Students Aim High in South Campus Tree Climb

Students met on the morning of November 15 in a forest clearing behind South Campus for an organized tree climb. In an event hosted by the Environmental Adventure Organization (EAO) and co-sponsored by the University Program Board, participants were provided with gear and expertise from the Adventure Tree Company. They spent the next five hours learning how to climb trees like a professional arborist.

The tree, a white oak, spans over 100 feet in height. Guy Mott from Adventure Tree had prepared the oak beforehand and twenty climbing ropes stretched from the upper limbs to the ground. Most first gave safety training to all participants, explaining proper gear use and climbing techniques. Each climber was fitted with a helmet and harness and then spent hours climbing via the ropes hanging from the oak.

After the initial training, Mott showed the students two ways to climb the tree. They were able to coordinate as a team in an activity called the “flying squirrel,” in which one person at a time was rapidly hoisted to the top of the tree by a ground team of six people and then belayed back down. Additionally, each participant could also climb — much more slowly — to the upper tree branches without the aid of others, using only a climbing rope and knots. The event attracted students from many backgrounds and experience levels.

“I’ve climbed a few trees in my day, but this was a totally different experience,” said EAO member Jacob Beers, freshman, communications. “Ropes, harnesses, flying squirrel—the whole nine yards. [The] EAO continues to impress me with one unique, exciting activity after another.”

“I’m a horrible climber! But climbing trees is something than can be incredibly useful for a field biologist,” said Mari Jaramillo, graduate, biology. “So climbing … right on campus was a pretty neat experience! And I could use the skills next time I need to check a hawk’s nest for breeding activity.”

Though this event was very well-received by participants, the initial process of receiving approval from campus risk management and other departments required almost a year of work on the part of the EAO and Adventure Tree. Now that the event has happened, faculty are excited by the educational opportunities that are now open to the campus.

“I am delighted we had the climb this fall,” said Jay Fish, Project Director for the Campus Honors Environmental Research Project (CHERP), “From my perspective as an environmental educator who teaches Urban Ecology … who is committed to inquiry based environmental learning, having the capability to climb trees on campus gives university educators some additional ways to teach ecology and character education. … By developing our capacity to safely climb into those great ancient oaks…we will be able to extend our eco-labs into the tree canopy and inquire about birds and bird behavior, insects and leaves, tree growth and health, and other topics of inquiry,” said Fish.

The tree climb is one of many outdoor adventures planned by the EAO, and anyone who enjoys spending time outside is welcome to participate. “The EAO is a great organization for beginners, casual interest and experienced outdoor enthusiasts alike,” said EAO vice president Tyler Votaw, senior, computer science. Upcoming events include a bonfire, campouts, river cleanups, and an east coast summer trip. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the EAO can find the club on OrgSync at https://orgsync.com/86727/chapter.

UMSL Colleges Merge in January

LORI DRESNER
NEWS EDITOR

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and College of Fine Arts and Communication (CoFAC) at the University of Missouri—St. Louis are set to merge back together on January 1. Once consolidated, the new college will be under the broad umbrella of arts and sciences. The upcoming merger is structured around the growing drive for more students to be exposed to science, technology, engineering, arts and humanities, and mathematics (STEAM), and will aim to further advance interdisciplinary studies and courses.

Energized STEAM is a main initiative of the merger. The idea behind this concept is to create interdisciplinary classes in different areas that will expose students to new learning opportunities. The merged college aims to offer students a more comprehensive education that will prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century.

The merger will also allow for the creation of new majors and minors, as well as the opportunity for students to explore a wider range of courses from different disciplines. This will provide students with a more well-rounded education that will prepare them for success in a variety of careers.

The new college will be led by Dr. Barbara W. Hood, who has served as the dean of CAS and CoFAC. Dr. Hood is a renowned scholar in the field of English literature and has a strong commitment to fostering interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning.

The merger is expected to have a positive impact on both students and faculty, as it will allow for increased collaboration and opportunities for innovation. It is anticipated that the new college will be better equipped to meet the changing needs of the modern world and prepare students for success in a rapidly evolving global landscape.
**GAME CORNER**

**Difficulty: Holidazed and Over-Snoozed**

The UMSL MATH CLUB Presents: Problem of the Week

Submit your solution to the problem below by Wednesday, December 2. Solvers will still be eligible for a valuable prize determined by a drawing on Thursday, December 3 at the Fibonacci Day festivities in the MSC (Nosh). Submit solutions to R. Dotzel 329 ESH (dotzelr@umsl.edu)

There once was an Italian, who by common sense Devised his well-known sequence. One must add terms, the latest two To get the next, completely new. Thus did Fibonacci hence, create so much of consequence.

Problem: In the Fibonacci sequence 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34,... show that every third term will be even.

Please note: On Thursday December 3 from 12:00-2:00pm we will be celebrating Fibonacci Day. There will be games, prizes, and other challenging but fun activities. We will be in the Nosh. Come join us.
A discussion entitled “Infectious Diseases and Their Impact on American Society” took place at the J.C. Penney Conference Center at the University of Missouri—St. Louis from 7 to 9 p.m. on November 19. The event was part of the Helen & Will Carpenter Series on Contemporary Issues in American Society and was sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences. The lecture featured a panel that included Dr. Ericka Hayes, associate professor of pediatrics at Washington University School of Medicine, Stephen Kolodziej, an associate researcher at Novavax, a biopharmaceutical company in St. Louis, and Dr. Nirav Patel, an infectious disease specialist at St. Louis University Hospital. Moderating the panel was James Bashkin, professor of chemistry at UMSL.

The predominant themes throughout the lecture and discussion centered around access to healthcare, treatment and prevention, decreasing the stigmas of diseases, and getting people into medical care as a means of preventing the spread of diseases.

After a brief introduction by Ron Yashin, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Bashkin framed the topic for the evening. “It is important for us to address infectious diseases, as a community, from a professional level, and from a perspective of people who do not have any training in infectious diseases. It is a challenge for us to have this discussion, but I believe in the value of discussions about infectious diseases, whether we have these questions as children, parents, researchers, or practicing physicians. We need to come together in a forum to put our concerns on the table, so everybody gets their opinions in, and to be better able to make informed choices down the road,” Bashkin said.

After Bashkin spoke, Hayes then gave a detailed history of how diseases were spread in American history and worldwide. The historical facets that Hayes discussed included the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 during World War I, the spread of malaria during the building of the Panama Canal, and soldiers infected with influenza at Fort Riley during WWII. “Abolishing diseases had an impact on promoting health in the United States,” she said. “So while diseases can have a negative impact, they can also mobilize us to make positive changes, and to improve the health of the citizens in the United States and worldwide,” Hayes said.

An important element of Hayes’ presentation was the emphasis on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Hayes gave an early history of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. According to Hayes, while there is no cure for HIV that develops into full-blown AIDS, developments of new treatments can significantly slow the spread of the disease. “Approximately 35 million people live with HIV worldwide. However, only 11 million are receiving treatment. In addition, there are 50,000 cases of HIV in the United States. One of four people diagnosed with HIV in the U.S. are between the ages of 13 to 24, and 4 of 5 of those diagnosed with the infection are male. Treatment is prevention to keep people from passing HIV to others. Early intervention could result in longer life expectancy. A person who is treated to 20 can live to age 70,” Hayes said.

Kolodziej then gave an overview of the research and development of vaccines from a global perspective. According to Kolodziej, the process of developing vaccines begins with the discovery phases, and then extends into pre-clinical trials, as well as phases I, II, and III. Overall, according to Kolodziej, the process of serum development takes up to 10 years all the way to the approval of a vaccine by the Food & Drug Administration. Finally, Dr. Patel spoke on the 18 x 20 initiative that has the objective of infection control, improved diagnoses, education, agricultural practices to prevent infections to humans and finally, the development of new drugs to treat infections. Patel ended with some important future steps for infection control. “We need to support diagnostic research. We need to decrease the burden that infection research has on companies to ensure a return in investments by them. We also need to be aggressive in infection control, in that viruses are contained and not spread in the hospital environment, and that good hygiene practices are carried out by health practitioners,” Patel said.

The two colleges have always shared a common advising center in 303 Lucas Hall and a common continuing education component.

With the consolidation, there are many research-based grants that will now be available to all the students under the new college that were previously only available to students in CAS. One of those grants is the undergraduate research scholarship grant program, in which students can earn up to $1,000 for their independent studies.

CAS and CoFAC students and faculty have already been notified of the consolidation via email. The countdown for the emergence of Energized STEM has begun. In honor of the last time CoFAC and CAS will graduate separately, the December graduation will feature entertainment instead of speakers. In February there will be a convocation in recognition of the merger.
The U.S. government and policymakers have a lot of influence on citizens’ lives. They set minimum wage, decide who can marry, monitor the safety of the food people eat, and protect civil rights in the workplace. Bills have so much say in what the American citizen can do and what they are protected from. Despite this, there remains a gap between students and government because of a lack of student participation. Only an average of 38 percent of eligible Americans ages 18-24 voted during 2012, according to a United States federal census. Fortunately for the University of Missouri community, the Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM) have undertaken the hefty goal of bridging this gap between students and government.

“The purpose of ASUM is to get the student voice to the UM system, and then to the legislator,” said Nicolae Butler, senior, political science, and vice president of the University of Missouri—St. Louis chapter of ASUM. As an officer, Butler works closely with the organization’s president David McGraw, graduate, counseling.

Both McGraw and Butler exemplify how politics are personal. McGraw grew up in St. Louis County and seeks to understand the relations between different groups in such a diverse area. “Being involved in this counseling program has given me a little bit more awareness of social justice,” he said. Butler, who grew up in Bucharest, is captivated by the infrastructure of the United States. “As an international student I find the American government system really fascinating,” he said. “It’s just unique and very stable.”

McGraw and Butler both share the optimism that ASUM will be continued by students who truly care about the laws we live under. “ASUM is already stabilized; it has the connections, so basically you come, you relate, you get other people involved.”

Although ASUM has existed for 40 years, McGraw and Butler had many concerns when they first joined. The Kansas City chapter had been inactive for years at that point and “it seemed like everything was just getting started,” said McGraw. Fortunately, ASUM has always had support from faculty and executives; the connections were already there, but ASUM needed students who would lead as links between the university community and those who govern it.

This year, two interns have been trained in policy, briefed on student interests, and work directly with representatives and senators at the Missouri state capitol. These internships are central to the structure of ASUM. “We take the student perspective, and communicate it to the system level, and then to the legislature,” said McGraw. “We do that by taking a survey and hiring interns who serve as lobbyists to push legislation.”

Butler said, “You synthesize an idea; we, the ASUM chapter, take it to those people directly. We don’t pass through the faculty; we take it directly to them. So, we have that connection that other organizations do not have.”

Surveys given on each campus help ASUM to determine what issues students care about, and what the organization’s platform should be comprised of. The concerns of UMSL students vary from year to year, and so it is vital to stay abreast of changing times. Four main topics of interest have recently dominated ASUM’s efforts.

The interns, Nathan Theus, sophomore, political science, and Rachel Dougherty, junior, political science, have become experts in these topics of interest. These include budget allocations, voting rights for the student representatives on the Board of Curators, a STEM initiative for students, and improving relations between landlords and tenants in the St. Louis region, as many tenants are also university students. Another issue that has recently come to light is the problem with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students and tuition. These students are technically American citizens, but are still required to pay high international tuition rates.

After being trained, the 12 interns for the entire university system work to develop policies, communicating frequently with state representatives and senators who will sponsor the bill. The interns become familiar with policy language and the work of lobbyists. They learn what will either kill a bill or propel it forward to be voted upon by the legislators.

One benefit of ASUM is the direct link between the interns and these legislators who have a great amount of say in local government. The legislators not only hear directly from their constituents through the program, but they hear from constituents who are trained in policy. “There’s a lot of people who are politicians who really want to do good things and are trying to do their best within the system,” said McGraw.

As the interns provide a student voice at the state level, the officers work primarily to supplement the voices of individuals on their campus. Butler acknowledged the disinterest of the average student demographic in politics: “They feel this lack of power or ability to change things,” he said. But change is possible, and ASUM has set a precedent for students creating change for their state’s legislation. Earlier this year, interns lobbied for a three percent increase in the state budget for the University of Missouri System. A 1.3 percent growth was decided upon; while this has limitations, the increase has led to millions of dollars added to UM’s budget. With every attempt, ASUM’s participants become more adept at the state’s legislative system and how to maneuver in the favor of their fellow UM students. “[We] see the imperfection as room to grow,” said McGraw.

For more information or details on upcoming events, such as Lobby Day and Lunch With a Legislator, email David McGraw at dkmcgraw@mail.umsl.edu or Nicolae Butler at njb359@mail.umsl.edu. Associated Students of the University of Missouri is also on Facebook, Twitter, and TritonSync.
First Hand Account of Paris Weekend

CHRIS ZUVER
STAFF WRITER

Local Band Jr. Clooney’s Debut, Worth Hearing

CHRIS ZUVER
STAFF WRITER

Some of you are familiar with a certain brand of jazzy post-rock that has been around since the mid-90s. Influenced heavily by the emo scene and progressive rock, most of these groups have remained isolated from the other scenes in their popularity, though this in no way subtracts from their merit and talent. From early pioneers like Cap’n Jazz to modern experimentalists like This Town Needs Guns, these are the types of bands who are continuing to make music some of the most unique and engaging music in the rock scene.

Recently, from the depths of St. Louis’ eclectic music scene has emerged Jr. Clooney, a colorful-sounding and talented group. The quartet started two years ago as a project between four local musicians who took time aside from their other bands to get together and play. After discovering the common ground they all shared musically, Jr. Clooney became a full-time endeavor.

While “EP” is a short EP of only five songs, the musicians have made sure that every moment matters, starting with the opening track “Eyebrows,” which comes in smooth and welcoming, then suddenly jerks itself into a dance-friendly groove. The fact that the band understands hooks becomes evident quickly, as repetition is used with precision and is not overdone. These pop sensibilities show up in other places, such as on the self-titled song “Junior Clooney” or in the opening guitar lead to “Saint of Inner Light,” which may be the most memorable melody on the album. As mentioned earlier, this band also knows when they risk wearing out their welcome and seem to know just when to switch the song up. This knowledge gives their music a sound that is reminiscent of improvisational music but with the rigidity of structured songwriting. Since Jr. Clooney has no vocalist, this quality is necessary since the instruments must carry the listener in the place of where a singer normally would.

Besides having pop sensibilities, everyone in the band knows how to play their instrument and play them very well. These two elements seem to balance out evenly, never throwing off the yin or yang of the sound. “Care” is the album’s technical tour-de-force, yet it has catchy melodies just the same. Bands like Jr. Clooney are often called “musician’s musicians,” meaning that their level of technicality turns off the average listener and that only music nerds will appreciate them. However, this band’s ability to be downright catchy makes them an exception to that unwritten rule. There seems to be a style and a mood for every type of listener on this album ranging from the ethereal bliss that can be found on “Parakeet and Mermaid,” all the way to the aggressive stompedes of “Care” and everything in-between.

If you are looking for new music, no matter what your taste is, I would recommend Jr. Clooney’s debut EP to you. Even if you do not get into the music, you cannot help but recognize that these guys worked hard to create five songs that stand out from the average sound.

‘Triforce Heroes’ Lacks Storyline, Single Player Gameplay

KAT RIDDLE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“By the Sea” is a very pretty film—pretty people, pretty locations, at least frustrating to play single player with this game.

Grade: C+

Water Temple boss battle ERIC WYNEN/THE CURRENT

The gameplay is similar to other Legend of Zelda games where the player has to work through puzzle dungeons, defeat the boss, and collect items and Rupees. In this game, Link travels to Hytopia and stumbles upon a town that needs help. The Princess Styla is cursed to wear a black jumpsuit instead of her gorgeous silver dress because of the switch to the Dopple stars, which they actually are.

It is time consuming and hard to switch between them up and throw them to move them. Dopples for control—or literally pick them out and the newlyweds’ one. The voyeurism makes things a little kinky, but the story returns to its plodding progression until the film decides to give us some answers.

The locations and photography are lovely, and the acting, particularly by Brad Pitt, is actually pretty good, given how little the actors have to work with. It is the story and the film’s direction that are lacking in fire, which is laid at the feet of director/star Angelina Jolie Pitt. Many are labeling this latest romantic drama a “vanity project.” It is hard to disagree with that. This is the third narrative film Jolie Pitt has directed, and neither were knockouts. Jolie Pitt has the resources and money to make any film she wants, and get it in theaters. It is much less clear if she has the skill to make great films.

This is a smaller, more personal film, in which she stars alongside her husband, which has prompted questions about how biographical it may be, since she wrote, as well as directed it. Regardless, the emotional fire the story could have sparked is not there. Still, one wants to see her to succeed if for no other reason than there are too few women directors. But best wishes cannot make a film good. Will there be a fourth Jolie Pitt-directed film? It is hard to say, but it is unlikely that response to “By The Sea” will encourage that.

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Alla Voskoboynikova, professor and director of Keyboard Studies, along with UMSL piano students and two guest pianists from local high schools, hosted a studio concert at the Touhill Performing Arts Center on November 17.

With over a dozen performances and nearly an equal amount of performers, the music varied in style, tone, and popularity. Some of the most easily recognizable pieces were there—Mozart’s A major and D minor concertos, Chopin nocturnes, and Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata”—as well as some lesser-known modern compositions. Although most of the students performed solo pieces, a few adaptations of concerti brought Voskoboynikova to the stage in place of an orchestra.

Although all of the students played well, the night’s most remarkable performances came from Michelle Martin, Paige Dubman, Rachel Morgan, and Marta Kersulis. Martin performed Chopin’s Nocturne in B Flat Minor, op. 9, no. 1; a well-known favorite among the beloved Chopin nocturnes. Her interpretation captured the rhythmic alterations between moods of melancholy and reverie.

Dubman’s interpretation of Grieg’s elegant “Notturno” was exactly that—elegant. Hers was possibly the night’s most visually engaging performance, too, as her physical movements seemed to naturally and effortlessly channel the dance-like quality of the piece.

Morgan brought command and facility to the manic “Allegro Barbaro,” Sz 49 by the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók (1881-1945). Careful modulation of volume and a sensitivity to rhythm brought the most out of this dynamic piece.

If, by the end of the night, the hours were starting to take their toll on any of the audience members, the final performance came to a close.

Continued on Page 8
‘Hamilton’ Is Best Rap Record of 2015

SARAH HAYES
A&E EDITOR

“How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore, and a scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean, by providence impoverished, in squallor grow up to be a hero and a scholar?”

This opens the first act of “Hamilton,” the off-Broadway turned Broadway hip-hop musical about Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, written, composed, and starring Lin-Manuel Miranda. Having a rap-based musical is not entirely revolutionary—Miranda himself wrote “In The Heights,” a 2008 musical based in his home neighborhood of Washington Heights—but the fact that none of the main cast, bar King George, are played by white actors is. As Smithsonian Magazine described it when President Barack Obama came to see the show for himself, “our first black president stepped inside to see our first president, black.”

The creator of the United States’ first national bank and our original secretary of the treasury does not sound like the ideal subject for the spiritfire raps that come out of Miranda’s mouth during the show, but “Hamilton” is proving to be the most explosive history lesson to ever cross a Broadway stage. Alexander Hamilton was a man who spoke loudly, decisively, and at great length. He was also no stranger to political machinations and his own inability to keep his trousers tightly buckled around attractive women. Alongside him is a cast of characters including Eliza Schuyler, his wife and confidant through all the chaos, Eliza’s sister Angelica, who continues to have a relationship with Hamilton after he is already married, Aaron Burr, the original frenemy of early America, and George Washington, Hamilton’s idol and mentor.

Then there is the ‘revolutionary set’ who led Hamilton to join the American Revolution in the first place—John Laurens, Marquis de Lafayette, and Hercules Mulligan—who get to have the fantastic work of many of these superheroes.

Piano Students Showcase their Talent

NATHAN WATSON
OPINIONS EDITOR

Continued from Page 7
piece—the first movement of Grieg’s famous Piano Concerto in A Minor, op. 16—was sure to give them a jolt. The piece’s opening descending flourish, among the best known bars in the classical piano repertoire, were delivered with a controlled energy that would define the remainder of the performance. With a piece as powerful as Grieg’s concerto, the audience can only hope the soloist is talented enough to convey original frenzy of early America, and George Washington, Hamilton’s idol and mentor.

It is almost impossible to write about the near-universal appeal of “Hamilton” without mentioning Miranda’s lyrics without simply playing the entire album start to finish. It is continuously attracting fans who are not into rap or history, much less a combination of the two. It succeeds as both a musical and a rap album and it might be the coolest album Miranda. Having a rap-based musical way hip-hop musical about Founding Fathers of America. As you know, I’m an immigrant. I think immigrants bring a lot to the country that they live in. These people who have committed these crimes that have nothing to do with immigration, they should be separated from it.”

First Hand Account of Paris Weekend

KAT RIDDLE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Continued from Page 5
Professor Wall said he would not let the experience change his love of cities like Paris, “I would always go back. I would never let these awful people get in the way of that.”

He also commented on how the attacks have been jumped on by some politicians to oppose allowing refugees into this country. Wall said, “I don’t think that we should use events like this to foster hatred for immigrants and foreigners. As you know, I’m an immigrant myself. I think immigrants bring...
Tritons Defend Their Turf, Winning Home Opener

ALEX NEUPERT
SPORTS EDITOR

And just like that, the University of Missouri—St. Louis Tritons men’s basketball team are 2-2 with two straight home victories in their first home stand of the 2015-2016 season. After first losing two games in a cross-conference tournament in Allenade, Michigan, the Tritons stood their ground to defend the house en route to wins over Fontbonne University and rival Lindenwood University (LU) at the Mark Twain Athletic & Fitness Center.

The home opener on November 18 was a big win for Tritons, on the other hand, had four players getting on the board with the team finishing with 19. The Tritons held on, however, winning the home opener 77-59. Aside from utilizing turnovers to score and maintaining a defense against the varied attack from the Griffins, they completely outclassed their adversaries, outscoring Fontbonne 42-25. The game looked like it would just be a beating for the rest of the night.

For the first ten minutes of the second half, it seemed like this would continue to be the case as the Griffins were still unable to mount a strong offensive push or pivotal defensive stops. In comparison, Fontbonne only had two players finish 10 or more points. Bryce Zimmerman finished with 10, and Ben Kissing was far and away the best player for them, finishing with 19. The Tritons, on the other hand, had four players in the double digits: guard Joseph English, junior, communications, on top for the team with 13, including two three-pointers. The team split its offense up fairly evenly, 35 points coming off each team brought to the table.

The second half was just as exciting as the first, a back-and-forth affair. LU managed to eke out a small five-point lead with nearly eight minutes left, but UMSL quickly reversed the lead once more. Down to the final two minutes, after a three-pointer to give the Lions the lead with less than two to go, UMSL would pull ahead to finish the victory 67-62.

The two teams were very even and finished the first half with 26 points each. Just as the previous game for the Tritons, their offense was varied, six players getting on the board with Cortex leading the way with eight points and two three-pointers.

For the Tritons at the Mark Twain Facility.
Seven Must-Knows When Visiting Spain

CYNTHIA MARIE FORD
STAFF WRITER

As people, we love routine and find it hard to adjust to change. It is difficult to get away from your comfort zone and travel out of a place that is all by your lonesome. Maybe the doubts pile up in your head until eventually you find yourself asking "why am I doing this again?"

The biggest fear I had before traveling abroad to Spain this semester was not knowing how to react. I had to do my research before making the leap, and even then I was still unprepared. Getting on that plane to fly across an ocean was by far the scariest thing I have ever experienced, but if I had the choice I would do it all over again.

However, one thing I would have done differently if I could do it over again would be to find someone familiar with Spain and pick their brain. To say that living in Spain is a different experience from living in the states would be to put it lightly. It is more like a different world and students need someone to guide them through all these changes. For all those students who are contemplating studying abroad in the semesters to come, I am here to tell you what I had to learn the hard way.

Duration of your trip

Understanding the big leap I am sure you have thought about how long you would like to stay. The Study Abroad Office (261 Millennium Study Center) has information on a variety of trips including Spain. Regardless of what trip you choose you should have an idea of how long you think you can tolerate being away from home. If this is your first time going out of the country by yourself, maybe two weeks or a month would be a good amount of time. If you are more daring, there are trips that range from a semester to an entire year. Whatever the case, keep in mind that, financially, it is always ideal to attend a semester or year program because the cost of tuition is identical to attending a semester or year at UMSL.

A kiss here, a kiss there

In Spain, kisses are required. For American students this is one of the biggest, most awkward changes. I personally am very keen on personal space, so when someone first pulled me in for a “beso,” I was totally caught off guard. It takes time to get used to but before you leave you will lose your concept of a personal bubble, kissing almost every one you meet.

Communication

Before traveling abroad you will need to determine how to communicate with both your family from home and the friends you will make in your new surroundings. Many students add an international plan to their current phone line, but I have found this to be quite expensive. For those that do not have hundreds of dollars each month for an outrageous phone bill, I suggest a combination of devices. I found it cheapest to add international texting to my current phone line, use Skype with my family via computer, and purchase a phone with a Spanish number to communicate with those that live in Spain. Also, downloading useful apps such as WhatsApp, a texting application widely used in European countries, may even eliminate the need to purchase international texting on your US line.

Continued online at thecurrent-online.com

South Park Might Save Humanity

ABBY N. VIRIO
STAFF WRITER

If you watched South Park in the 1990s and early 2000s, you should know that everyone’s favorite Colorado suburb is a completely different place today. As creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker have aged and matured, so too has their brain child. Nowadays, South Park tackles political humor in clever, shockingly eye-opening ways. From PC Principal to Mr. Garrison’s presidential campaign, there is a lot more to South Park these days than a Christmas poop joke.

Recent changes at South Park Elementary laid the foundation for Stone’s and Parker’s latest critiques of American society. Long-time administrator Principal Victoria has been replaced by the totally ripped, recent college grad PC (politically correct) Principal and his frat house of socially-conscious ‘bros.’ When he is not pouding solo cups at a charity-geared frat party full of attractive women, he spends his time correcting South Park’s children and telling Leslie to ‘shut her mouth’ and ‘learn about diversity.’ PC Principal embodies every terrible white Facebook friend, who feels the need to lecture you about racism and bullying while aggressively labeling you as a bigot for using the word ‘retarded’ in a post you made about student loan policy. And if a handicapped individual says they do not care if others use ‘retarded’ in the colloquial phrase or even use it themselves, it is only because ‘marginalized people are so oppressed they sympathize with their oppressors’, not because handicapped people can make up their own minds about whether or not a slang term is going to affect their confidence.

Not surprisingly, Randy Marsh is quick to jump on the PC bandwagon. His goal! Bring a Whole Foods—the symbol of a progressive urban neighborhood—to town. The townspeople accomplish this by hijing all their poor and temporarily gentrifying the rundown southern part of town, dubbed ‘So Do So Pa,’ before abandoning the artisanal shops in favor of newly-built Shi Tapa Town, near South Park’s infamous City Wok. In a devilishly snarky plot, Stone and Parker demonstrate how gentrification of rundown areas works against inhabitants, smacking a big Bandaid of shiny lights and cobbled sidewalks over the homes of the poor, who are left uneducated and unemployed as soon as the fad moves again.

Perhaps the most striking example of South Park’s season of awakening occurs in episode 1907: “Naughty Ninjas.” Simpleton policeman Officer Barbrady is fired from the force when he panics and accidentally shoots a Latino-American student at South Park Elementary school assembly to which police have been called. Later, when the children dress as ninjas in order to protect Kenny’s house from So Do So Pa’s homeless people and are mistaken for members of ISIS, Barbrady is asked by the town to save them from ISIS by ‘shooting kids, some of whom may be minorities.’ Stone and Parker show us that Officer Barbrady is the product of a diseased system, in which he is continually called upon to protect civilians in controversial, delicate situations created by the ignorance and racism of the townspeople themselves. At the same time, the rest of the South Park police force refuse to help the town if they cannot beat minorities, instead opening up a Hulu studio. When the homeless begin to overrun the Whole Foods, the town makes a deal with the Police Chief, allowing police to violently discriminate again—so long as they only beat perfect voiceless minorities and not the affluent Whole Foods shoppers.

Undoubtedly, South Park has grown from its days of killing Kenny and cursing for giggles. The show has grown from its days of killing Kenny and cursing for giggles. The show has evolved, and evolved for the better. South Park is a show that one would have to watch to understand the amount of context and history behind the show, but it is a show that you will not want to miss. It takes time to get used to but before you leave you will lose your concept of a personal bubble, kissing almost every one you meet.

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Learning to Live With Sophisticated Machines

Join The Current and discussion leader Keith W. Miller, Orthwein Endowed Professor for Lifelong Learning in the Sciences, for a lively student-centered discussion. Computers, computer networks, robots and webbots continue to get faster, smarter, and better connected. Humans are now living with interactive entities that are silicon-based, but increasingly sophisticated. How does this change how we live? Does it change who we are? Computer scientists, philosophers, and social scientists have different perspectives on these issues, but all seem to agree that things are changing rapidly. Let’s get together and talk about those changes.

The New York Times feature that will serve as the jumping off point for the conversation is “Don’t Be Afraid of Robots, Says Ayanna Howard.”


When: Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.
Where: MSC Century Room C
What: Cookies and conversation*

* Cookies/dessert and beverages provided to the first 25 students.
The Current

Which is Better, CDs or Digital Music? CDs: The Music Lover’s Paradise

ALEX NEUPERT
SPORTS EDITOR

While, admittedly, CD albums are not quite as high quality as a vinyl record, they are a great deal better than digital music. This is just one of the reasons why CD albums, purported relics of yesteryear, still stand as a better investment for the music connoisseur.

Since the arrival of CDs in the early ‘80s, they have both risen and declined in the overall landscape of the music industry. Digital music is the rage now, and it is hard to justify buying albums on CD.

However, the overall sound quality has been noted by many as the driving point behind purchasing physical copies of albums. On top of this, if the main reason you like digital music is the ability to take a wide range and vast quantity of music with you on the go, buying CDs is essentially a two-for-one. Not only do you get a physical disc, but after you tip the album onto your computer—which you should do regardless—you can have the best of both worlds.

The fact that a CD is something tangible, something you can see and grasp in your own hands, is the point to pixels on a screen and music in your ears, makes a rather strong case towards getting albums in CD form. For one, when you purchase music through iTunes, you technically do not own the music and Apple can take away your right to listen to it through their program in the future (an unlikely, but possible scenario). However, the fact that you get a physical album also leads to another significant advantage of CDs: collectability.

Alongside stamps, baseball cards, books, and other collectibles, CD albums can become a tremendous source of pride for what you have amassed, a physical representation of your musical psyche. I love my meager collection of almost 200 albums because they show how my tastes have progressed over the years and what has influenced me. It is different showing someone your collection of CDs versus saying, “I have 10,000 songs on iTunes.” You cannot even really prove that everything in someone’s digital collection is bought, and because of that, it does not have as much an impact.

Lastly, one of my favorite reasons to buy albums is for the cover art on the leaflets that come with most CD albums. While iTunes provides you a digital representation of it, once again it is really just not the same. CDs really are the best way to go if you truly love music.

The Real Meaning of Saying ‘I Will Pray for You’

JESSIE EIKMANN
FEATURES EDITOR

Every Friday morning at 8 a.m., I volunteer at a Planned Parenthood clinic. My job is to ensure that patients are not being diverted by the protesters and do not stop for them long enough to block the driveway. It is a relatively uneventful job—even when one of the protesters whips out his iPad and films us—but there is one thing about it that gets under my skin every week. As I leave the clinic, one of the protesters always yells at me some variant of the words “I will pray for you.”

As an atheist, I detest that phrase more than any other in the English language. It is not just because I disagree with the people who say it, but because that sentiment is often used to suggest exactly the opposite of the sincere concern supposed to convey. “I will pray for you” is a sentence that, under the surface, has a message of condescension.

Saying “I will pray for you” to an atheist is a subtle form of backhanding that imposes religion on someone who is not asking for it. For me it is the equivalent of someone grating a whole block of cheese over a meal they make for me and not even asking if I like cheese. Although many people like cheese, not everyone does, and those people who do not (like me) would not appreciate it. The same is the case when someone is being smothered in cheese. Not everyone is Christian; therefore, not everyone likes being “served” Christianity. I can honestly say that I want nothing to do with God in any capacity, and that includes any indirect involvement that I have from being unwillingly inserted into somebody’s monologue to him.

The meaning of “I will pray for you” can be extended farther, though. It can be interpreted as a threat veiled beneath superficial benevolence. In one instance at the clinic, I heard one of the protesters yell to a client entering on foot, verbatim, “God is going to bless you whether you like it or not.” Sentiments like that are actually saying, “I think that you are so far from my point of view that I consider you to be evil.”

This idea is certainly far removed from being something nice to say to someone in a crisis. Instead of sympathizing, it condescends to a person by implying that they need to be saved from their own choices and forced by a higher entity to repent—and the person praying intends to set off that process of coercion.

Praying for me—or anyone, for that matter—does not actually do anything to change a person’s situation. In fact, the only thing it does effectively is stroke the ego of the praying person. Praying for people has a kind of placebo effect in that it makes someone feel like they have done something about a problem, but that person has actually done nothing constructive about that problem. Take, for example, the text of a Mizzou or “Pray for Paris” hashtags that have been going around. Are the people who are posting these hashtags on their Twitter actively fighting racism on Mizzou’s campus or supporting the victims of the Paris attacks in any way beyond just saying empty words? Of course not. But because they are telling God to help those people and telling other people to ask God to help those people, they feel better about all the “help” they have contributed. The Planned Parenthood protesters are even worse, because I suspect that they are not saying they will pray for me out of genuine concern for my well-being. They do it so that they can say to themselves, “I am such a saintly person. Look at me, taking time out of my day to help convert sinners.” Give me a break.

So to all of the people offering to pray for me, let me make this clear: I am unimpressed with your attempts at shaming me and glorifying yourselves. Your prayers will do absolutely nothing to change me, or anyone else’s, behavior. And no matter how many protesters waste their evenings talking to the void about me, I will still be coming to battle with them at Planned Parenthood’s gates every Friday morning.

South Park Saves Humanity

ABBY N. VIRIO
STAFF WRITER

Continued from Page 10 stream media and your Facebook friends will not—fairly objectively. Whether it is the Canadians accidentally electing their version of Donald Trump, causing the country to collapse, Caitlyn Jenner repeatedly being called ‘a

The Current

Romantics Be Damned

COUNTERPOINT

SARAH HAYES
A&E EDITOR

Music romantics may wish to compose Petrarchan love sonnets over the feel of a vinyl record, or the thrill of running one’s finger across the spines of CDs still in their cases. That is quite cute of them, but I would rather just have my music accessible, damn the aesthetics. So, sue me if a musical and, more importantly, I no longer have for the room a 100-plus record and CD collection like it is the ‘70s and ‘80s all over again. I collect in many ways, but recently my digital collection of music has been the one steadily growing above all others. This is for two reasons: first, we are in an era in which access to new and upcoming artists is easier than it has ever been since record companies first put sound to record. Second, with the advent of services like iTunes and Amazon Music, it has become easier to legally purchase sound files of music across all genres and time periods as more artists’ labels go digital.

Yes, being able to show off one’s abundant collection of physical media is a trip, but unless you are trying to impress someone, it is an ultimately pointless endeavor. Plus, if a tangible proof that all the music in someone’s collection is legally obtained, maybe you should ask yourself why the automatic assumption is piracy and not a ton of money and gift cards poured into an iTunes account? Bigger the impact, let me show you my collection of Broadway albums in place.

Here is the reality: brick and mortar shops are dying. Niche markets are disappearing or being folded into larger ventures. The places where we once bought CDs and records are fading into the ether. Everything is going digital, from the music itself to the sound files of music across all genres and time periods. It is just easier to purchase a bundle of mp3’s than wait for the CD to drop into my hands. Instant gratification is what I want, and that is what digital music gives me. Find me a 45 vinyl that can do that.

Opinions 11
STLCyberCon 2015 Brings Awareness to Cybersecurity

JILL HARDY
STAFF WRITER

The University of Missouri—St. Louis sponsored the STLCyberCon 2015 at Express Scripts Hall (ESH) on November 20. This conference featured a plethora of information that brought awareness to cybersecurity, a prevalent IT issue in the 21st century. From 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. there were various segments, each averaging 30 minutes, in 003 and 005 ESH. In these segments, participants learned about cyber-physical systems, new threats in countermeasures in digital crime, cyberterrorism, global threats, top cybersecurity threats in higher education, and capacity building in cybersecurity research and education.

Due to an emerging global economy and the daily use of computers and mobile devices, cybersecurity information is pertinent. During a segment with Dr. Bruce McMillin, professor of computer science at Missouri University of Science and Technology, participants learned about “Information Flow Properties for Security in Cyber-Physical Systems.” McMillin discussed Future Renewable Electric Energy Delivery and Management (FREEDM), which generates locally sourced energy. He also discussed Distributed Grid Intelligence, which allows people to share energy resources at the neighborhood and industrial levels. McMillin said, “There are some threats to new data systems based on collective gathering because utility can disambiguate the signals to figure out your personal usage and sell that to a third party. Our vulnerabilities are a culmination of Cyber-Physical Network Scheduling.”

Dr. Maurice Dawson, assistant professor of Information Systems at UMSL, hosted a segment titled “New Threats and Countermeasures in Digital Crime and Cyber Terrorism.” Dawson spoke about the vulnerabilities of Bluetooth and mobile device usage. He also discussed cyberspionage. WikiLeaks and FinSpy captured thousands of pages of material, exposing the global mass surveillance industry. Dawson said, “The U.S. Government has an agreement that indicates that we do not spy on Canada, Britain, and Australia. However, we will spy on South Africa because they have tons of oil. Some countries like Egypt and Eritrea buy their technology to spy on other countries. What you may not be aware of is when you fly to a different country you are tracked immediately by technologies that are sold by European countries.”

Another segment featured Brian Mize, who is currently the Senior Manager of the Cyber Threat Intelligence Team at Enterprise Holdings. Mize’s segment featured “Cyber Crime, Cyber Criminals, and Cyber Cops.” Mize retired after 20 years in law enforcement, with his last 10 years assigned to the FBI Cyber Instruction Unit. He worked to stop cyber use of targeting children for human sex trafficking rings. He also covered information pertaining to groups like Anonymous, who participate in doxing— an internet-based practice of researching and publishing personal identifiable information about an individual. Mize also mentioned the Black Hat Hackers, a somewhat silent group that sells malware and viruses to other groups.

State-sponsored organizations employ professional personnel who specialize in intrusive activity. They target government, manufacturing, research, intellectual property, military secrets, competitive intelligence, and advantage in negotiations. Mize said, “One of the most common infection vectors is email with malicious attachment.” Now and in the future, there is a greater need for cyber cops, in federal and local law enforcement, as private industry experts, and even hackers.

Cybercrimes take place globally as well. In Romania, cybercrime percentages are being reduced based on the minimized ability to partake in them. In China, people are employed for cybercrimes due to patriotic motivations. Mize said, “These people aren’t necessarily bad guys, they just have a lot of patriotic pride and they steal secrets because they want to be the best. So they do not see any problem with stealing secrets globally if it elevates their country.”

A final morning segment featured Tammy Hawkins, who is Vice President of Authentication Software Engineering and Enterprise Security Solutions at MasterCard. Hawkins gathered some pertinent data to share regarding the usage of mobile devices and services. Here are the statistics:

1. 90% of connected devices collect personal information
2. 80% of connected devices lack sufficient authentication
3. 70% of connected devices use unencrypted networks
4. Currently, 4.9 billion connected devices are in use in 2015.
5. An estimated 25 billion connected devices will be in use by 2020.

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