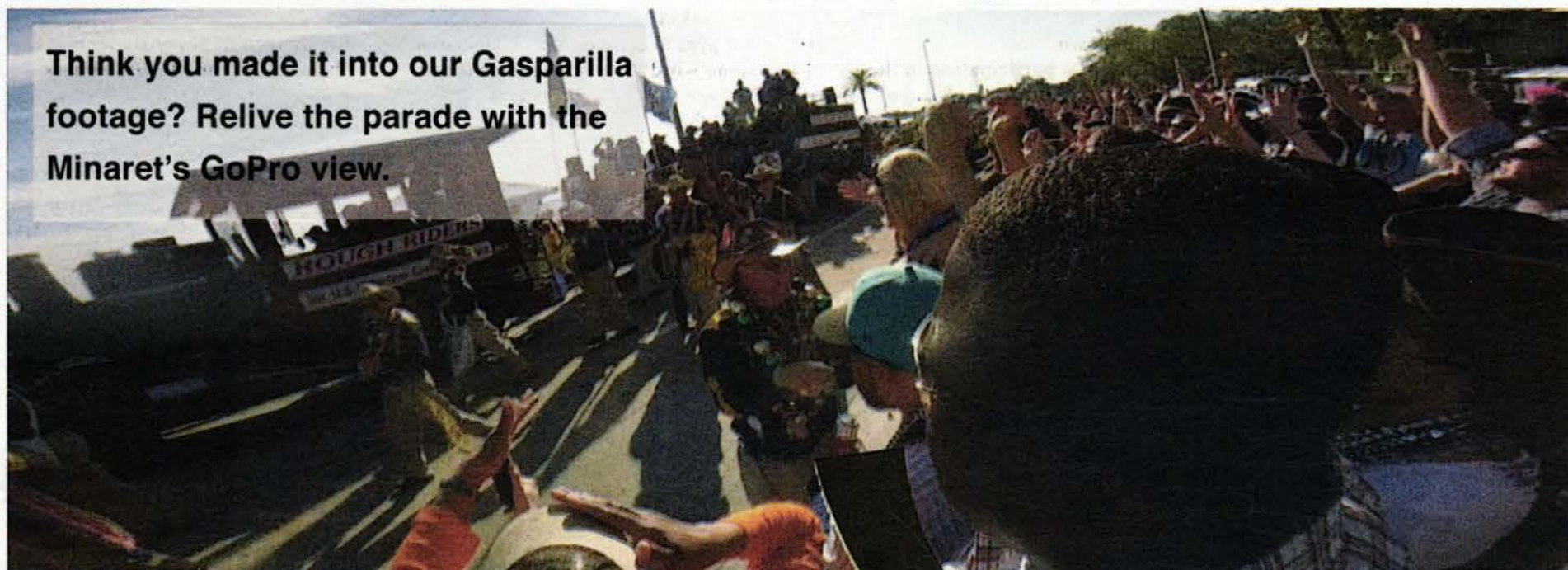
Madison Irwin can be reached at madison.irwin@spartans.ut.edu



Liz MacLean/The Minaret

The Palm Appartments offer students a spacious common area, updated kitchen and private rooms.

Think you made it into our Gasparilla footage? Relive the parade with the Minaret's GoPro view.



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DIVERSIONS

ON CAMPUS

FEBRUARY 5
Spring Internship Fair
Get the scoop on various internship opportunities for the summer or near future in Fletcher Lounge 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 6
SP Film: The Equalizer
Student Productions will be screening action-thriller “The Equalizer” for free in Reeves Theatre at 7:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 7
Men’s Basketball
Support your Spartans in a game against Florida Tech in the Martinez Center at 4:00 p.m. Admission is \$5 and free with a UT ID.

FEBRUARY 11
Understanding Islam
What does it mean to be Muslim? Learn about being a Muslim in America at the Sykes Chapel from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The event is free.

OFF CAMPUS

FEBRUARY 5
Florida State Fair
Enjoy classic carnival rides, food, and Vietnam War Memorial at the annual Florida State Fair. The event takes place at the fairgrounds and admission is \$9.

FEBRUARY 6
Playlist Live
This annual three-day conference hosts fans and creators of online video and takes place in Orlando. For more info, visit playlist-live.com.

FEBRUARY 9
Jaeb Concert Series
Enjoy the Straz Center as it transforms into an intimate music space featuring a variety of genres from alternative to Americana. The show begins at 7:30 p.m. and tickets are \$28.50.

FEBRUARY 11
Ingird Michaelson
Pop singer-songwriter Ingrid Michaelson will be performing at the historic Capitol Theatre at 8:00 p.m. Tickets range from \$35 to \$45.

SUDOKU

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websudoku.com

PICTURE of the WEEK



Photo by Tom Kolbe

The UT Women’s lacrosse team is set to begin its second season as a program this Saturday. The team will look to clinch a postseason berth in the inaugural SSC tournament this year.

ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT

UT Theatre Prepares for Regional Festival

By KARA DELEMEESTER
Arts + Entertainment Writer

UT Theatre students showcased their talents on Feb. 1 in preparation for the KCACTF.

A group of Performing Arts majors will be travelling to Albany, Georgia this week to compete at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). With four pairs of actors going into the competition, Professor Finocchiaro is hoping to have at least two pairs advance to the semi finals, and at least one pair in the finals.

The team will be leaving for Albany on Tuesday, competing against 300 students in the preliminaries on Wednesday, 64 students in the semi-finals on Thursday, and 32 students in the finals on Friday. Only two pairs out of the 300 students competing will go past the final round. If any of the pairs win the finals, they'll go on to a competition in Washington, D.C. where they will compete with finalists from all over the country for prestigious scholarships such as The Mark Twain Scholarship for Comic Performance, The Williamstown Theatre Festival Apprenticeship, The Shakespeare Theatre Company Acting Fellowship and The VASTA (Voice and Speech Trainers Association) Award for Vocal Excellence.

Before they left for the competition, the team held a showcase that served not only as a formal rehearsal, but also gave the acting pairs the opportunity to be critiqued by three different directors. The showcase was open to other Performing Arts students so that they could support their friends and also strive to be nominated to attend KCACTF next year.

Each acting pair consists of a student that was nominated for a performance in

either the fall semester's play or musical, and the acting partner of their choice. This year's pairs include seniors John Millsap and Alexa Perez; senior Emmanuel Carrero and sophomore Julia Rifino; junior Jessica Stone and senior Mitchell Spencer; and juniors Roxxi Jaxx and Mikaela Bracken. Each pair performs a six-minute package with three different performances. The packages are meant to showcase the nominated actor's ability to perform in a variety of genres, so they include scenes that are dramatic, and scenes that are

starting off with a strong performance of "My Lord and Master" from "The King and I," and then moving into two scenes with Spencer that included both witty dialogue, and a handgun. Finally, Jaxx and Bracken performed extremely well together in both a song and a scene before Jaxx broke off and gave a wonderful vocal performance of "Dead Girl Walking" from the musical adaptation of the movie "Heathers."

Also attending KCACTF is junior and film major Jessica White, who has served

"I'm excited to go to KCACTF because a stage manager hasn't gone in a long time. It's exciting because it's different for our school which is really cool but also pretty scary. I think it will be a lot of fun. I'm looking forward to it."

Jessica White

comedic, as well as duets and solos. The actors are challenged with having to cut scenes and songs to keep the entire package under six minutes while also making sure each of the three pieces transition smoothly.

At the showcase, the packages were rapidly performed, but each stood out in their own way and was unique to each of the actors. Millsap performed a serious and a comedic scene with Perez that kept the audience on their toes before he stepped forward seamlessly into a dramatic monologue from Shakespeare's "Richard II." Carrero and Rifino had the audience in hysterics with their performance of Therapy from the musical "Tick, Tick... Boom!" and a quirky scene from the play "Almost Maine," then Carrero sang a heart-breaking rendition of "Nobody Needs to Know" from "The Last 5 Years." Stone showcased her ability to sing and act by

as the stage manager for three shows during her time here at UT. White was nominated to attend the competition for her technical work in "Les Miserables." Unlike the acting pairs, White won't be performing at KCACTF. Instead, she'll bring a portfolio of her work to present for the stage manager portion of the competition.

Besides the competition aspect of the festival, KCACTF also includes performing arts-related workshops and seminars. The festival hosts parties every night for all of the students, and some schools even bring entire plays and musicals that they've rehearsed, performances of which are open to all attendees.

Kara Delemeester can be reached at Kara.delemeester@spartans.ut.edu.



(From top to bottom) Jessica White, Emmanuel Carrero and John Millsap.

Project Almanac is Unfulfilling and Visually Unsteady

By SAMMI BRENNAN
Arts + Entertainment Writer

With his first feature length debut, Dean Israelite directs the sci-fi thriller Project Almanac, a film which proves that the perfect way to rack in the dollar signs is product placement and slapping producer Michael Bay in the credits.

David Raskin (Jonny Weston), an average twenty-something-year-old in high school, because apparently casting agents refuse to hire actors under twenty to play teenagers. David is MIT bound, but with the death of his father at an

early age and a mother struggling to pay the bills, his dreams are too far to reach. The first scholarship only acquired him a few thousand in financial aid, but luckily, a second one is still available. David must create a proposal for a new invention and thus, decides to go through his father's old belongings for inspiration. After finding a video camera with the last tape documenting his seventh birthday party, David notices his current self reflected back in a mirror. With a little more rummaging around, David and his friends locate the blueprints and

equipment for a time machine. It's at least got some originality going for it.

Project Almanac is filmed entirely on a hand-held camera, so if you can survive the nauseas, this film may be enjoyable. That's not to say that a shaky cam film cannot be done effectively. 2012's Chronicle was a sleeper success and the Paranormal Activity movies, although mostly low on ratings, managed to usher in a whole franchise. At least Project Almanac is documenting something revolutionary as opposed to a teenager zooming in on a demon's face.

With most films oriented on time-travel, consequences follow when you attempt to change the future. At first, their motives are moderately unselfish. Quinn (Sam Lerner), points out that David is broke and his sister is a victim of bullying. Once that is taken care of, David uses the technology to get a second chance at love, and that's when things take a turn for the worst. However, that is also when the film finally kicks it up a notch, and whether it's due to the sense of panic or the mere dizziness of the shaky camera, the audience is just as out of breath as David is. The film could have easily removed all of the other characters since clearly David is the one we care about and feel connected to the most. We laugh at his romantic awkwardness and sympathize with his conflict of morality.

Despite the thousands of unanswered questions (How can a secret government agency just forget about the time travel machine they let David's dad keep in his basement? Why haven't any government agents come to collect it upon his death? How come none of David's neighbors notice the extremely loud noises coming from his basement?), Project Almanac grabs you by the ankles and drags you in towards the end. If only the film started out that way, we could have had a somewhat decent movie on our hands. But the film spends too much time forcing itself on a younger audience. Music festivals? Check. Product placement? Check. Modern-day movie references? Check. Barely-clothed girls? Check. Is that Imagine Dragons? That's what happens when MTV Films helps with production. I wouldn't be surprised if the movie turns into a spin off series on MTV.

Editing-wise, this film resembles a tutorial on Youtube, where the cuts are milliseconds before the character is about to say something. It's almost as if they choose to justify the poor cinematography based on the fact that they are using a hand-held camera. Project Almanac has potential, but there is too much fluff to see it clearly.

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Project Almanac/Facebook.com

Project Almanac was released on Jan. 30 and made \$8.3 million in its opening weekend.

Harry Potter Celebration Lacks Magic

By GRIFFIN GUINTA
Arts + Entertainment Writer

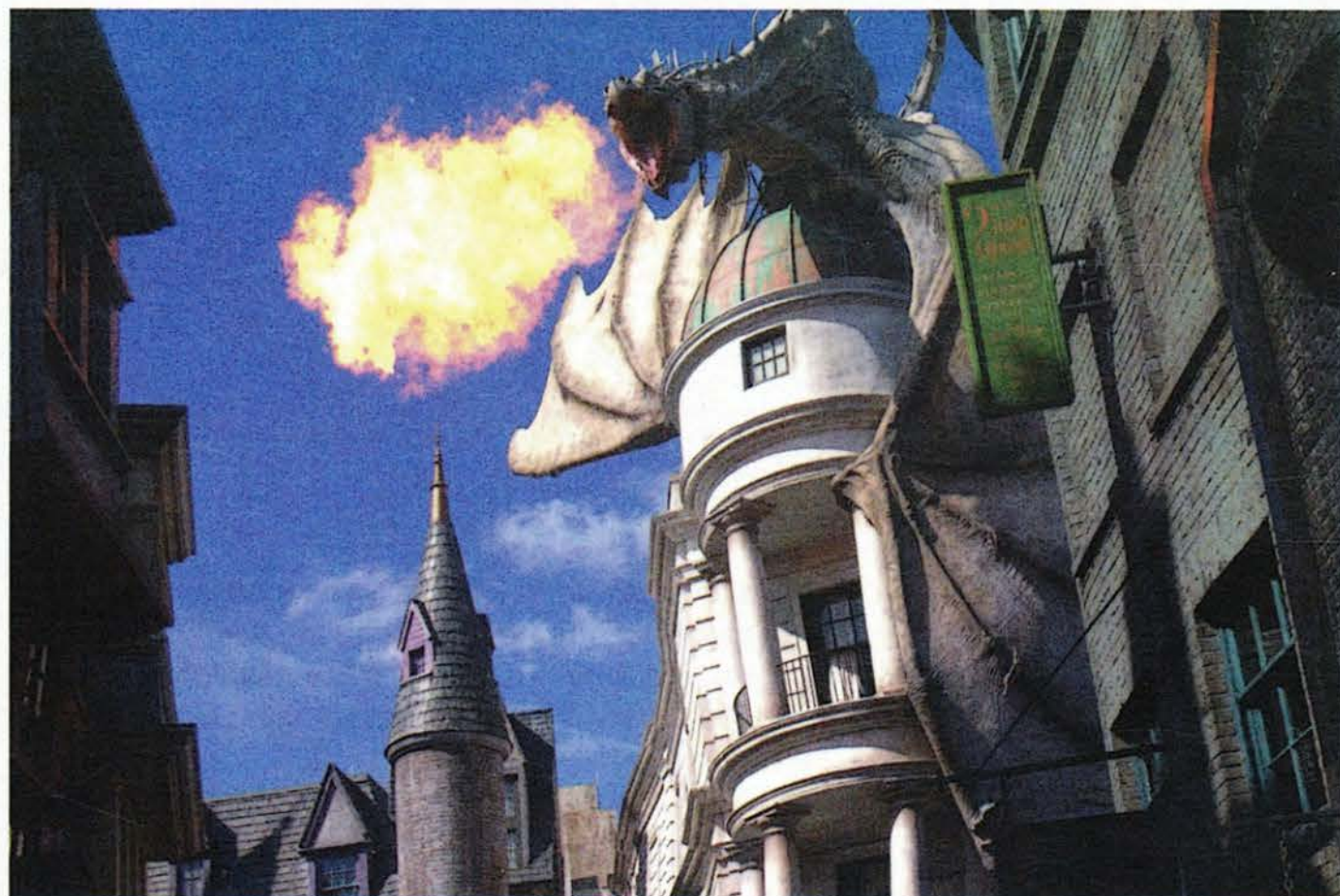
Universal Studios hosted the first ever Celebration of Harry Potter from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1.

Given the amount of people dressed in "Harry Potter" themed robes and regalia, one may have mistaken Universal Studios for the wizarding world itself this past weekend. Wizards everywhere, young and old, rushed to the popular Orlando park for the first ever "Celebration of Harry Potter," an event commemorating the fantastical book and movie series conceived by J.K. Rowling. While the event on the whole would appease any casual Potter fan, die-hard followers of the bespectacled young wizard may have left a bit disappointed by the end of the day.

Since the occasion was called a "celebration" of "Harry Potter," it would be logical to assume that Universal would pull out all the stops to honor the franchise that rakes in millions for them every year. Instead, it was underplanned and devoid of, for lack of a better word, magic. Practically every function took place in one isolated area while the rest of the park, including Diagon Alley, appeared no different than it would have been on an ordinary day. The only area with anything going on was a large music stage near the entrance, where presentations such as film talent panels, wand dueling demonstrations, graphic design tutorials, and film trivia were lined up from nine to five o'clock. To be fair, the "celebration" wasn't intended to be a fan convention, such as the popular LeakyCon, but there could have at least been more hype generated around the park. The whole event felt like UT homecoming: Unless you had walked by the fields during the Saturday soccer games, you'd have no idea that we even had a homecoming week.

The first scheduled event of the Saturday festivities began with a lot of promise as British actors from the seven "Harry Potter" films, including Michael Gambon (Dumbledore), Evanna Lynch (Luna Lovegood) and twins James and Oliver Phelps (Fred and George Weasley) were on hand to answer questions asked by randomly selected fans in the audience. Notably absent was Robbie Coltrane (Hagrid), who was sick with the flu. While the audience participation component was a nice gesture, it fizzled fairly quickly. The emcee would pick "random" younger fans from the audience, who (through no fault of their own) would ask redundant questions that inevitably produced one word answers, such as: "what's your favorite animal?" or "what's your favorite spell?"

Energy was restored, however, by the comically blunt Gambon, who seemed clueless at just about every juncture. Unlike the stern and mild-mannered Dumbledore he plays in the films, Gambon was chock-full of eccentricity. Sporting a gray sport jacket, striped blue tie and pink socks, he repeatedly spewed out one wild card answer after the other. "I would choose my mustache," said Gambon when asked what magical item he would bring back from the Potter world. "And I'd wear it everywhere. But not the beard, that's uncomfortable."



The panel of four eventually delved into deeper subjects, but everything felt forced and awkward. The actors were set up on the Music Plaza Stage, a concert-sized venue sandwiched in between the Rip, Ride, Rock It coaster and the "Transformers" ride. Because of this, the actors were interrupted every few minutes by screams from the rollercoaster and a loud, abrasive siren noise that emanated from the exterior of the Transformers building.

Much like the first event, the subsequent panel of graphic design duo MinaLima seemed incredibly intriguing in the beginning. Artists Miraphora Mina and Eduardo Lima began by explaining the level of detail injected into every single "Harry Potter" film; details that the average viewer would likely gloss over when watching the films. For example, every Daily Prophet, the wizarding newspaper, was filled with fake news articles about various witches, wizards, and even quidditch matches. Mina went on to explain that the newspaper derived some of its influence from Russian propaganda after being taken over by the Ministry of Magic.

"We looked at Russian propaganda posters and so on, and used that aesthetic to inform what we wanted to do in the design," Lima said. The same newspaper was never used more than once.

"We made sure that all the Daily Prophet covers were different," he said. "There's no repetition in the design."

While it was fascinating to see the inner workings of the films from the designers' perspective, the effectiveness of the presentation was yet again spoiled by poor planning on Universal's part. The artists had to fill a forty-five minute time slot and the intervallic dead space was at times painfully awkward. It was as if the planners behind it all said, "Okay, go out there and talk about your art for an hour. By the way, here's a powerpoint. Oh, and have fun!"

Arguably the best part of the day was Kazu Kibuishi, a Seattle-based artist who illustrated the re-released covers of the "Harry Potter" books. Instead of just throwing him on stage and expecting him to divulge his life story, the brains behind the operation



Photos by Griffin Guinta

"A Celebration of Harry Potter" proved to be an anticlimactic event to Universal Studios visitors.

had Kibuishi design a cover from scratch on stage while simultaneously answering questions asked by the host and a few audience members. In the span of about thirty minutes, Kibuishi crafted a near perfect cover while also dishing out some poignant creative advice.

"When you're painting, it's about finding the image more than just creating the image," Kibuishi said.

He then went on to explain that you should never limit yourself or get locked into a specific goal. Instead,

work tirelessly on your craft and let your work speak for itself. The genuine, down-to-earth feel of this culminating event put a silver lining on an otherwise bland day, leaving certain fans wondering why it hadn't been structured like that from the beginning.

Overall, the whole ordeal felt a bit like a Gilderoy Lockhart class: all style, no substance.

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The Sidekicks Appropriately Blend Punk and Pop

By JORDAN WALSH
Arts + Entertainment Writer

It's getting more and more difficult to leave a mark on the continually broadening "punk" scene, with plenty of bands carrying the torch of the more classic definition of the term in honor of its founders, and others taking the essence of punk and trying to turn it into something new or different. The Sidekicks' latest album "Runners In The Nerved World," is the sound of a band trying to accomplish the best of both worlds—utilizing the immediacy of well-established punk tropes in addition to more complex and lasting song structures, sun-bleached harmonies and arresting pop hooks. The result is a record that seems to combine the most defining characteristics of Belle and Sebastian and The Menzingers for an interesting and incredibly enjoyable listen.



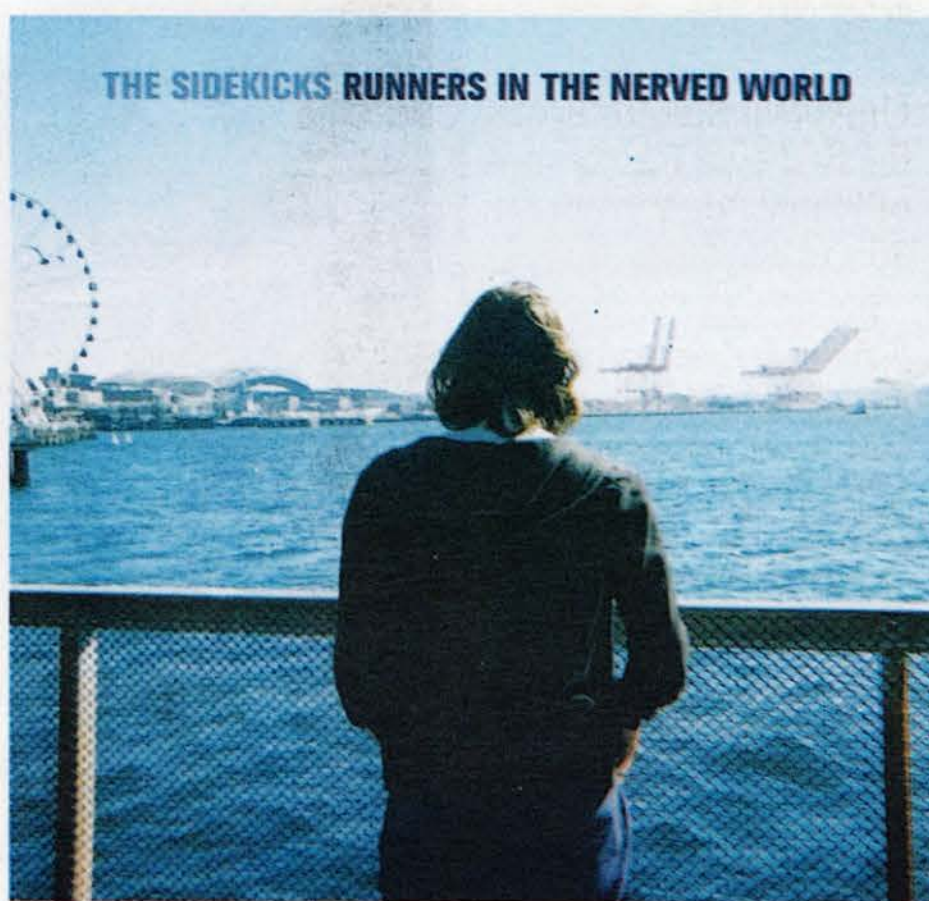
The introduction to opener "Hell Is Warm" breezily conjures up a lazy, flat day at the ocean—a late-era Modest Mouse pluck coupled with some layered "ohhhs" giving an initially misleading impression of what "Runners In The Nerved World" will sound like. But from here, things speed up rather quickly—and soon "Hell Is Warm" flip-flops to showing The Sidekicks' punk edge, a repeated, hammering belt of "how do we, how do we not get lost?" inciting all the

self-aware frustration of the best early adolescent punk music. While this transition may sound disjointed at first blush, the song ties the obvious indie rock influences in with its harder-edged punk tendencies rather well as the atmosphere and the thrashing guitars meet in the song's lead-out.

This melding of influences reflects the essence of "Runners In The Nerved World," an album that feels transitional for the Cleveland group. But that's not to say that "Runners" isn't a great outing in its own right—in fact, The Sidekicks strike the balance here beautifully, the pop-punk tendencies of the catchy and faster-paced "Everything In Twos" blending in nicely next to the '60s pop harmonies of "The Kid Who Broke His Wrist."

Lyrical, the album deals with the tentativeness of early adulthood—they're instantly relatable but not always concrete or clear, much in the style of Death Cab For Cutie's earliest songs ("I was underneath hours spent inside of that vision/ bend to hours spent inside televisions"). Lead singer Steve Ciolek delivers lines like "summer was singing 'dreams' and 'loving fun' / summer was singing both their words at once," that sound as if The Shins' James Mercer is doing his best Beach Boys impression. This makes for a set of tunes with a perfect mixture of catharsis, ambiguity and light-as-air springtime pop.

The record stays interesting and engaging throughout its runtime because of The Sidekicks' ability to throw curve balls within songs.



The Sidekicks/ Sidekicksohio.bandcamp.com
The Sidekicks' album "Runners in the Nerved World" is now available on iTunes and Spotify.

Tracks like "Spinning Seat" start off as toe-tapping rock tunes, but turn into more atmospheric indie rambles by the end. The melodies twist in often unpredictable directions, turning these hooks into absolute

earworms after a few listens.

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"The Loft" Fails to Rise to Expectations, Despite All-Star Cast

By CLAIRE FARROW
Arts + Entertainment Writer

"The Loft" features Karl Urban, James Marsden, Wentworth Miller and more.

"The Loft" is a puzzling film. At times, it's completely awful; at others, it's actually quite brilliant. Were it not for the blatant misogyny plastered on screen, the lackluster, disappointing ending, and the sub-par writing, "The Loft" may have been a lot better. The acting is actually quite good. Karl Urban (Star Trek Into Darkness, RED) and James Marsden (X-Men, X-Men 2) portray Vincent Stevens and Chris Vanowen, respectively, the two leading men of the five. Wentworth Miller (Prison Break, Underworld), Eric Stonestreet (Modern Family, Identity Thief) and Matthias Schoenaerts (The Drop) round out the rest of the quintet as Luke Seacord, Marty Landry and Philip Trauner.

It should be noted that "The Loft" has previously been made twice—one is a Belgian film released in 2008, the other in 2010 in The Netherlands (both previous versions were titled Loft). More interesting than that is the fact that all three of these films are nearly identical in plot, script (the same screenwriter and screenplay are used in all three), and sequence, particularly in regards to the 2008 and 2015 version. Both the original Belgian version of Loft and the United States remake of "The Loft" are not only directed by the same man, Erik Van Looy, but also share one of same main actors, Matthias Schoenaerts. The title sequence is even identical. It seems a bit superfluous to make a film in one country/language, then make it over seven years later in a different country/language. Then again, Hollywood is very good at remaking television shows and films previously made very well in other countries (House of

Cards, for example, is one of the successful/well-done American remakes).

The basic premise of the story is supposedly every married man's dream—a place, aka, "The Loft", where five friends can live out their extra-marital affairs in private, in secret and with little-to-no expense. Basically a timeshare lover's nest, or "fuck pad" as one of the female characters, Anne Morris, refers to it. This perfect arrangement is shattered when a woman is found deceased in "The Loft"'s bed. This of course begs the question—who does the laundry in "The Loft"? Certainly it isn't sanitary for the same sheets to be used over and over by different people having sex; one of the intriguing and unexplained aesthetic points in this film.

There were times when this film piques the viewer's interest; certain areas of the

plot— basically most of the middle and climax of the film— keep you wondering what is going to happen next. This intrigue is aided in part by the cinematography. However, once the climax is about to hit, the suspense is sucked out of the film and the viewer is left sorely wanting (most



likely a refund).

Fair warning—there is non-stop camera movement, literally. Even when the actors are standing still, the camera pans slowly and often circles around the actors while they move. Additionally, there are some rather bizarrely angled shots in "The Loft". In fact, it's quite nauseating; if one

is susceptible to motion-sickness, going to see this film is definitely not a grand idea. However, though the camera movement is unabating, it serves a purpose. Through this slightly jarring movement, the viewer is constantly transfixed to the screen, filled with uncomfortable anticipation.

What is most frustrating is the lack of positive, dynamic female roles. The woman that is most spirited is seen as a "fixer-upper" and a "damsel-in-distress"—she is a prostitute and is portrayed as less of a valuable person because of her profession. Only when she leaves this line of work does she gain value in the film. The most interesting thing about Morris' (Rachael Taylor) career choice is that she has complete control over her clientele and her relationships with them. Once she stops, however, she is immediately made vulnerable and basically powerless. The female characters in this film are all very one-dimensional. They are either nagging, needy, dim-witted, or femme-fatale-esque. They are merely there to be objects or to provide a visual for the reason these men are cheating on their wives. It's upsetting and disheartening to know that it is still so hard to find women portrayed as equals on screen (and off screen).

Finally, "The Loft" fails to give the viewer a sense of justice. The "bad guys" really don't receive ample punishment for their crimes. Perhaps the point of the filmmaker was to create undesirable, deplorable characters; however, if that were the case, one would think the consequences would be more severe. If there is a cautionary tale somewhere present, it has hidden itself very well.

The film is pretty to look at, barring the nausea, and including the eye candy. The actors do their best with what they have, and though the plot flounders, it keeps the viewer interested enough to wish for something more.

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The Loft/Blogs.indiewire.com

"The Loft," released Jan. 30, made a domestic total of \$2,997,321 on its opening weekend.

Netflix Guru's Pick of the Week: February Releases

By **CLAIRE FARROW**

Arts + Entertainment Writer

This February marks the addition of hours of new material to watch on the wonderful world of Netflix. Here is just a brief overview of some of the more interesting movies and television series being added to the catalog. Although no one is really in danger of not having anything to watch on Netflix, new series and movies are always a nice occurrence. Additionally, especially in the case of *House of Cards*, many fans are delighted with continuations of their beloved series.

Feb. 1

"King Arthur" (2004)

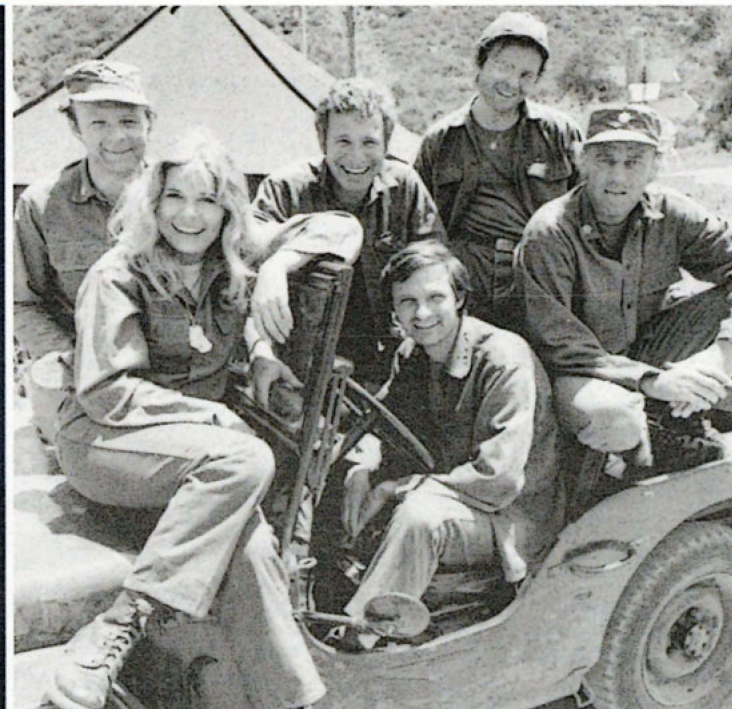
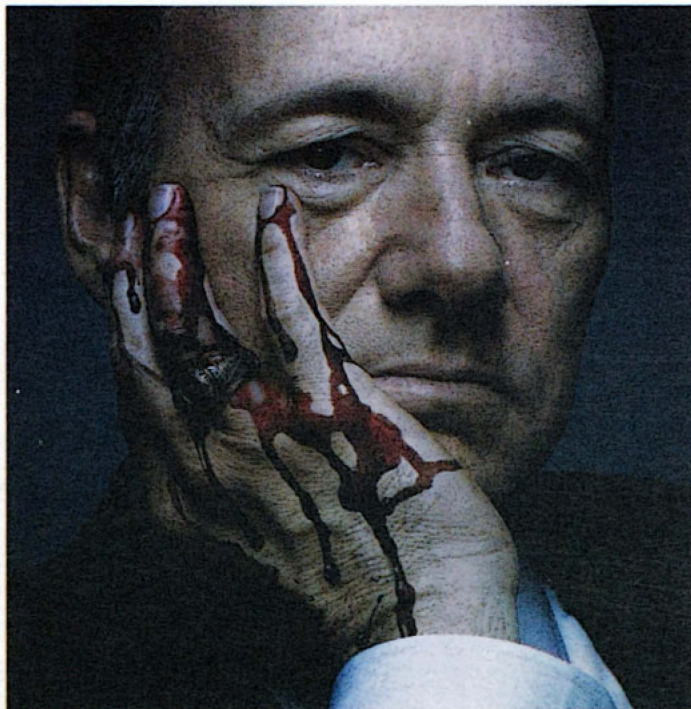
A "historical" look at the legend of King Arthur, set in fifth century England and starring Kiera Knightly, Clive Owen, Mads Mikkelsen, Hugh Dancy, Ioan Gruffudd, Stellan Skarsgård and Ray Stevenson. Full of Romans, pagans, bloody battles, and romance, this film is reminiscent of *300* and *Gladiator*, though a bit less grand.

"Gucci: the Director (The Director: An Evolution in Three Acts)" (2013)

Produced by James Franco, this documentary showcases the life and career of Frida Giannini, Gucci's creative director. It premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival back in 2013. Think perhaps of *The Devil Wears Prada*, only that this is a real insight to the fashion industry and into the life and creative process of one of the individuals who drives it.

"M*A*S*H" Seasons 1-5 (1972-1976)

The first five series of one of the funniest and most heartfelt comedies have come to Netflix. Set in the 1950s during the Korean War (though decidedly making commentary about the 1970s), a *M*A*S*H* (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) unit is fighting to save lives and maintain their sanity in any way possible—which normally translates to many, many zany



House of Cards/ www.pixcelation.com and *M*A*S*H*/ wikipedia.org

"*House of Cards*," returns to Netflix for a third season on Feb. 27. "*M*A*S*H*" seasons one through five were added on Feb. 1.

practical jokes and antics. It primarily follows the life of Dr. Hawkeye Pierce, played by Alan Alda, Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan (Loretta Swit), Maxwell Klinger (Jamie Farr), "Radar" O'Reilly (Gary Burghoff), and B.J. Hunnicutt (Mike Farrell).

"Magic City" Seasons 1-2 (2012-2013)

A short-lived Starz series set in 1959 Miami about hotel owner Ike Evans (Jeffery Dean Morgan), who is wrangled into a deal with local mob boss Ben Diamond (Danny Houston).

"Spartacus" Seasons 1-4 (2010-2013)

This Starz series is full of blood, gore, enslaved gladiators, violent battles and sex-- lots of sex. Fans of this show should be most pleased to see the fourth and final season added to Netflix, thus completing the series.

Feb. 11

"Mr. Peabody & Sherman" (2014)

A story about a dog and his boy... quite literally. Mr. Peabody (Ty Burrell) is a genius dog business man, inventor and adopter of a young boy, Sherman (Max Charles). In this film they must save history from being accidentally unraveled.

Feb. 21

"RoboCop" (2014)

This remake of the classic 1987 version of the same name isn't bad, necessarily-- just a bit lackluster and somewhat overreaching. Having said that, it certainly tries to be a good movie, though it still falls short of expectations. There is a lack of satire and wry humor that was present in the original. The fact that *RoboCop* has some big names attached to it (Samuel Jackson, Michael Keaton, Gary Oldman, Jennifer Ehle, and

Jay Baruchel), makes this slightly more disappointing. What is best about having this film on Netflix is that it allows viewers to compare the original and the remake and make judgments for themselves.

Feb. 27

"House of Cards" Season 3 (2013-2015)

Naturally, this is one of the most popular Netflix series, and is highly anticipated by its many fans. Frank Underwood (the brilliant Kevin Spacey) is back to his ruthless ways in life and politics. What lies in store for the new POTUS? Key characters' lives are in limbo, quite literally, and there are many questions waiting to be answered. Will this be the final season, or will the show go on? Let the countdown to binge watching begin.

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'Avengers: Age of Ultron' To Lead Comic Book Movie Slate

By **JORDAN LLANES**

Asst. Sports Editor

The last time we saw the Avengers, they had just saved New York City from an alien invasion. Now its time for our heroes to square off against a monster that was created by one of their own: Ultron. The first time that the team will meet their robotic adversary is when he utters his very clear intentions: "I know you mean well. You want to protect the world but you don't want it to change. There's only one path to peace: your extinction."

With those words of proclamation, one of the Avengers' greatest enemies begins his war against Earth's Mightiest Heroes. This battle will be the backbone of "*Avengers: Age of Ultron*," the sequel to the 2012 film "*The Avengers*."

Returning are each of the members of the original Avengers: Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, The Hulk, Black Widow and Hawkeye. In addition, their support staff of former Director of S.H.I.E.L.D Nick Fury and former S.H.I.E.L.D Deputy Director Maria Hill, who now works for Stark Industries following the events of "*Captain America: The Winter Soldier*," will return.

Joining the original team will be the brother-sister tandem of Pietro and Wanda Maximoff, aka Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch, as well as the Vision. As mentioned above, the villain will be

Ultron, who is an AI/ robot made of an indestructible blend of adamantium and vibranium who can possess any type of technology and make it do his bidding. This is will be the Avengers' hardest test yet and will make Loki and his army of Chitauri look like child's play.

"*The Avengers*" made over \$1.5 billion in the worldwide box office and is the third highest grossing film ever-- expect the sequel to smash that number. More heroes and a bigger, badder villain might allow "*Age of Ultron*" to push the \$2 billion mark when it comes out on May 1.

The second film featuring the silver screen's top superhero team isn't the only Marvel film coming out this year. On July 17, "*Ant-Man*" will hit theaters. The last installment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe's (MCU) Phase Two, "*Ant-Man*" will follow former thief Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) as he takes over the mantle of Ant-Man from his mentor, Dr. Hank Pym (Michael Douglas). With the use of Pym Particles, Lang is able to shrink down to the size of an ant, but his strength increases as well.

According to the official Marvel synopsis of the film, Lang and Pym must team up in order to protect the Ant-Man technology from various new threats, as well plan a heist that will

save the world. The film also stars Corey Stoll as Darren Cross, who is Pym's former protege and uses the Pym Particles to create the Yellow Jacket suit to oppose Ant-Man. The role of Hope Van Dyne, Pym's daughter who later becomes The Wasp, is played by Evangeline Lilly.

The film had suffered a bit of a setback when the original writer and director team of Joe Cornish and Edgar Wright left the film last May, but Marvel brought on Peyton Reed to direct and Adam McKay (who has directed such comedic hits as the "*Anchorman*" films and "*Step Brothers*") to polish the film's script off along with Rudd. Ant-Man was one of the original Avengers, so if Marvel can nail this character come July, then it will have another tentpole franchise as well as another member to add to the MCU's version of the Avengers.

The third and final film based on the comic book canon to come out this year will be Fox's reboot of "*Fantastic Four*." Although this is a Marvel property, Fox owns the film rights, so unfortunately, it will not be a part of the MCU. However, judging by the film's first teaser which came out in late January, it looks like Fox might have another flagship Marvel movie franchise on its hands, along with the X-Men series.

Directed by Josh Trank, the reboot features younger versions of Reed Richards (Miles Teller), Ben Grimm (Jamie Bell), and the Storm siblings, Johnny (Michael B. Jordan) and Sue (Kate Mara). Their classic arch nemesis from the comics, Victor Von Doom, has been renamed Victor Dumashev, and will be played by Toby Kebbell. Fox's official synopsis says that the *Fantastic Four* will gain their powers when they are transported to an alternate dimension, and must harness their abilities and work together to stop a former friend turned enemy. Sounds like another showdown between the team and their greatest enemy is in order here.

Once "*Fantastic Four*" finishes its theatrical run, this could be the highest grossing year in history for superhero films. However, if that does happen, don't look for that record to stand. The superhero movie is here to stay, and with Warner Brothers and DC beginning to churn the wheels on its own universe of films, it looks like a box office war filled with superpowered beings will be waged. These next few years should be super.

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OPINION

Blue Light Stations Lack Reliability

Campus

By KATIE DRAKE
Opinion Writer



Safety is a top priority on all college campuses and every school has different techniques to ensure the safety of their students. The University of Tampa has Campus Safety patrolling campus 24/7, student ID checks in residence halls at night and blue safety lights around campus that have a direct line to security. This system creates a good environment for making sure that we are all safe while in the residence halls or walking from building to building, but when most of the crime happens on the outskirts of campus, then none of these things really help. When I first started here, the blue safety lights in various locations around campus were an important feature that my mom and I both liked about the campus. However, when I looked into it more I couldn't seem to find any statistics about these blue poles anywhere.

These blue poles are called "blue light" phones, according to Campus Safety. They are spread out across campus and whether they are in the

form of a telephone or the actual blue pole, you either pick up a handset or press a button and are directly connected to campus safety where they try to respond in under two minutes. I always see them around campus but more recently, I found one in the West parking garage that had a piece of paper taped to it that read 'out of order' which makes me wonder how many others could possibly be out of order as well. I have never seen one of those lights in action or ever heard of one assisting a student when they were in danger. But how would we know about them, if they don't post statistics? One drastic way to test these blue light phones is to push the button ourselves and see how long we actually have to wait for help to come; after all a lot can happen in two minutes. (Note: this is illegal).

We frequently receive alerts in our Spartans email about students being mugged or attacked, many of which happen on Cass Street or the area encompassing the backside of our campus. A more strategic location for these blue poles would be on the edge of campus where it seems more likely that someone may actually need to push the button for immediate help. As the lights stand now, they are so far apart that if campus security is on the other

side of campus, the chances of them getting to you before the perpetrator gets away or does harm are slim. If you have ever been in a golf cart, you know they don't move too fast even when you have the pedal to the floor. It might at least scare the criminal away if they know that help is coming or if a light/ alarm comes on.

A big selling point during campus tours are the safety of these blue poles, however, they fail to mention any specific information about them on our school website. We go to school on a beautiful campus right next to the downtown area which I think distracts people from being aware that the areas around us are potentially dangerous. We also go to school on an open campus, meaning anyone can walk on and off whenever they like. It makes sense that the blue lights are located throughout campus, but for this same reason they need to be surrounding campus as well. Campus Safety will never be able to be everywhere on campus so we need to make smart decisions when it comes to off-campus safety such as not walking alone late at night where the area is poorly lit or less populated.

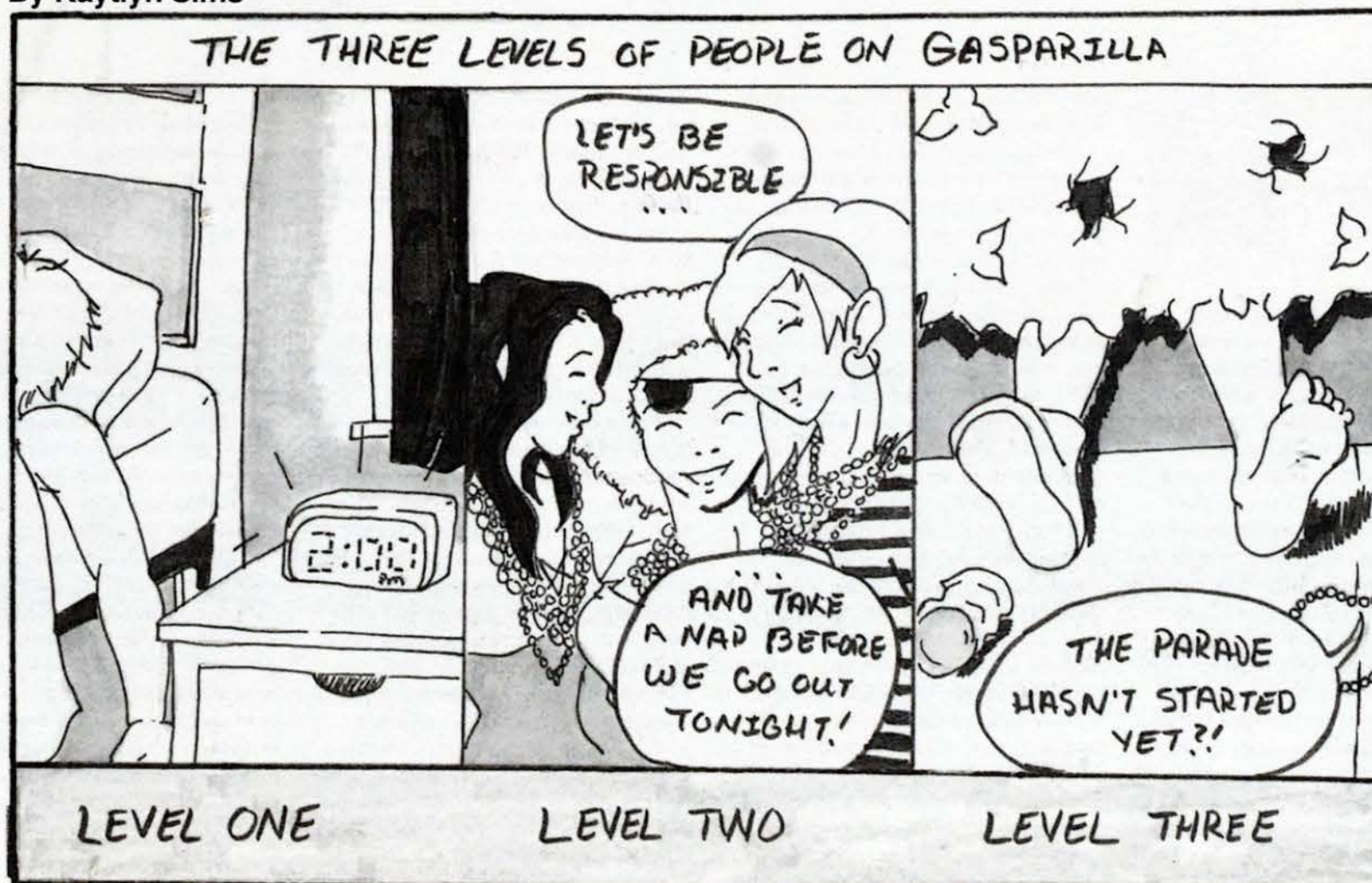
Katie Drake can be reached at katie.drake@spartans.ut.edu



Photo Courtesy of Doha Madani
Blue light lamp in West Parking Garage is out of order.

Commentary:

By Kaytlyn Sims



Kaytlyn Sims

Overweight Model Sets Bad Health Example

Health

By **EMILY SILVERMAN**
Opinion Writer



The growing popularity of body-positivity along with an increased presence of plus-sized fashion models has brought on this idea that as long as you're happy with the way you look, obesity is not an issue. This is not the case. Almost 70 percent of adults in America are either overweight or obese, according to the American Heart Association. Teaching women to accept their bodies regardless of their weight rather than encouraging them to lead healthier lifestyles is only going to increase that number.

Plus-sized model Tess Munster, also known as Tess Holliday, was recently signed by Milk Model Management, making her the first model of her size to be signed to a major agency, according to plus-model-mag.com. Her signing has been seen as a huge milestone to some body-positivity activists, but I see it as a setback. When talking body-positivity, we should include health as a primary component. Having been named one of the top plus-sized models in the world by both Vogue Italia and Refinery 29, there's no doubt the woman is both beautiful and talented, but at five foot five and 260 pounds, according to her Model Mayhem page, she is definitely not healthy. The ideal healthy weight for a five foot five woman is between 114 and 144 pounds; at 180 pounds and above a woman of this height is considered obese, according to www.rush.edu.

In addition to her modeling career,

Munster has proclaimed herself a body-positivity activist and is the founder of the #effyourbeautystandards movement. The movement encourages women to screw the strict standards society has set for what it means to be beautiful, and has her followers Instagramming and Tweeting selfies proudly marked with the hashtag, #effyourbeautystandards, telling the world to "eff" off and let them love their bodies.

While her message is both powerful and important, she is misleading women in the difference between beauty standards and health standards. "Currently, about 35 percent of women and 31 percent of men are considered seriously overweight, and 15 percent of children between the ages of six and 19 are overweight," according to stanfordhealthcare.com. Munster is proof that it is possible to love yourself regardless of your weight, but is it healthy? Obesity can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attacks and strokes, according to the American Heart Association. I'm not saying that women need to have a flat stomach and perfectly toned muscles to be happy with who they are, but simply that health and confidence in who you are should exist in harmony.

Body-positivity activists have commonly shamed agencies and brands for promoting health risks and diseases like anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa by using abnormally underweight models. They are chastised for encouraging women to put their health on the back burner in order to be skinny. However, the use of extremely overweight models and the resulting advocacy of the numerous health problems associated with obesity don't



elmeme.me/AnaGeekLogue
Tess Munster is beautiful but sets unhealthy example for both sexes looking to her as a role model.

seem to be of the same concern. No, these women are seen as role models and self-love gurus. The whole point to the #effyourbeautystandards movement that Munster created is to love our bodies; in that mindset, we should want to take the best possible care of what we love most. We should all want the best for whom we love the most. The way I see it, self-love is not just accepting who you are, it is also striving to take the best possible care of yourself.

In a world dominated by the media where we see gorgeous models

on every other billboard, magazine and Instagram post we pass by, self-acceptance and body-positivity are more important than ever. But with the obesity epidemic threatening our nation's health and well-being, self-love and body-positivity activists need to start encouraging women not only to be comfortable in their own skin, but to do their best to make sure the skin they're in is healthy.

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Academy Nominations Must Focus on Diversity in Future

Pop Culture

By **SAM ALLEN**
Opinion Writer



The media has made some progress in diversifying its programming, most notably in television. With shows like "Orange Is the New Black", "The Fosters", "Scandal" and "How to Get Away with Murder" the number of people of color, women and members of the LGBT community are increasing not only in representation but also in lead roles. The popularity of this programming says something important about our society: diversity makes for a better media experience. With that being said, it is puzzling that "not a single actor of color or female director was included" in the Academy Awards nominations this year, according to *The Washington Post*. Though many are outraged by the lack of diversity in Hollywood and the Academy Awards nominees, we as consumers need to take some responsibility. In order to create a more accepting environment in which we need to support films that present a healthy representation of a more diverse population.

Anger at this year's Academy Awards nominations is important and necessary if our community wants to see a change made.

Nominations are "the least diverse in 17 years" according to ABC 7 News. The film "Selma" (directed by Ava DuVernay, a woman of color) is nominated for an Oscar in the Best Picture category but the performances of the actors are being ignored. In response to the predominantly white nominations this year, the hashtag "#OscarsSoWhite" has been trending on Twitter recently. Raising awareness of the neglect many audience members feel will help to promote more varied programming and recognition of LGBT, people of color and women in the film industry. Viewers need to let the industry know that diversity is important to them, and that doesn't just mean members of minority groups, it is the responsibility of everyone.

Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the current president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences who is also the first ever black (and third female) Academy president recently presented a statement about the lack of diversity in this year's nominations: "In the last two years, we've made greater strides than we ever have in the past toward becoming a more diverse and inclusive organization through admitting new members and more inclusive classes of members ... And, personally, I would love to see and look forward to see a greater cultural diversity among all our nominees in all of our categories." Though Isaacs is hopeful for diversity in

the future, that advancement "in the last two years" she mentions has disappeared in this year's nominations. It is the opinion of some, however, that the problem with the Academy Awards lies elsewhere. "I don't necessarily think that the problem with the Academy Awards is a lack of diversity in ethnicity," De Andre Clyburn said, a junior film and media arts major. "I think the problem is the age group that runs the academy. Younger and more open-minded people need to be eligible to vote."

While the Academy Awards does need to open itself to a more ethnically diverse population, Clyburn raises a very significant point: young filmmakers need to be taking steps to change the industry. As a female film student, I need to make an effort to hire diverse cast and crew members. It is my responsibility, and the responsibility of all others in art related majors, to make art that realistically reflects our generation.

Organizations on campus are already making great progress in developing a diverse filmmaking community. Delta Kappa Alpha, a professional co-ed cinema fraternity here at the University of Tampa prides itself on being a "values based" organization with a goal to "create artists of character" through collaborative efforts. Out of DKA's 45 members, 23 of them are female and 18 are people of color.

"It's no secret that the film industry is a predominantly Caucasian male industry. With all the commotion about the Oscars this year, it's important to remember that it's our generations job to make the film industry as varied, accepting and collective as possible. That's why I have so much respect for organizations like Delta Kappa Alpha," said Alexandria Woodard, President of the Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Alpha. "We take pride in the fact that we're inclusive, diverse and collaborative with other organizations such as the Film Society and the entire film community on campus. We're all learning how the industry works and what to expect from it when we graduate."

Through DKA, members have a safe environment to cultivate their stories. If film students become committed to including those who are different from them, whether it be sexual orientation, gender, or race, films of the future will be enriched with more diversity and greater depth. The lack of diversity in the film industry is a problem for the industry at large and is not exclusive to the academy. Changing the Academy Awards means changing the industry and that starts with us.

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Millennials Leaving Organized Religion

Quick Judgement Unappealing

Religion

By CAITLIN MALONE
Opinion Writer



Christianity, among other religions, tends to force their beliefs on others and discriminate against those who choose to live differently

Separating oneself from any type of organized religion is becoming increasingly popular. A recent survey done by Pew Research Center showed that among Americans between the ages of 18 and 29, one in four of them said they did not currently belong to any particular religion, and those that do belong to some form of organized religion are finding themselves bound by strict rules and expectations causing them to want to break free.

George Perdikis, co-founder of the Christian band, The Newsboys, shocked believers everywhere when he recently proclaimed that he is now an atheist. Perdikis released this statement on Jan. 21 in a guest blog post on patheos.com, a website that encourages a wide variety of conversations focused on the topic of religion.

As someone who was raised with religion and attended a Christian school from elementary to high school, I have to say I am disappointed by his statement, but I am not at all surprised by it. A recent trend responsible for causing Christians to renounce their belief in God is the claim that Christians are coming off as not only judgemental, but hypocritical as well. In other words, they are judging others harshly for their "sinful" actions when they themselves are participating in the same actions or have participated in them at one time or another.

"I always felt uncomfortable with the strict rules imposed by Christianity," said Perdikis, according to *Christian Examiner*. "All I wanted to do was create and play rock and roll... and yet most of the attention I received was focused on how well I maintained the impossible standards of religion." He wanted people to measure his life based on his ability to make music, not on his ability to avoid temptation.

Because of the strict rules that Christianity imposes on people, important figures that belong to the church are usually placed on a pedestal and have expectations of perfection placed on them, which is what Perdikis has a problem with. We shouldn't concern ourselves with the way other people choose to live out their religious beliefs. We should focus on our own actions; the actions

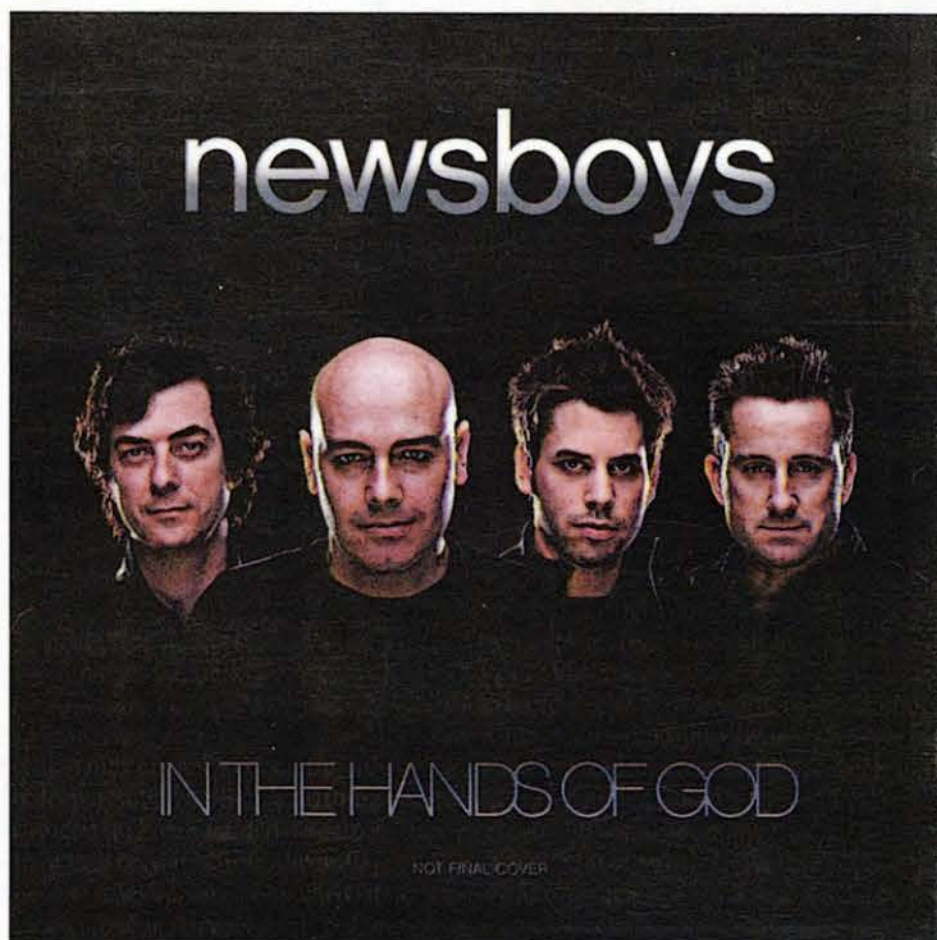
of others is none of our business.

As Perdikis moved away from a life focused on the church, he went on to discover what his beliefs really were. When his marriage fell apart in 2003, he began to focus on human psychology and by 2007, he had completely renounced Christianity and was calling himself an atheist.

A recent study was done by a research company known as the Barna Group in which they recorded millennials reasons for leaving the church. Among other things, the study found that 87 percent said that they felt the church was "too judgmental," and 85 percent found it to be "hypocritical" as well, according to faithstreet.com.

Often times, I have found this to be the case among the majority of Christians. However, I have found that the struggle to follow the guidelines of Christianity is very difficult and impossible to succeed at perfectly. Everyone commits numerous "sinful acts" daily, Christian or not. Christians should not place judgement on anyone; they're not God.

The Newsboys is a popular Christian rock band that has been around since 1985. You may recognize their name from the recent



Former founding Newsboy, George Perdikis recently renounced his long held belief of Christianity
Flickr.com/ Breezy Baldwin

with the purpose of providing better structure and morals than a secular

The fact that most kinds of organized religion frowns upon these things is what pushes people away from it as a whole, especially millennials.

movie "God's Not Dead" for which Newsboys created an album that shares the same title. This particular album hit number one on the Billboard Christian Albums Chart, according to patheos.com.

Perdikis met the other three original band members while he was attending high school. Peter Furler, John James, Sean Taylor and Perdikis started out doing small gigs at churches, pubs, parties, etc., according to patheos.com. Perdikis mentioned in his blog post that the choice to become a Christian band was heavily influenced by Furler's parents who were fundamentalist Christians. They believed that the only acceptable music in the world was that which worshipped God, according to *The Huffington Post*.

A common theme in which you saw happen above with Furler's parents influencing the boys to only play Christian music happens frequently today. A lot of children have Christianity or some other type of organized religion thrust upon them because of what their parents believe. Or in my case, their parents placed them in a religious school

school. It didn't have anything to do with being extremely religious.

But within a religious school environment, kids are not taught to approach the topic of religion with an open mind. I attended a religious school from kindergarten up until I graduated high school, and I can clearly say this was the case with my experience. I was taught that Christianity is the end all be all, and that every other way of thinking was untrue. And this may be the case, who am I to say that Christians or Muslims are right or wrong. Nobody has the right to judge any religion's authenticity.

Breaking free of the regular Sunday church services and morning chapel services at college helped me to explore my beliefs on my own terms. I do still consider myself a Christian and believe there is a God, but I don't consider myself in a position to look down on other people who choose to follow other paths or think I am better than them in any way. I believe that everyone should have a choice to believe in what they feel is right and not what others say is right. The fact that most kinds

of organized religion frowns upon these things is what pushes people away from it as a whole, especially millennials. As of 2013, more than 25 percent of millennials had moved away from all kinds of organized religion not just Christianity, according to onbeing.org.

Millennials do agree that organized religion holds some value, but there are a lot of things that they disagree with, and that is why most of them do not wish to be a part of any particular religious group. They are trying to put together the parts of religion they find value in like brotherhood and sisterhood, while not focusing on the superstitious aspects, according to onbeing.org.

It is not just Perdikis who decided to become more open minded about the topic of organized religion. Many other people of our generation are making their own decisions about the role that they want religion to play in their lives. It's not just religion either, but things like gender and racial equality as well as marriage equality. When BuzzFeed created an article called "21 Classic Quotes Reimagined For The Millennial Generation," they included these two in particular: "If you don't have anything nice to say don't say anything at all" and "be the change you wish to see in the world." That's all there is to it.

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Talk Dirty To Me

Safe Sexting Advice

Sex and Love

By SELENE SAN FELICE
Opinion Writer



Question: "This might sound weird but since you're the sex and love columnist I thought I'd ask for some advice. What are some good tips for dirty talking over text? I feel like I'm not comfortable doing it because maybe I don't feel confident as a sexual being. Does that make sense?" --Sextless

Dear Sextless,

Before I get into the nitty gritty details, I just want to say that sexting, just like any other sexual activity, does have its risks. While you may not necessarily be taking the chance of pregnancy or STI/STDs, anyone sexting should still do so with caution. Just because you've deleted or can't find old messages doesn't mean they're gone. They're floating around on the interwebs somewhere, and can end up in the wrong hands at any time. This information isn't meant to scare

you away, but it's important to know. Keep it between two smart, consenting and trusting adults.

Dirty talk is essentially you and your partner playing out a fantasy. If you're initiating, or you want to initiate, all you need to do is talk about the things you may have already thought about doing to/with them. If your partner initiates and you're not quite in the mood, you've got a bit more work to do.

The first step to any sexual activity is consent, so if you're not ready to have the conversation, that is completely okay. It may seem awkward to shut down the dirty talk, but your partner should be understanding and aware of your feelings. If they're not, then that person isn't worth the characters you were going to waste anyways.

If you're in the mood but not sure what to say try thinking about what turns you on about the person you're with. These can be physical features, personality traits, or any little details you like about them. If you've previously been physical with the person, try telling them all the things you like them doing or talk about all the things you know they like when you're together.

If you haven't been physical with your partner yet, think about what you want that first time to be like. This is a goldmine because with sex communication is key and dirty talk is essentially a sex cheat sheet. You don't need to be physically in the moment or have an ultra-serious conversation to communicate about sex. With sexting you can tell your partner all the things you like or want to try, and you can openly ask them what they like or might want to try without it being weird.

If you're not sexually experienced at all,

AT&T

10:17 PM

21%

Messages

Bae

Details

Today 10:15 PM

Hey bby

Hey you

Tell me something dirty

Uhh..I haven't showered in a couple days?

don't worry. Dirty talk is a chance for you to think about what you might want or might like and you can still communicate that to your partner.

As I mentioned earlier, not feeling comfortable with sexting is perfectly okay and totally normal. You're making yourself completely and permanently vulnerable to someone. Make sure you trust that person and that you can hold true to what you say if you plan on going through with your word physically. Obviously fantasies are fine

(everyone knows you probably won't get the chance to bang against a coconut tree on a deserted island), but you should never say you're going to do something that's out of your comfort zone or moral grounds if you don't actually want to do it. Just make sure you don't force yourself to do or say something because you think you should. Any form of sex should feel natural.

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The University Of
T A M P A

Attention

First-Year Students and Seniors

UT wants your feedback!

A sample of first-year and senior students are being invited to complete the

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Why?

If chosen to participate, you will provide administrators and faculty with valuable information to help improve curriculum and general campus life.

Look for an invitation in your spartans.ut.edu email.

QEP: Good Intentions but Forgets Students' Needs

Campus

By LIV REEB
Opinion Writer



The incoming Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at the University of Tampa is a program designed to improve our learning experience and I think it is a great idea.

The QEP is a required part of the university's accreditation program that happens every ten years through the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The theme for the next decade is "Learning by Doing: Inquiry-based Learning and Experiential Education." The University of Tampa (UT) is going to promote more faculty-student engagement, more mentoring, better funded undergraduate research, redesigned first year classes to highlight inquiry, an online journal to publish inquiry-based work, annual showcases of student work, and a new Office of Student Inquiry Projects, according to the QEP video on UT's website. The school is going to dedicate \$1.2 million per year to fund these programs.

The ideas behind the program sound awesome. I am genuinely excited for the opportunities this plan can bring. However, some aspects of the program seem pushy, overbearing, and others seem difficult to access. Students didn't have any say in how the program would affect them or what the program would even be, what's more, it feels as if it's being forced upon us.

The program is going to begin with a "Bottom Tier," pushing future first year students to get involved in research projects, internships,

and requiring students to attend more events and seminars according to a QEP handout.

But how are undeclared students supposed to learn career-oriented skills when they haven't picked a career yet? About 30 percent of UT freshmen come in undeclared, according to ut.edu. That's a big chunk of the first year population that would have a difficult time participating. Forcing me to go to seminars and shoving research projects down my throat wouldn't make me want to do these things. It would make me resent the school's pushy attitude. If UT wants students to respect the program, UT needs to respect the students and allow them to come use the resources when they're ready.

The "Middle Tier" is aimed at sophomore and junior students and will incorporate "Inquiry-based learning" into existing classes for every major, according to the QEP handout. Inquiry-based learning includes research for science majors, creative works for majors in the arts, and internships. This part of the program seems well thought out and useful. Sophomore and junior students should already have a pretty good idea of what their major will be and therefore have no problem getting involved in research and internships. Because it will be incorporated into major classes that already exist, the inquiry-related activities are more likely to relate to a student's future career and meet very little resistance, after all students chose to be in that major.

The "Top Tier" is aimed at "select junior and senior students," according to the QEP handout. Students can apply for inquiry-based experiences that will end in a presentation of some sort to the UT community. So after the pushy, overbearingness of the bottom tier inquiry-

based learning and the great learning opportunities given by the middle tier, the juniors and seniors have to apply to receive the inquiry-based resources.

It's upsetting that the students had no say in what the QEP would be. According to Kristin Anderson, President of Student Government and a senior advertising and public relations major, "It's never taken to a student vote. Faculty and staff work together to formulate it but we fully support it." This is something that will affect everyone on campus but the program was designed strictly by faculty and staff. Students that already attend UT are going to have to put up with this program that we knew nothing about when we applied here. Current freshmen, like myself, have already settled into a four-year plan, made friends, and established ourselves at the university in clubs and organizations, only to have our learning experiences changed. I'm expecting to have to take on more internships and research projects which will cut out my already-limited time for the organizations I'm in. Also, I'm still in the process of picking a major. I chose this school because I felt like I would have time to experiment with different majors before I got involved with internships.

I'm not ready to take on hours at an internship if I'm not even sure I've picked the right career path yet. And I'd like to know at least the basics of an industry before I go apply for an internship. Students that will be freshmen next year will have the opportunity to choose if this sort of hands-on experience right away is something for them or not. They can research it before they enroll and if they don't like it, they can decide not to go to here. But students that already attend UT are either going to have to support this program or make

the difficult decision to uproot themselves and leave.

The way this program is being presented is also disturbing. I've been given the QEP handout, preached to by my professors about the program and been told my degree won't mean anything if I don't say that I'm excited about the program. I've also sat through the video about the QEP in my pathways class, which resembles propaganda with its upbeat music, smiling students, professors working as mentors, and no possible bugs in the program being addressed. Courtney Carson, a freshman accounting major said after the presentation, "It feels like something we have to do. We have to look good for them [SACSCOC]. I feel like I should just be saying, 'Oh yeah, I heard about it' and run away." It's not right that we're being forced to feel and act a certain way to impress the association. And it's a very negative attitude to have over a program that has the potential to be so positive. There would be a much better student response to the QEP if professors went more into detail about exactly how it would affect us rather than just handing us the materials the QEP committee created and saying we had to understand them and be able to regurgitate the information. If the QEP is so great, we shouldn't need to be threatened to comply.

Although there are good ideas behind the QEP program, there are still problems that need to be worked out, and the way it's being pushed onto students is just too much. For a program that's supposed to help the students, it seems a lot more like a way for the school to force us to do things their way.

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Hershey's Crosses Line Banning Cadbury Eggs from US

Business

By REBECCA TURNER
Opinion Writer



Fans of the British-made Cadbury chocolates may have trouble finding their products in the United States in the near future. Hershey's filed a lawsuit against Let's Buy British Imports (LBB) for importing the British versions of candies that Hershey's has the rights to produce in the U.S. and the two have struck a deal to bar the importation of the British Cadbury chocolates. The deal would also prevent some British Nestlé products from being sold in the U.S. due to their having packaging similar to Hershey's products, according to *The New York Times*. Hershey's does have the legal justification for banning British Cadbury chocolate, but they are overreaching in trying to cut off importation of some Nestlé products and are unethically targeting Nestlé, with no legal grounds to do so, in order to be the only major chocolate supplier in the U.S.

In the wake of this announcement, fans of British Cadbury products have been in an uproar on social media, even trying to get people to stop eating Hershey's products with the hashtag, "#boycotthershey," according to CNBC. However, what these people fail to realize is that the decision to sue, specifically over Cadbury, wasn't really about chocolate. It was a business decision.

"Since 1988, Hershey has owned the right to sell Dairy Milk, Creme Eggs and other Cadbury

products. Why? Simple — Cadbury needed the money, and decided that Hershey could manage the U.S. business better than it could," *TIME Magazine* reported. Hershey's owns the production rights to Cadbury chocolate sold in the U.S. When Cadbury chocolate is imported it takes money away from Hershey's Cadbury productions and may also steal some of Hershey's customers over to the British Cadbury side. When LBB imports British Cadbury, they are ultimately taking money out of Hershey's pockets while also becoming a meaningful competitor on U.S. soil. In the case of the British Cadbury, Hershey's is just defending the rights it bought directly from Cadbury.

Though Hershey's does have the right to bring LBB to court over British Cadbury being brought into the U.S., it should not be suing in regards to the Nestlé products. Apparently, Nestlé's packaging for Toffee Crisps too closely resembles the Hershey's packaging for Reese's and Nestlé's Yorkie bars and Maltesers too closely resemble other Hershey's products, according to Hershey's lawsuit as reported by CNBC. It's true that they do resemble each other, if not in name, then in appearance. Toffee crisps have the same color packaging as Reese's, Yorkie bars resemble Peppermint Patties and Maltesers resemble Whoppers. Even with this resemblance, Hershey's has no right to fight their sale in the U.S.

The aforementioned candies all appeared a few years before or after the competition's candy in two very different countries, as seen on their respective websites. It's possible that one may have influenced the other, but chocolate fans can attest that British and American



Hershey's is trying to stop LBB's import of the British-made Cadbury chocolates into the U.S.

chocolates taste quite different. While they are similar, Nestlé isn't trying to sue Hershey's, and Hershey's has never made a deal for production rights with Nestlé, making their claim to certain colors and similar candies baseless. This is just Hershey's way of trying to exile some of their greatest competitors from American soil, via their supplier LBB.

Hershey's is acting intelligently but with ethical abandon in going after British Cadbury and Nestlé through LBB. The company does have the production rights for Cadbury in the U.S., and so their

demands to cease the importation of British Cadbury are legally viable. Despite this legal clause specifically regarding Cadbury products, Hershey's is getting a little too greedy in their going after Nestlé products because they really have no legal justification to go after Nestlé. Hershey's is taking down who they can in order to protect their own sales, showing that there is in fact a sour side to chocolate.

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SPORTS

Women's Lacrosse Aspires to Land Spot in Inaugural SSC Tournament

By TESS SHEETS

Sports Writer

As the beginning of their season draws nearer, the women's lacrosse team is preparing for their second year as a program at UT. The season looks promising, according to head coach Kelly Gallagher, as the returning players from last year bring with them a level of experience that wasn't there before.

"We have some more depth and some different positions and we have some experience," Gallagher said. "We have girls who have played college lacrosse before and were very successful doing it for us last year."

As the girls work toward relieving their team from the assumption of being a "young program," and from the amateur connotation that that title presents, they pride themselves on working harder than ever.

Their spring schedule consists of matches against top regional opponents such as Florida Southern University, Pfeiffer University and Limestone College, which are all currently ranked teams according to the Lacrosse Magazine poll. These have all been tough opponents for the Spartans since the start of their program. However, this season they are hoping to prove themselves.

"We have a completely new group of girls this year and we've been working extremely hard so we're ready to prove all



The women's lacrosse team looks to enter the SSC tournament as a first year representative of the conference. Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe

this to everyone," said senior midfielder Kirsten Brierley. "We strive to always empty our tanks, and we hold each other accountable for little things because if one person is working her hardest she's making everyone around her work harder."

In fact, this is the first season that the Sunshine State Conference (SSC) will be sponsoring women's lacrosse, and the girls are making it their mission to compete in the SSC tournament come April, according to Gallagher. In order to do this, the team must make it out of their conference in the top four of the five teams.

"This January, we've really been focusing on being a fast-paced and aggressive team," Gallagher said. "We've been focusing on applying a high-pressure defense and trusting each other, playing as a team."

Along with technical skills, the team puts a lot of focus on their mindset when it comes to team chemistry. Positivity is an aspect that the girls say they have improved since last season, and the results have been beneficial in improving the overall dynamic on and off the field.

"Everyone's attitude this year is way

more positive, and we are more connected as a whole," Brierley said. "We have a lot more faith and trust in each other this year as well, which helps us perform successfully on and off the field."

Along with the right mindset and ample improvement of skill, the team brings a strong desire for success that will surely aid them in their goals to compete in the conference tournament. They are eager to move past their underdog status and show off their improvements.

"Our mindset is to enter every game with the goal of winning, but we're definitely hoping to top all the teams in our conference," Brierley said. "There's some animosity there, which we love because it makes us give that much more effort in practice so we're ready for when those game days come."

With all the right pieces in place, there is little stopping the Spartans as they begin their spring season. Experience, hard work and skilled athletes are what will bring the team success and allow them to realize their goals, both short and long term.

"The one thing that's really great about this team is that they all see the field," Gallagher said. "They all play lacrosse very well so they want to play a fast-paced game, they want to push the fast break offensively and they want to continue to improve from last year."

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Men's Lacrosse Looks to Clinch NCAA Title Berth in 2015

By GRIFFIN GUNITA

Sports Columnist

The men's lacrosse team has developed quite the knack for winning since the program's inception in 2011. Under the leadership of head coach Rory Whipple, the team has won three straight Sunshine State Conference crowns and owns a dazzling 38-14 record over the past three seasons. The team also earned a semi-finals appearance in the NCAA Division II tournament last year. That being said, the team isn't lingering on past accomplishments or letting the hype get to their heads.

"I think what we need to do is build on last year's success," Whipple said. "We've worked real hard over the off-season and brought in some new transfers that are going to help out the program quite a bit."

This new crop of transfers brings an abundance of Division I caliber talent, namely junior Chris Vetter (Towson), junior Dan Soviero (St. John's), junior AJ Leary (Vermont), sophomore Steve Reall (St. John's) and junior Ryan Vella (OCC.) Having this new wave of players fortifies an already established squad and puts them in prime position to contend for a national title this season.

If the team wants to hoist the coveted Division II championship trophy come May, however, they'll have to overcome some daunting roadblocks on their schedule, including No. 1 ranked Limestone College. Over the past few years, a win against Limestone has been hard to come by for the Spartans.

In fact, they've never beaten the South

Carolina powerhouse; the closest matchup a devastating 14-10 semi-final loss in last year's tournament.

Fortunately, the fourth-ranked Spartans will have a chance to buck that trend. In a week from this upcoming Saturday, the team hosts Limestone at the Naimoli Athletic Complex in what could very well be the game of the year.

"We're fortunate to have them here," Whipple said. "That's one game we're really focusing on. After they beat us last year they went on to win the National Championship."

Despite the anticipation for the Limestone game, the team knows full and well that equal challenges lie further down the road. Tough road games against conference rival Florida Southern and the always difficult Lake Erie College will prove to be formidable fights for this battle-tested squad as well.

"Our goal is a national championship. Although often times when you say that you slip up by looking past teams. We are trying to focus on one game at a time and staying level headed," said sophomore attacker Conor Whipple.

Nonetheless, the Spartans should have every reason to believe they can win any one of those games.

Defensively, they're anchored by an All-American and first team SSC defender Marty Heyn, a junior who has been a model of consistency in his three year tenure with the team. One of his standout skills is his ability to produce turnovers (he lead the team last year with 22 forced turnovers).

"Marty is one of the best defensesmen I've ever played with," said junior



The men's lacrosse team pursues another trip to the NCAA National Semi-Final in 2015. Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe

midfielder Dylan Kane. "He isn't a flashy player; he plays hard-nosed, gritty defense but also has a great stick and lands some pretty crazy checks."

Of course, Heyn doesn't do it all alone. To his left is promising freshman Nick Balzano and to his right veteran defender Ryan Vella. Should anything happen to slip by them, goalkeeper Andrew Failla will be there for the save. Failla, a junior from Baldwin, N.Y., posted an impressive 7.7 goals allowed average last year—good for sixth in all of Division II.

As far as the attack goes, Coach Whipple is fortunate enough to have his son Conor leading the charge. Like his teammate Heyn, the younger Whipple racked up a bevy of accomplishments last season, including first

team all-SSC, second-team All-American, and most impressively, SSC Player of the Year—all as a freshman. This season, Whipple is excited to lead an attack that he believes to be more dynamic than ever.

"We have a strong offense and like to score goals," he said. "Chris Vetter, a transfer from Towson, looks really good on attack this season."

As far as predictions go, it's realistic to assume that this team is a championship contender, especially given that each season the Spartans have climbed higher and higher in terms of level of success. Perhaps this is the year they reach the top.

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Brady, Defense Lead Pats to Fourth Title

By JORDAN LLANES

Asst. Sports Editor

It has been dubbed as "The Super Bowl That Took Everyone's Breath Away."

What a game. What a finish. The legacies of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady and head coach Bill Belichick have been further augmented after the tandem captured their fourth Lombardi Trophy, and first since 2004, when the Patriots came from ten points down as the final quarter began to defeat the Seattle Seahawks 28-24 in Arizona last Sunday.

Yet before we focus on New England's triumph, let's take a closer look at Seattle's defeat, which has to be one of the most agonizing losses in Super Bowl history.

The Seahawks played almost the entire game right and for a few moments on their final drive, it seemed as if the Patriots would suffer another improbable defeat in the Super Bowl.

Wide receiver Jermaine Kearse's tumbling catch gave Seattle a first and goal and was easily one of the craziest catches ever seen in not only Super Bowl history, but NFL history as well.

For most of the game, the backfield tandem of quarterback Russell Wilson and running back Marshawn Lynch kept the Patriots' defense at bay, especially in the second and third quarters. Undrafted wide receiver Chris Matthews, unheard of by almost every NFL fan until he recovered Green Bay's onside kick attempt in the NFC Championship game two weeks ago, exploded onto the scene with four huge receptions for 109 yards and a touchdown reception that tied the game at 14 going into halftime.

Even though Brady had a good game (he

did win his third Super Bowl MVP award), he didn't have a dominant one. His longest completions were for 23 yards to wide receiver Julian Edelman and a 22 yard scoring pass to tight end Rob Gronkowski. The fact that Brady had to dink and dunk his way to victory speaks to the volumes that Brady, Belichick and offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels respected Seattle's defense, which has been the best in the league over the last two seasons.

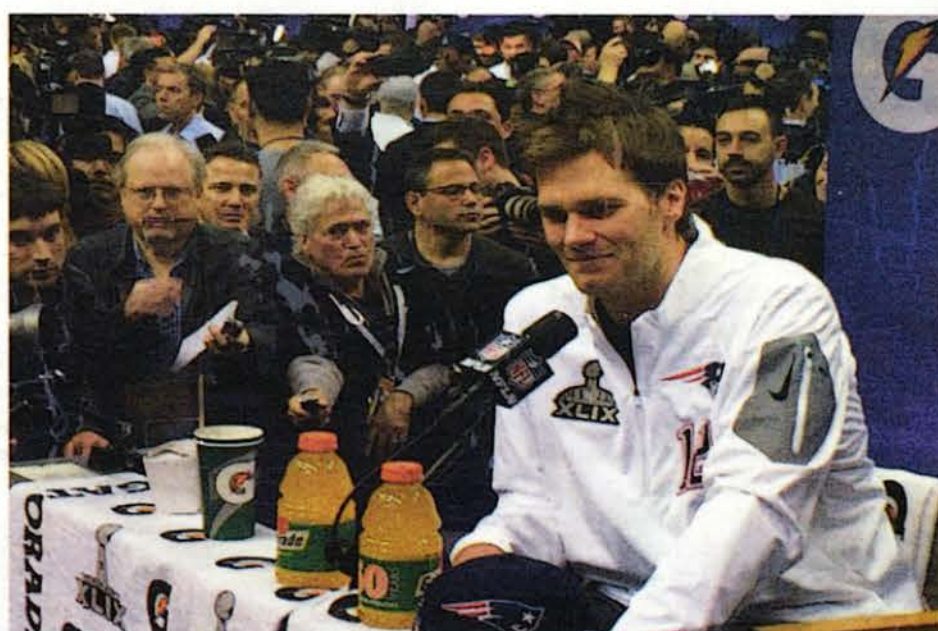
The defense didn't have an eye-popping, turnover-filled dominant performance like they did in last year's triumph over the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII, but they still had a stout performance. Seahawks defensive lineman Michael Bennett was arguably the best player on the field, and was the very definition of a man playing amongst boys.

Furthermore, the Legion of Boom made their presence known from the first drive, as Brady only threw in Richard Sherman's direction once, and cornerback Jeremy Lane intercepted an ill-advised Brady throw in the endzone.

Middle linebacker Bobby Wagner, who also received an MVP vote for his performance this season, had a great interception after he jumped a crossing route.

But Seattle's performance will always be remembered for the play that clinched the game for the Patriots. After Lynch's first and goal run that brought the Seattle offense to the one yard line, the Seahawks came to the line for second and goal. It seemed as if Seattle was poised to capture their second straight Super Bowl title. Wilson stood in the shotgun, with Lynch to his left. Kearse and fellow receiver Ricardo Lockette were lined up in a stack formation to the right.

The play was simple: Kearse would set



WEBN-TV/Flickr

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady won his third Super Bowl MVP award following the Pats' victory over Seattle.

a pick for the corner covering Lockette, and Wilson would throw an easy touchdown pass to Lockette for the go ahead score. It's just too bad that nobody told Patriots cornerback Malcolm Butler that.

Another undrafted rookie that had only played 190 snaps coming into the Super Bowl, Butler took over the game in the fourth quarter. It seemed as if every time that Wilson dropped back to heave a deep ball, Butler was there.

This time last year, Butler was playing for Division II West Alabama. On Sunday, he excelled on professional football's biggest stage, and is now considered a hero.

So where do the Patriots and Seahawks go from here? The simple answer: it is time for each team to reload for another Super Bowl run. Both teams have won the past two titles by

sticking to their formulas, and they should stick with it. Each team could afford to add more threats on offense, as the Seahawks' receivers were largely invisible save for Matthews, while the Patriots could really use a lead running back to help them transition from Brady to whoever replaces him within the next few years.

Even though Brady led the Patriots from behind to win, New England did not win this game. Seattle shot themselves in the foot, especially in the fourth quarter. Nevertheless, the New England Patriots are once again NFL champions. Now comes the long wait until next season. Let the absolute mayhem that is called the NFL offseason begin.

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Women's Golf Goes Into Spring With High Expectations

By ANDREW STAMAS

Sports Writer

After a lengthy and restful winter break, the women's golf team is ready for the 2015 spring season. The Spartans will begin their season this weekend in St. Augustine at the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The Spartans have been working very hard to prepare for their upcoming events. Junior Fatin Amin was one of the top performers during the fall season.

"During preseason we had scheduled practice time with the team. We worked on a lot of mechanics and course management, meaning we would practice different kinds of shots to prepare for tournaments," Amin said.

Practices and workouts are no joke for these women, as they begin as early as 6:30 a.m. Head Coach Missey Jones is well aware of how hard her team works.

She said that she noticed big improvements in the players who came and worked on their swings. They were also working on training and conditioning and had to pass a fitness test. "They came back [from break] in good shape," Jones said.

Jones also mentioned although they technically only have 6:30 starts three times a week, many of the girls opt to work out that early five days a week for extra training and conditioning.

Though the Spartans have worked hard and have prepared well for their next events, there is still plenty of room for improvement. "Technically, our greens in regulation have to improve," Jones said.

Amin noted that with a young team comes some golfers who need more experience. She herself has proved that experience is very valuable, as she has improved her average every season throughout her college career.

"We have a very young team and I think the level difference between junior golf and college golf is completely different. So I think we just need more experience in tournaments in order to play better and get used to the conditions of playing college golf," Amin said.

It's these necessary improvements that if made, can definitely help the Spartans achieve their goals. "I'd like to see top five break 80 at a tournament. Everybody on the same day. All five," said Jones when asked about her expectations for the upcoming season. She then added that she's had many girls break 80, but not all of them at the same time and that she'd like to see that happen for a change.

Amin also has set her sights high for the season. "To maintain being in the mid and high 70s. It's a lot of work but I think it's possible to set that goal if I work hard enough this semester," Amin said. Seventy six has been the best round of her collegiate career up to this point, so she has definitely shown that she is capable of achieving this particular goal.

She also has expectations for her teammates. "We definitely want to break our lowest score of 313 as a team at a tournament. I believe that the girls can do it. They are hardworking and dedicated," Amin said. That score

of 313 was achieved in October in the second round of the Guy Harvey invitational, and was the best round the Spartans had in years.

Unfortunately, the Spartans will be left without a few golfers who competed during the fall. Most notably, freshman standout Cailee Beisswanger, who was the top performer on the team this past fall, unfortunately had a career-ending injury. Jones described her as "a very hard worker."

The Spartans still have a solid squad this year and Jones has already been recruiting for the future, knowing

that some of her golfers might graduate early. She has been particularly focusing on the 2016 incoming class, as she still has a young team for now with most of the women being freshmen and sophomores.

Jones takes a lot of pride in her team and their work ethic. "It's easy to work with good kids. They take care of each other and look after each other. They're there for each other, it's a good family," Jones said.

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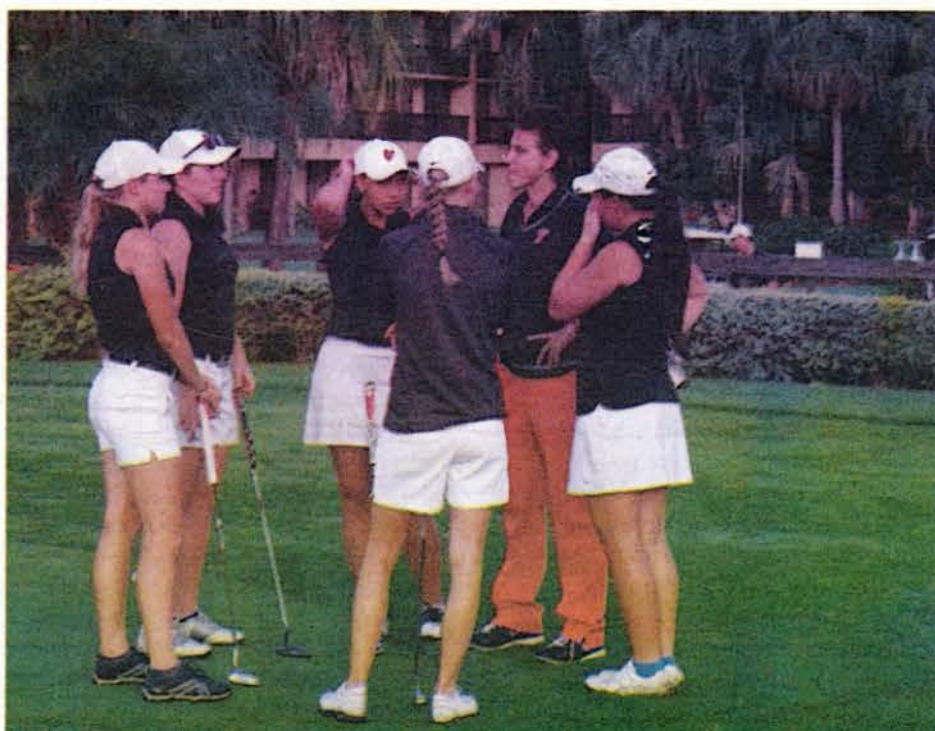


Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe

The women's golf team is focused on starting out the spring season strong in St. Augustine this weekend.

Augier Continues to be Key Part of Swim Team's Success

By CANDACE MARTINO

Sports Writer

Many recognize the island of Saint Lucia for its mountainous countryside and volcanic ringed beaches. As for the University of Tampa, only one thing comes to mind when they think of Saint Lucia: swimming phenomenon Jordan Augier.

The two-time St. Lucia National Swimmer of The Year is in the midst of preparing for the Sunshine State Conference (SSC) Championship that will be held in Orlando on Feb. 19-22. With much of the spotlight on the six-foot-four-inch junior, spectators wait anxiously to see which school record Augier will shatter next.

After he was crowned in the 2013-14 season as a CSCAA All-American, Augier set multiple school benchmarks for the Spartans at last year's SSC Championship meet, competing in what he declares to be his "favorite" strokes: the 100 freestyle and 100 backstroke.

This year, Augier will compete yet again in those two categories along with a variety of relays, including the 200 and 400 medleys and freestyle relay.

Despite a lingering right knee injury, Augier is learning to deal with it; his hopes of returning to the NCAA National Championship meets in Indianapolis, Indiana remain high.

"In order to continue my success in the year, I have been treating my injury as best as possible, staying healthy and keeping a positive attitude day in and day out," Augier said.

Augier's mentality is one reason why he was appointed the title of captain this season. His humble demeanor and will to compete are what his Spartan teammates and coaches admire most about him. Being such a decorated amateur swimmer, Augier credits most of his success to his coaches.

"My coaches are a huge influence on my swimming, especially their suggestions in practice. Training is 99 percent of your preparation and racing in meets is only 1

percent," Augier said.

In fact, training is what Augier has done most of his life. Growing up surrounded by nothing but the Caribbean Sea, Augier's parents made it mandatory for all his siblings to learn how to swim. Though this may have sparked his love for water at such a young age, it is not what keeps him going.

This summer he will attend his first ever Pan American Games in Toronto, Canada. Augier became the first St. Lucian to reach under a minute in the 100m backstroke and capture a silver medal in the 18 and over male category.

With his time of 59.46 seconds, he was able to qualify for the Pan Am on July 10-26, 2015. He surpassed his previous National Record set in the Central American and Caribbean Games (CCCCAN) in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico in the summer of 2013.

After participating in the Pan Am this July, Augier will have a short turn-around, switching gears to the World Championships in Kazan, Russia. This will be Augier's first ever appearance at these meets.

The All-American remains confident that by paying close attention to proper technique and execution of his strokes during training, he will be able to clock faster times.

Maybe one day making his lifelong dream of representing St. Lucia in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio, Brazil a reality.

But for now, Augier's mind for the next month will be on bringing home a national title to UT, something he did not get to check off last year at Nationals in Geneva, Ohio.

Augier placed sixth in the final 400 free relay with the time of 2:59.30. This year, he and his teammates go into the meet focused and anxious looking to come out on top.



Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe
Junior swimmer Jordan Augier looks to lead the Spartan swim team to the Sunshine State Conference and the NCAA championships in 2015.

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Softball Team Determined to Make it Back to Regionals

By PHIL NOVOTNY

Sports Editor

The University of Tampa softball team is coming off of a milestone season. The Spartans went 33-8 last season while finishing 19-5 in the Sunshine State Conference (SSC).

They were ranked as high as second in the nation in 2014, which set a program record.

Going into the 2015 season, the Spartans were ranked seventeenth in the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) polls.

This is the fourth consecutive season that the Spartans came into a season being nationally ranked.

Also, they were predicted to finish second in the 2015 SSC preseason poll behind Rollins College. Rollins and UT were crowned the SSC co-champions last season after finishing with the same record in conference play.

Senior first baseman Meagan Burke did not seem to be phased by the SSC preseason ranking.

"I am happy with the ranking because we have been ranked first in the past and it puts a target on your back," Burke said.

Senior pitcher and 2014 Division II All-American Julia Morrow feel the same way. "I am not upset about the ranking at all, I like being number two. The target is now on Rollins back," Morrow said.

Burke is one of UT's best returning

hitters in the lineup as she lead the team with six home runs and 20 runs batted in (RBI) on top of a .347 batting average in 2014.

In addition, senior outfielder Lindsay Dring will complement Burke at the top of the lineup. Dring hit .340 last season and was only second to Burke in RBI with 14.

With that said, the Spartans also have unfinished business going into the 2015 campaign as they lost to Valdosta State University in the NCAA South Regional Tournament in 2013 and 2014. Morrow makes it clear that the Spartans want to go deeper into the postseason.

"Our goal is to get out of regionals but we have to get there first. It was a bummer to lose at home last year to the team that we lost to the year before (Valdosta State)," Morrow said.

Morrow will be the centerpiece to the Spartans pitching staff as she went 15-5 with a NCAA leading 0.72 earned run average (ERA). She also recorded 16 complete games and six shutouts to cap off her special 2014 season.

To kick off their quest to get back to regionals, UT will play in the Eckerd Tournament, which is located in Clearwater on Friday.

They will start off the tournament against Southwest Baptist University and Lindenwood University as a part of the five game stretch. After that, the Spartans will open at home as they face off against Colorado

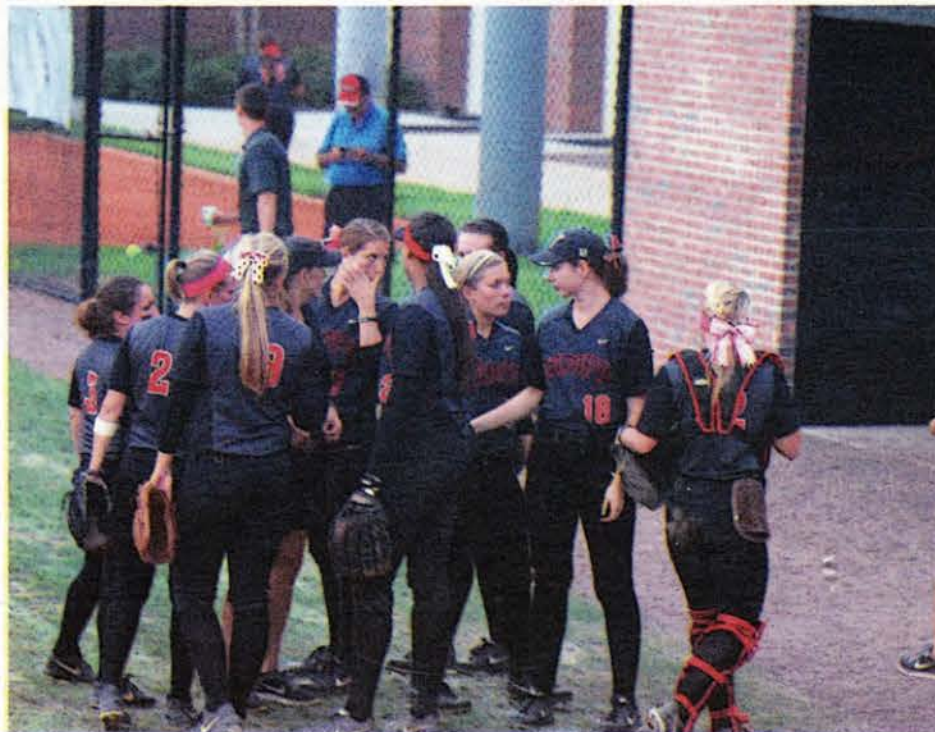


Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe
The softball team has unfinished business going into 2015 as they try to get out of the NCAA South Region.

Christian University.

Also, SSC play begins for the Spartans in late February against Florida Tech. Their most notable series will be against preseason SSC favorite Rollins in mid-March.

The Spartans will have a long journey to out of the NCAA South Region. Burke and Morrow discuss what they believe the team needs to do in order get out of regionals and into the race for a national title. "Everyone needs to work hard and do their own

thing in order to contribute to the team. It is not only working together but doing your part," Burke said.

Morrow puts more emphasis on scoring runs in pivotal situations. "We got a little relaxed last season and settled for one or two runs but if we score a couple more runs in each game then we should be where we want to be."

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Tough SSC Slate Sinks Spartans' Hopes

By **MARCUS MITCHELL**
Sports Writer

As the men's basketball season reaches its midpoint, the Spartans currently sit in the middle of the Sunshine State Conference (SSC) standings with a conference record of 4-5 as of right now.

The difficulty of playing in the SSC has begun to wear on the Spartans as they have lost three of their last four games.

However, the losses the Spartans have suffered have been close and well fought. The Spartans only have one recorded double-digit loss this season and have just been unable to secure wins as the clock winds down.

"It's like we run out of gas," said head coach Richard Schmidt. "We get leads but just don't have the depth to hold onto them."

Coach Schmidt is in his thirty-second season at the University of Tampa and has successfully taken the Spartans to the NCAA Tournament 16 times. He has only had three seasons with a losing record and is determined not to make this season his fourth.

"We have had some really tough losses against some really good basketball teams this season," Schmidt said. "This conference is grueling but hopefully we can start a comeback and get good positioning for the conference tournament."

While all nine conference teams are granted admission into the SSC Tournament the seeding of the teams makes a large impact. The top three teams of the conference are the most coveted spots as they have less games to play in order to reach the championship game.

Last year, the Spartans were granted

the third seed and were able to get into the championship game before falling to Florida Southern.

However, the Spartans' road to the championship game is tougher this year than in past seasons. Sitting above them in the standings are some of the best teams in the nation.

Florida Southern and Barry are the third and fourth best teams in the nation, respectively and Lynn has been dropping in and out of the top 25 throughout the season.

The Spartans have been unable to win against the three thus far but the losses weren't blowouts, and the Spartans have been able to hold their own against the top SSC teams.

"It's going to be tough to get past those guys and the other teams in this conference," Schmidt said. "But I still think we have a good team. Our freshmen are stepping up and are more experienced players are getting the job done."

The Spartans have played particularly well on the court this season despite their mediocre record. They lead opponents in all major stat categories (points, rebounds, assists, etc.) except for shooting from three-point range.

Defending three-point shots has been a major issue for the Spartans and it cost them the win last Saturday as Nova Southeastern University sank 15 of their 31 three-point attempts. On the offensive side of the ball, the Spartans have developed into a proficient scoring team, with three players averaging over 15 points a game.

Senior guard Jordan Davis has been the facilitator of the offense and is sixth in the nation in assists per game (6.7). "Davis can see things three plays ahead and it helps keep this team together," said senior forward Eugene McCrory.



The basketball team is trying to recover after their recent string of losses during conference play. Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe

McCrory is a recent transfer to UT and leads the team in both points per game (17.7) and rebounds per game (9.6). With seven double-doubles, McCrory has become a force to be reckoned with on the court.

Another strong component to the Spartans' offense has been sophomore Austin Rettig, who has played in many positions on the court.

Rettig has an average of 15.1 points per game and has developed into another option for coach Schmidt to utilize.

One of the players with the biggest impact has been freshman forward Othniel "Duke" Shelton. At a monstrous size of 6-8, Shelton makes his presence on the court known and he is a threat that opponents must take note of.

"We lost a lot of our seniors from last year and needed our guys new to the program to come through for us," Schmidt said. "Duke is playing better

and our other players are stepping up in huge ways. Everything is coming together, but we just need to keep it together for the whole game."

Despite a well-disciplined team, Schmidt and his Spartans are fighting for a higher seed before the SSC tournament begins.

With a series of upcoming games against opponents they have already defeated this season (Florida Tech, Eckerd, Saint Leo and Rollins), the Spartans will be looking to build momentum before closing out the regular season with games against Florida Southern and Barry.

"It's not going to be easy. Not by any means. It's going to be tough to try and win this conference, but it's important that we focus now and win these next games," Schmidt said.

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Rodney's Passion Leads to Success on Basketball Court

By **ED KERNER**
Sports Writer

Deciding to play basketball was an easy decision for Aisha Rodney, a senior forward from Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Growing up, all she wanted was to be noticed by her father. Rodney hoped that one day her father would come out and watch her play.

"I was doing dance at the time and I knew that he loved sports, so I tried a bunch and fell in love with the game," Rodney said.

Rodney had a stellar high school career under coach Kevin Richards at Grosse Pointe South. During her senior year she averaged 16 points, 12 rebounds and four steals per game.

Rodney played a vital part in leading her team to three consecutive conference championships. She was honored for her distinguished career by receiving many accolades.

She was a four-time All-State selection, and three-time team MVP. She was also named Rookie of the Year for Grosse Pointe South and a McDonald's All-American nominee.

Outside of high school basketball, Rodney also played on a club basketball team known as the Michigan Crossovers. She helped lead the team to the semifinals of the Nike Nationals, which is the furthest that any team from Michigan has ever reached. Rodney described this moment as being



Senior forward Aisha Rodney's averages 16 points and 12 rebounds per game for the Spartans in 2015. Photo courtesy of Tom Kolbe

the greatest memory from her high school career.

After high school Rodney made the decision to attend University of Massachusetts. As a freshman, she averaged 3.8 points per game, scoring her first points in 10 minutes of play against Coastal Connecticut.

Her best game as a freshman came against Holy Cross, in which she recorded 15 points, seven rebounds and three steals. As a sophomore, Rodney earned more minutes for UMass. She

finished the season averaging 4.1 points per game and 2.2 rebounds per game.

She also had 29 appearances, and made four starts along the way, tallying a career high eight rebounds against Miami of Ohio.

After her sophomore season Rodney decided to transfer to UT. "It was a tough decision for me but mostly I just wanted to get closer to my family who all moved to Florida after I graduated high school," Rodney said. "The distance was too much for me at the time

and when I visited UT, I liked the vibe I got from the coaches and the players as well as the campus."

During her junior campaign, Rodney appeared in 28 games logging 15.5 minutes per game. She was a key reserve who averaged 6.6 points per game and recorded a season high 21 points during the SSC Tournament Quarterfinal matchup.

Rodney went on a streak of five straight games scoring at least ten points. She was selected to the SSC all-championship team and finished top five in field goal shooting percentage in the SSC tournament.

Rodney's favorite memory at UT was the last regular season game of her junior year when the team found out that they were conference champions. She described the moment as the "best feeling ever."

Rodney said her goals for this season are "to play as a team on defense first of all and win conference as well as the regional." Rodney said, "We need to get back to our defensive principles. Once our defense clicks our offense will follow."

After college, Rodney plans on going to professional school and working in health care. "I'm excited to help people and save lives when I get the opportunity," she said.

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Spartan Shortstop Follows Family Legacy

Giovanny Alfonzo hit .317 his junior season, hopes to lead Spartans to National Title

By REGINA GONZALEZ
Sports Writer

When an athlete is talented enough to play a sport at the collegiate level, there is always a significant journey behind his or her success.

Their talents can be naturally born, developed through grade school, or implemented through other means over time. Yet in the case of UT's senior shortstop Giovanny Alfonzo, baseball runs in his genes.

Alfonzo's father, Edgar and uncle Edgardo played professional baseball, so it only made sense that he would inherit the same athletic skills passed down in his family. Edgar Alfonzo had experience playing with both the minor league systems of the California (now Los Angeles) Angels and Baltimore Orioles. Being the older sibling, he used his baseball knowledge to coach Edgardo, helping him go on to play for the New York Mets and the San Francisco Giants. Giovanny commends his father for playing a major role in his success.

"He is really my hero, he's my mentor, I talk to my dad every single day about baseball," Alfonzo said. "He's always been there, everything that I do out there on the field he taught me, everything my uncle did on the field was something my dad taught him. God gave him the gift of being a good coach so he used it to help me, my uncle and my older brother."

Growing up in South Florida, Alfonzo attended high school at Lincoln Park Academy in Fort Pierce. Most of his exposure as a young athlete came from travel baseball while playing for the All-American Prospects. Being a huge, well-known team in the travel league, Alfonzo played in multiple showcases all across the U.S., giving him the opportunity to be watched by some of the biggest collegiate and professional scouts. By his junior year of high school, he was already in contact with big name schools such as the University of Miami, LSU and Florida State, and had already been offered scholarships from the University of Central Florida and the University of South Florida.

Deciding to take the scholarship at Florida State, he ventured to Tallahassee to begin his freshman year. Not seeing much playing time his freshman season, Alfonzo got the chance to prove himself as a shortstop playing 59 games the following season as a sophomore.

Towards the end, he was forced to have a talk with the head coach about his future on the team after the coach did not give him a straight answer about having a spot for his junior year. Not liking what he heard and still not getting full assurance after the conversation, Alfonzo requested his release from the team.

Being released came with the penalty of restriction from a couple of schools in the ACC, so he decided to take his skills to a Division II program to seek more

playing time. His father knew of head coach Joe Urso from the Angels back when they both played pro ball, and asked if he needed a shortstop or an infielder, knowing that his son was willing to come in and work for a spot to play shortstop.

In agreement to the idea, Urso had Alfonzo come visit UT. Alfonzo right away fell in love with the city of Tampa and the school.

Alfonzo was quickly thrown into the swing of the baseball program, and even under the intense pressure of being a new transfer, quickly adapted into the foundation of the team.

"Anytime we get a DI transfer, there's always a little bit of transition period for them. A lot of them come down with the conception that it's going to be easier. This, however, is one of the top programs in the country, and he bought in quickly to what we believe in here," Urso said. When the official season began, Alfonzo was not particularly satisfied with his starting performance, but towards the end, he was able to get hot at the right time and play well, making the SSC team for the region and leading them to the World Series.

Although the team suffered a heartbreaking loss in the College World Series, Alfonzo successfully developed a significant role on his new team both on and off the field. "Giovanny has great leadership and communication skills, he's just a good person in general, and fortunately for him he's a very talented baseball player," said Assistant Infield Coach Frank Maldonado. "He just constantly wants to work, constantly wants to get better, motivates his teammates, and right away you can tell he's a leader out there."

Alfonzo has not only impressed the coaching staff of the program, but has also captivated the hearts of his teammates.

"Gio is a huge part of our success here on and off the field. We get a lot of transfers and that can mess with team chemistry, but Gio is one of those guys who has a great personality and makes everyone feel welcome," said senior outfielder and fellow captain Stephen Dezzi. "Even when he transferred in he was outgoing and made it a point to become a part of our family as quickly as he could. He's an extremely talented guy and someone that our team can count on. I'm proud to suit up with him and make a run at a championship."

As for the future of this season and his journey after playing for UT, his coaches are confident that he will lead the Spartans to a Championship.

"I think he's going to have a great senior season... he has high expectations to win a national championship and go on to play professional baseball.. him being the shortstop a captain of the team, I think he will be a very huge asset to the guys this season," Maldonado said. As far as going on to play professionally after his collegiate career, he has already heard from a number of scouts and is seeking the right opportunity to follow in his family's footsteps.

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