

10-3-2016

Current, October 03, 2016

University of Missouri-St. Louis

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Recommended Citation

University of Missouri-St. Louis, "Current, October 03, 2016" (2016). *Current (2010s)*. 240.
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The Current

1966

Celebrating 50 Years as

2016

UMSL'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWS

VOL. 50

ISSUE 1510

OCTOBER 3, 2016



University Square Fountain

KAT RIDDLER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ZYRA DE LOS REYES
STAFF WRITER

University Square celebrated the completion of the Natural Bridge Great Streets Project, phase I, by hosting their first annual Fountain Festival on September 24. Most of the activities centered around the Natural Bridge Road Fountain Plaza. From 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., some parts of Florissant Road and Natural Bridge Road as well as some of the adjoining streets were closed for the festival. The celebration consisted of music, food, and fountain displays throughout the day.

The event started at 9 a.m. with an ecology tour, and then a Fun Run/Great Streets Walk was held at 10 a.m. to show the improvements that were made along Natural Bridge Road.

"We have been working on this

Continued on page 8

Faculty Fight for a Union Election

BRIAN SHERRILL
STAFF WRITER

Unionizing faculty supporters and some students chanted and rallied across the bridge from the Quad to the Millennium Student Center and down to the stage near the Nosh the morning of September 27. The demonstrators were attempting to put pressure on their administrators by demanding their voices be heard among the Board of Curators.

They were trying to start productive conversations about the benefits of joining a union during the University of Missouri-St. Louis' budget crisis.

Dr. Lauren Obermark, assistant professor of English, said, "The rally was a powerful and visible statement for the university community and its students." Obermark hopes that students realize this is a faculty movement protecting their students' education. "Faculty members want changes and a voice in how the university works, because this will improve our working conditions, which in turn will make us stronger teachers. A union would give faculty representation in the decisions the university makes. We work with the students, and we're committed to maintaining a strong educational culture on campus," she said.

Obermark also said UMSL has many excellent professors struggling to get by without benefits and job security.

Jennafer Alexander, an adjunct instructor at UMSL, said, "If the vote for a union passes, we hope to exercise our right to bargain collectively with the administration over the terms and conditions of our employment.

Alexander said most adjuncts work for poverty-level wages, teach at multiple campuses to make ends meet, have no job security, and no access to deci-



sion-making processes. "If we hope to maintain high standards as researchers and educators at UMSL, then we will need the legal protection of a faculty union. Better working conditions for educators will mean better learning conditions for students," Alexander said.

Dr. Wally Siewert, the director of The Center for Ethics in Public Life, said at the rally that the administrators have been working hard under tough circumstances. He said, "But it shouldn't all be on their shoulders and there is a big voice missing from the discussion. Students deserve a supported faculty that makes sure you get what you need for your education. Faculty deserves fair compensation and a seat at the decision making table for their institution which they have grown to love. An administration deserves to know exactly where their faculty stands, what their needs are, and to know that their faculty has their back when they go to deal with the State and the [UM] system."

UMSL's faculty wants to protect their students' education and in order to do that, Siewert said they need to use their right to organize and have

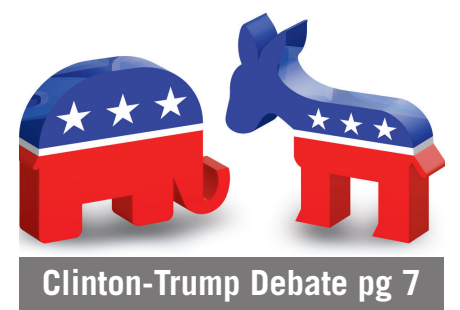
a union election via a fair and swift process. "First, we want this election administered by a neutral third party," said Siewert. "Secondly, we want this election to be ready to go and called into place when 30 percent of faculty members have signaled their support for a union election. Thirdly, we want a mail-in ballot. We want to make it as easy as possible for every voice to be heard. So if you think the working conditions for your faculty are important, and you think the decision making process of all that happens here at UMSL are important, what we'd like for all of you to do is get involved. You can go to www.umslunited.org. It takes two minutes to sign a petition and send a letter to the Board of Curators."

Sunny Hutton, graduate, education, also said at the rally that the UMSL administration has made decisions that have negatively impacted the university's sustainability, faculty, and staff's commitment, which disadvantages UMSL students academically.

Hutton said, "When the board drove our university into a financial hole, it mimicked the actions of the fed-

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INSIDE



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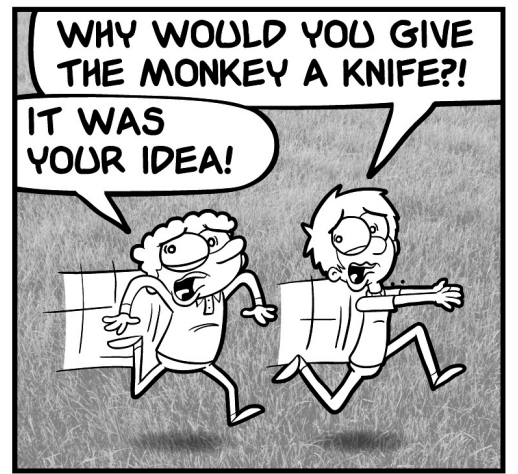
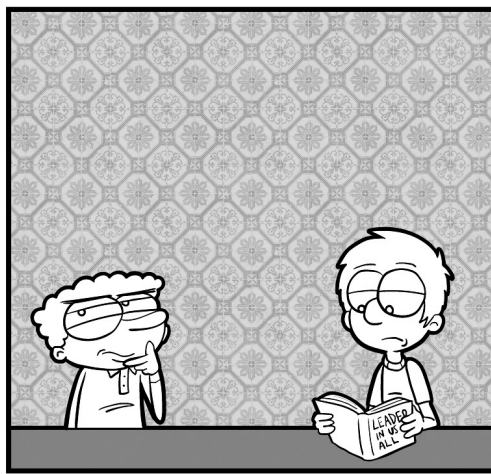
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ON THE QUAD BY MIKE DILBERTO

FRIDAY OCT. 7 10AM-3PM | **LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY INSTITUTE**
 FREE and OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS. Lunch will be provided. | Register online in TritonSync by Wednesday, October 5

GAME CORNER

The UMSL MATH CLUB Presents: Problem of the Week



Puzzle # 14:

What is the next letter in the sequence OTTFSSSENT...?

Email solutions to covertdj@umsl.edu with an email titled "Puzzle of the Week".

NEWS BRIEFS

Campus Venue Hours See A Cut For Fall

SARAH HAYES
 A&E EDITOR

The University of Missouri–St. Louis' Residential Life and Housing Office has recently updated hours for several on-campus locations. The changes were announced in a campus-wide email on September

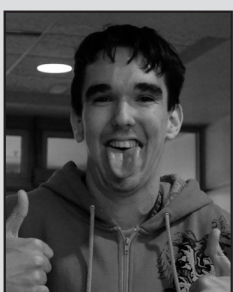
30. The following locations will be changing their hours of operations, effective October 1:
 The Provincial House's late night dinner option is open between 7:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday, with the dining room closing at 9:30 p.m. On Friday and Saturday,

there are no late night dining options.
 The Oak Hall C-Store is open between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. from Sunday through Thursday. On Friday, it is open from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. On Saturday, it is closed.
 The Triton Store is no

longer open on the weekends. During the week, except for Friday, it is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Friday, it is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 For further information, contact the Residential Life Office at 314-516-6877 or online at umsl.edu/reslife.

THE UNDERCURRENT By Lori Dresner

HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN AN ONLINE CLASS? DID YOU LIKE IT?



OWEN EIGENBERG,
 Freshman, Succeed
 "Yes. My grades were a bit low but I improved them."



DAT LE,
 Freshman, Anthropology
 "No."



SARAH MCFARLAND,
 Freshman, Spanish/Japanese
 "I'm taking a hybrid class. I don't have any problems with it."

MON 77 57	TUE 81 61	WED 82 63	THU 72 54	FRI 70 48	SAT 70 48	SUN 70 52
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UMSL Faculty Rallies For A Union, An Election, A Voice

Continued from page 1

eral government and Wall Street. They bailed themselves out, maintaining their positions and salary while hourly wage workers were fired. Tenures were taken away along with implications of raises. Adjunct professors are teaching half of department courses and high turnover rates are happening due to the fact that they are leaving for better [paying] jobs. We will hold the UM board curators accountable to a fair and timely election process.”

Dr. Pamela Stuerke, UMSL faculty senate chairwoman and associate professor in the College of Business Administration, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, “This doesn’t seem to be a divisive issue on campus. We have a really fabulous system of shared governance here. We’ve been told by people at other institutions that what we have here is how shared governance is supposed to work. A possible outcome of a union contract is that shared governance and faculty council—along with its almost two dozen committees—



UMSL Faculty Forward rally members speak on stage in the Nosh. BRIAN SHERRILL/THE CURRENT

could end.”

The previous school Stuerke worked for was a union school. She said, “My

experience there with respect to the issues that tie into shared governance was very negative. The relationship broadly

between faculty covered under the union agreement and the administration was at best adversarial on both sides.”

Adriano Udani, an assistant professor of political science at UMSL and member of the organizing committee, told St. Louis Public Radio, “Given the budget crisis at UMSL, I think we all agree and believe that a collective bargaining unit that speaks for all faculty is going to increase UMSL’s capacity to address the long-term issues in a collaborative manner. We have a legal right to organize, and I think the university has a legal obligation to provide a fair process.”

The group, however, has not reached 30 percent support needed and the foreseen outcome is still unclear. The Service International Employees Organization effort has been working with tenured, non-tenured, adjunct instructors, and other faculty members at Washington University, St. Louis University, and Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville.

Campus Considers Learning Management System Switch

LORI DRESNER
NEWS EDITOR

This fall, the University of Missouri-St. Louis is in the process of deciding whether to keep its current learning management system (LMS), Blackboard, or migrate to a different system called Canvas. The decision must be made by November 30 and input is being gathered from students, faculty, and staff about which system’s features will best suit the campus’ needs.

Conversations about the LMS have begun due to the fact that UMSL’s contract with Blackboard is ending in December. If the campus chooses to stay with Blackboard, there would still be a migration process of upgrading to the new Blackboard Ultra Experience, which would contain new and upgraded features of the current version that UMSL is using. Some of these features would include faster mobile access, a new app for Android and iPhones, and the ability to drag and drop files.

Features of Canvas include compatibility with all browsers, a mobile app for Androids and iPhones, and the ability to open all documents in-line so users do not have to download files.

The migration from the current version of Blackboard to Blackboard Ultra could take anywhere from one to two years if UMSL stays with Blackboard. If the campus makes the move to Canvas, the full migration process would be complete around Spring 2018.

J. Andy Goodman, Associate Provost for Professional Develop and

the Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), is heading up the process of deciding which LMS the campus will use moving forward.

Goodman explained that the process began when the University of Missouri-Columbia put out a request for proposal (RFP) for a new LMS. There were several requirements, one being that the new LMS had to be cloud-based, meaning that there would no longer be downtime for users. The version of Blackboard that UMSL currently uses is hosted on the Columbia campus. Beginning in January, UMSL will begin migrating to a cloud-based system, although most courses in the spring semester will still be on the current Blackboard server. Although costs associated with Blackboard and Canvas are undisclosed, Goodman said, “One is slightly less expensive than the other, but it’s not a huge difference. So I don’t think cost is going to be the primary determining factor. I think it’s really going to be: what are the preferences of our faculty, staff, and students?”

An online survey is currently available to the campus community to gather information about which LMS features are preferred. Goodman said that as of last week, there were around 400 responses to the survey and around half of them were from students. He encouraged more of the campus community to provide input about which features they would like to see in the LMS. “We’d love for more students to be responding, and faculty as well. We really want to know what people think,”

Continued at thecurrent-online.com

Instructure Representatives Showcase Canvas

DANIEL STRAWHUN
OPINIONS EDITOR

On September 21 and 22, representatives from Instructure Inc. visited the University of Missouri-St. Louis to demo the company’s learning management software, Canvas. The demos took place in the Thomas Jefferson Library’s Training Room and were open to both students and faculty.

The presentation began with an overview of the Canvas platform, with special emphasis placed on the innovative features that set Canvas apart from its main competitor, Blackboard. Canvas, which was launched in 2011, was “architected for the Cloud,” as one of the company’s reps explained; therefore, the software is constantly up and running, with zero downtime for scheduled maintenance. Canvas also works on all browsers, and there is a free, fully functional mobile app version available to both Android and iPhone users. As the rep was eager to point out, students could potentially complete an entire online Canvas course using only their smartphones—a milestone in usability that the company surpassed three years ago. Canvas also opens all documents in-line, which means that users never have to download files in order to view them. Everything is contained and displayed within the browser page.

The demo also included a workshop, which was oriented toward instructors. Laptops were arranged in front of each seat, and the reps guided audience members through the process

of creating their own Canvas courses on the spot. One feature that seemed especially popular with instructors was the assignment calendar, which allows assignments to be rescheduled or postponed with a simple drag-and-drop motion. Another popular feature was the “clone course” option, which copies the instructor’s course and applies it to the next semester’s calendar, updating all the due dates in the process.

During the workshop, some instructors even went as far as to import their own Blackboard courses into Canvas, testing the software’s cross-compatibility. After the demo, Barbara VanVoorden, associate professor of English, said: “I tried to import a test from the online grammar class, just to see how that worked, because some of the rumors that had been going around had been that changing over to the different test tool was going to be a real headache. However...I exported the test from Blackboard and then imported that package, like a zip file or something, into Canvas, and it seemed to go very smoothly. I looked at the test and everything was there.”

However, VanVoorden also offered her own criticism of the program. She said: “From what I could see, I think it would be very similar to what we already have with Blackboard. It looks like all the same tools and functions are there. They’re [just] called something else and on a different place on the screen...” However, she also mentioned some new features that she liked: “What Canvas does have that Blackboard does

Continued at thecurrent-online.com

Japan Drama Night Hosts 'Hula Girls' Movie Night

BRIAN SHERRILL
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Laura Miller, Eiichi Shibusawa-Seigo Arai Endowed Professor of Japanese Studies and professor of anthropology, hosted the Japan Drama Night showing of "Hula Girls" on September 28 in 331 Social Sciences & Business Building (SSB). "Hula Girls," directed by Lee Sang-il, is based off the formation of the Joban Hawaiian Center. It is a "very cute, and very true story," said Miller. The film was nominated for 12 awards at the Japan Academy Awards in 2007.

"Hula Girls" is a dramatic and inspirational movie about Iwaki, a

cold, dying coal mining slum-town in northern Japan. The town's mine is closing down along with the hopes of its families' futures. However, the mining company decides to attempt to revitalize Iwaki with its new project, the Joban Hawaiian Center, meant to bring in thousands of tourists.

"By and for the coal miners" is the motto the project announces. The project and its hired teacher from Tokyo, Madoka Hirayama (Yasuko Matsuyuki), are both met with hostility from the laid off fathers, although the daughters are sparked with enthusiasm, seeing their ticket out of Iwaki.

Hirayama teaches these girls how to dance, how to be dancers, and how

to "be something." These coal miners' daughters' determination becomes inspirational. Their stakes are high but they prove themselves in the end after months of hard work touring surrounding rural areas to promote the center's grand opening, where they finally dance in front of a captivated audience of thousands. The Center, now known as Spa Resort Hawaiians, became one of Japan's most popular theme parks.

Many of the students who came to see the film were Japanese Studies majors. After it ended, the students began chiming in, saying the movie was a "tear jerker" and "hilarious." Miller said, "I cried a bit," and many of the students agreed that they did the same.

One of the students, Rana Jchaj, freshman, mathematics, came for the free pizza and the extra credit but left with something more. Jchaj said, "It was such a rich and insightful movie full of Japanese culture. It was so powerful. Seeing this movie makes you want to go to Japan and visit the Center."

Dr. Miller hosts these kind of Japanese culture events every semester, bringing in guest speakers and showing movies. The next event is "The Children of the Gutenberg Revolution: Japanese Typewriters and the Extension of Print as a Universal Visual Language" with guest speaker Raja Adal from the University of Pittsburgh. The event takes place October 5 at 3 p.m. in 331 SSB.

Leslie Pietrzyk Encourages UMSL Writers to Persevere

LEAH JONES
FEATURES EDITOR

Leslie Pietrzyk, author and teacher, described herself as "the most stubborn person in the world." Her stubbornness has paid off though. After having her collection of short stories "This Angel on My Chest" rejected by several other publishers, Pietrzyk won the prestigious Drue Heinz Literature Award from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015. Pietrzyk visited the University of Missouri-St. Louis to read from her book on September 29. The stories all feature a young grieving widow and use unique narrative forms. Mary Troy, professor of English, said, "The stories in this book are held together by an intelligence and an artfulness, a way of looking at the same thing from different perspectives and positions. This collection works, in fact, by being a true tour de force."

Pietrzyk's determination extends beyond just publishing though. She also uses it to deal with difficult personal struggles in her own life. She chose the book's subject matter from her own experiences as a young widow. Pietrzyk, whose first husband passed away of a heart attack at 37, said, "[It was a] profound and life-changing experience." Shortly after his passing, she wrote the

first story in the book, "Ten Things," followed by her second novel, "A Year and A Day," about a young girl whose mother commits suicide. Pietrzyk said that though nothing was factually the same as her life, that novel was about her grieving.

After these two pieces about her loss, Pietrzyk said that she thought that she was done writing about that time in her life. However, while at a writer's colony, Pietrzyk had a breakfast conversation with a poet about reading subcultures. The idea piqued Pietrzyk's interest and she returned to her studio and started writing a list of subcultures about which she could write. Pietrzyk included cooking school and various jobs on her list, as well as "Young Widow's Support Group." "The minute I saw that I thought, '...That's going to be really hard,' and then I also thought 'Oh, I have to do that one,'" Pietrzyk said.

Pietrzyk began writing "The Circle" while at the writer's colony, but that single idea generated more ideas. "By the end of the day, I didn't know it would be a book, but I knew that I would be writing more stories from that time," Pietrzyk said. "The assignment that I gave myself was [that I would write about] one true hard thing from my personal experience. I was going to blend fact and fiction and see what happened...It was clearly the right time to write all of those stories."

The material for the book was emotionally demanding though. Pietrzyk said, "A lot of grieving is actually obsessing." She created distance from the content by using odd forms such as a multiple-choice quiz, a list, the use of second person, and a craft lecture piece, "One True Thing," which uses nine different points of view. "For me, using the second person is a good way to create some distance...it's like, this didn't happen to me, this was someone else, 'you,' and so I think that was why I kind of turned to those different points of view and different forms in the book," Pietrzyk said.



Leslie Pietrzyk

COURTESY OF LESLIE PIETRZYK

In addition to struggling with the difficult emotional content, Pietrzyk said that she also found herself questioning whether or not her grief was enough in comparison to other people's trauma and grief. In the end though, Pietrzyk said though it may be selfish to write about one's own grief, that's fine. "Grief is universal...and yet it's utterly individual," Pietrzyk said. Pietrzyk avoids sentimentality in her stories through self-reflexive humor.

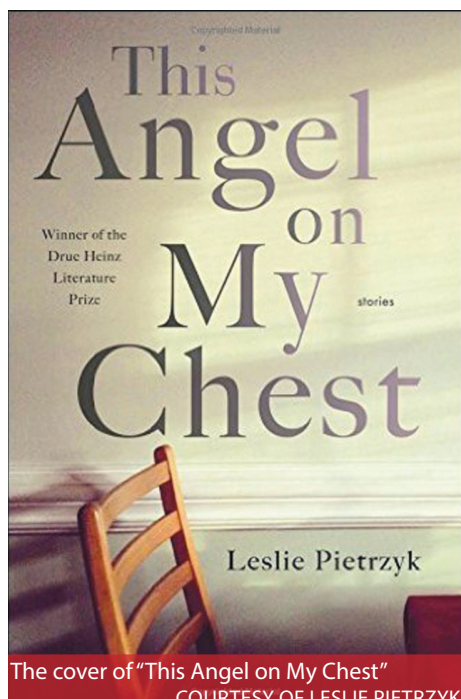
This is not the first time that UMSL has celebrated Pietrzyk's work. Her short story "This Day With You," was published in the first edition of UMSL's literary journal, *Natural Bridge*, in April 1999. "That story is still one of my very favorite stories," Pietrzyk said, "It was exciting that I had that little tiny but special place in the *Natural Bridge* archives and history." The story, which takes a more traditional form, also draws on facts from Pietrzyk's life. Like the characters in the story, Pietrzyk grew up in Iowa and worked at a movie theatre.

Pietrzyk's connection to *Natural Bridge* kept her connected with Troy. After Pietrzyk won the Drue Heinz Literature Award, Troy invited her to

do a reading at UMSL. In addition to the \$15,000 prize and book printing, the award gave Pietrzyk an endowment for travel to universities for readings, so she accepted the invitation. Pietrzyk said that she chooses what she will read at a reading based on the audience and time frame. Though she said that readings can be difficult because she "gets the good and bad of seeing people respond," she said, "I really love doing readings... I think it's exciting when a reading goes really well. The audience is energized. I am energized. People will tell me secret moving things that they wouldn't normally announce...It's very moving."

In addition to writing fiction, Pietrzyk also writes blogs and essays. Though she said that essays are "tortuous," she explained that she could use her own voice in her blog, which focuses on writing and some cooking. "I can have anything I want to say, and I can say it," she said. "I could be humorous. I could put parentheses all over the place (which I love to do). That was me."

As with many writers, Pietrzyk also teaches at a low-residency MFA pro-



The cover of "This Angel on My Chest" COURTESY OF LESLIE PIETRZYK

Continued on page 6

New Assistant Coach Shaw Arms Men's Basketball Team For Conquest

LANCE JORDAN
SPORTS EDITOR

Rob Holloway, who resigned last month for a position at Eastern Illinois, will be replaced by University of Missouri-St. Louis men's new assistant basketball coach Jesse Shaw. Shaw's record includes a NJCAA Region VI Coach of the Year award, KBCA Junior College Men's Coach of the Year award, and several other championship and tournament victories while serving as the head coach at Pratt Community College, an NJCAA Division I junior college in Kansas.

The opportunity presented itself when former UMSL men's basketball head coach Steve Tappmeyer informed Shaw of the open position at the university.

"Coach Steve Tappmeyer was the previous head basketball coach here before Coach Sundvold. He contacted Coach Sundvold and myself when the position became open. I always wanted to get back to the four-year level, and my wife and I loved the idea of living in a major city. Plus, everyone I talked to about Coach Sundvold said great things about him," Shaw said.

Wasting no time, Shaw went to the first place he could and signed the contract. He already has big plans for the men's basketball team here at UMSL. The team last season had a slightly disappointing 12-16 record, which Shaw hopes to turn around and even win the championship. "I'm all about championships and relationships. My goals here are to win conference championships, conference tournament championships, regional championships, and



Jesse Shaw

COURTESY OF UMSL ATHLETICS

national championships. I also want to make sure every one of our seniors is set up to be successful in their next step in life," Shaw said.

In what would be Shaw's final season as head coach at Pratt Community College, the team placed second in a 14-team Jayhawk conference, won a total of 22 games, and finished with the best record in the East Division of the conference. As he says his goodbyes to Pratt, Shaw said he will miss the players, staff, faculty, and people in the community the most.

Still in what he describes as the honeymoon stage, Shaw, his wife Hannah Bell, and daughters, Harmony and Avery, are finding St. Louis great so far. "Our heads are spinning right now! My wife and daughters are excited, and our families are too. Pratt was great, but for some reason I think our families are more excited to visit us in St Louis!"

Shaw said.

The UMSL men's basketball team's first game of the season will be in November. They will start the season with an away exhibition game against SIU Carbondale. Shaw is confident that not only the team can win the opener but also outplay the other teams in the division.

"My initial evaluation of our team is that we have enough talent and depth to win championships. We will obviously have to stay healthy and get lucky. We will also have to be an extremely close group, one that is willing to outwork the other teams in our conference, and completely buy in to coach Sundvold's system and roles," Shaw said.

To read more about Coach Shaw, visit umsltritons.com/news/2016/9/13/shaw-joins-mens-basketball-coaching-staff.aspx?path=mbball.

Triton Sports Recap Sept. 25-30

BRIAN SHERRILL
STAFF WRITER

The women's golf team placed fourth out of 19 teams with a team score of 615, at the Gilda's Club Laker Fall Invite hosted by Grand Valley State on September 25 through 26. Emma Thorngren, freshman, business, posted fourth individually with a 147 and the University of Missouri-St. Louis team all placed under 50 among 95 golfers. Thorngren has finished in the top five in both tournaments this year for UMSL.

Women's soccer shutout William Jewell on September 25 and beat Missouri S&T, 2-1, on September 30. Against William Jewell, Miriam Taylor, senior, accounting, netted her third goal of the season with a through ball from Rose Crabtree, freshman, history education. Emily Mosier, junior, social work, scored the insurance goal with a loose ball in the box contributing to the team's 2-0 win. The team offensively dominated the game with a 27-9 advantage in shots. McKayla Harder, sophomore, psychology, and Kirsten Crabtree, senior, psychology, took 11 of those shots. McKenzie DeRouen, sophomore, education, had three saves; Emily Rish, freshman, music education, had one save.

Against Missouri S&T, Sarah Lyon, freshman, education, scored on a penalty kick. Then she assisted Taylor Tosovsky, senior, biology, with her first goal of the season. The team placed 10 out of 15 shots on goal.

The men's soccer team tagged their seventh straight win when they defeated William Jewell September 25 with a final score of 2-1 but lost to Missouri S&T, 1-3 on September 30. UMSL is now 6-2-1 overall and tied for first place with Rockhurst in the GLVC standings. DJ Bednar, senior, electrical engineering, and Kenan Selimovic, sophomore, undecided scored with assists from Pim Boonstra, senior, accounting; Nick Werner, junior, business; and Bronson Melvin, senior, business administration.

On September 27 the men's golf team claimed the title at the Midwest Regional at Harborside International with a 614 and Julien de Poyen, senior, international business, won second individually. This was the team's second team win of the year.

Men's tennis opened home slate with a 6-3 win over Lindenwood-Belleville September 28. The team won four of six singles matches and two of the three doubles.

Women's tennis skunked Lindenwood-Belleville 8-0. UMSL only allowed Lindenwood-Belleville to win 8 sets out of all 9 matches. The Tritons will return to their home court October 8 to host their UMSL Tournament.

Continued at thecurrent-online.com

Weekly Sports Calendar

Monday, October 3

MGOLF vs DII National Preview
All Day
Away

Tuesday, October 4

MGOLF vs DII National Preview
All Day
Away
WVB vs. Maryville
7 p.m.
Away

WVB at Maryville
7:00 P.M.
Away

Friday, October 7

MSWIM
Show-Me Showdown
2 p.m.
Away

WTEN
UMSL Tournament
All Day
Home

WSOC vs Lewis
5 p.m.
Home

WVB vs Quincy
7 p.m.
Home

MSOC vs Lewis
7:30 p.m.
Home

Saturday, October 8

WTEN
UMSL Tournament
All Day
Home

WVB vs Truman State
3 p.m.
Home

Sunday 9/18

WGOLF
Findlay Tournament
All Day
Away

WSOC vs Wisconsin-Parkside
12 p.m.
Home

MSOC vs Wisconsin-Parkside
2:30 p.m.
Home



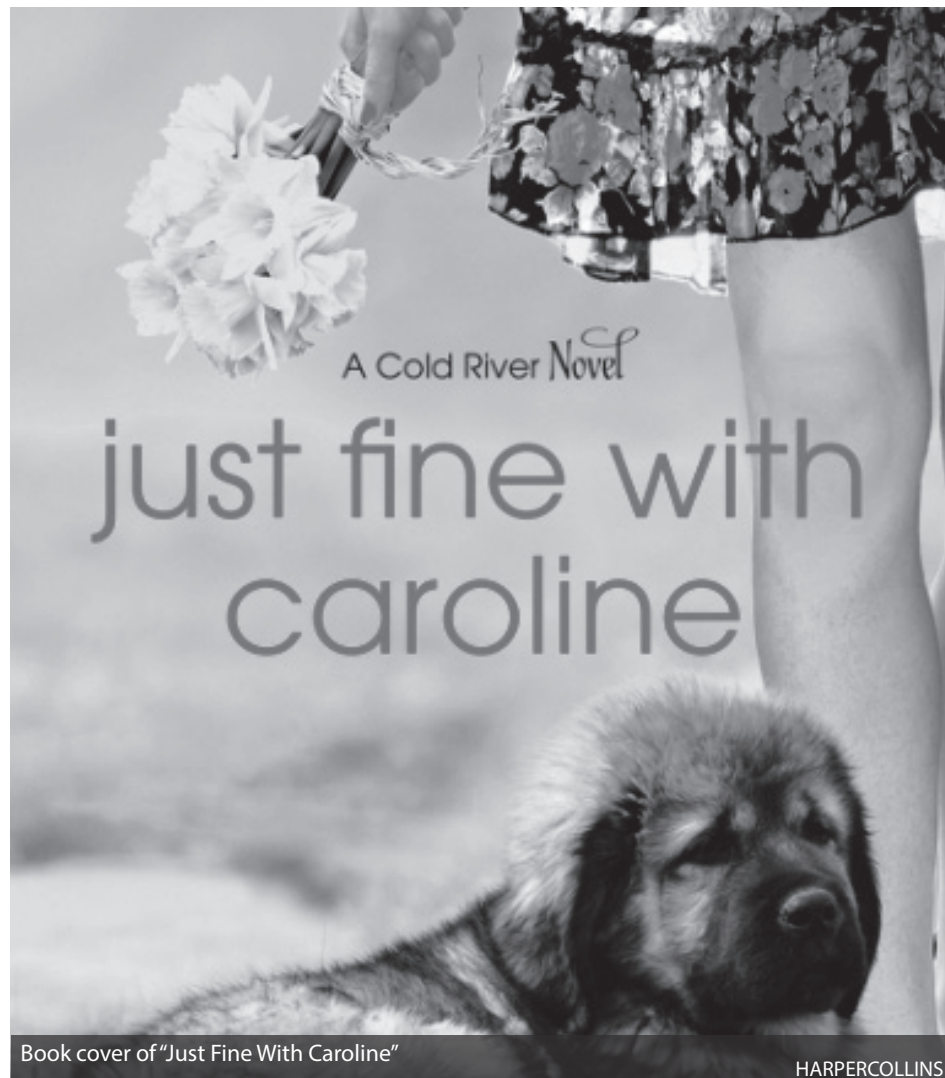
Family Secrets, Romance Butt Heads in Fine 'Caroline'

SARAH HAYES
A&E EDITOR

Caroline O'Connor is fine. Sure, she had to move back to her hometown of Cold River, Missouri, deep in the Ozarks, where she now runs her parents' run-down bait shop. Sure, she now watches after her mother who has Alzheimer's and sometimes thinks Caroline is her caregiver, not her daughter. And sure, she still does not have a boyfriend and people think she is going to marry her childhood friend Court, who does not even like women. No, Caroline is doing just fine. So when Noah Cranwell rolls into town, fresh from a stint in New Jersey and ready to revive the family store, bearing the last name of a local clan which has been ripe with drama and gossip since the 20s, it does not take much for Caroline's fine life to be turned upside-down.

"Just Fine With Caroline" is the second novel by local author Annie England Noblin, an alumna of Missouri State University who lives in the Ozarks. The book is "Cold Mountain" wrapped in cotton candy: sweet and light on substance in parts, but still emotionally satisfying at its core. It does not aspire to be the next big thing in Ozark-centric fiction, which is good, because it does not have the reach for it, but it turns an oft-maligned corner of Missouri into a welcoming, heartfelt setting.

Caroline is an interesting character. She fights for agency and independence while her one defining roman-



Book cover of "Just Fine With Caroline"

HARPERCOLLINS

tic relationship in the entire novel, her on-and-off courtship with Noah Cranwell, seems to take that away. For some reason, the steamier parts of their courting—and it does get a bit explicit at points, more of a hard PG-13 than a soft R, although when they actually do the do, Noblin cuts to the pillow talk—involves Caroline as an active partici-

pant but her feelings are not described. In the romance genre, half of the appeal is seeing how the characters feel in the heat of the moment and yet Caroline keeps her feelings locked inside of her, even while telling the story.

Then again, perhaps I am not giving Noblin enough credit in portraying a protagonist who has dealt with

romantic and familial drama with the same steely, closed-off resolve, so much so that when she finally explodes and confronts those around her, from the notorious Cranwells to her own best friend Ava Dawn, it is not so much a surprise as a revelation in-the-making. That is one of the main draws of "Caroline": how the book deals with personal trauma that has run deep for generations and manifested in the lives of its descendants, who must grapple with what their parents and grandparents have done. For Noah, it is his family's bootlegging past and his elders' past indiscretions. For Caroline, it is a personal secret that her mother slowly reveals on accident, when the effects of her illness prevent her from keeping quiet.

Noblin is a fine author of the cozy warm story. She populates her fictional town of Cold River with dynamic characters, ranging across the board in terms of class, gender, age, and sexual orientation. She even throws in an adorable, three-legged, deaf Tibetan mastiff puppy named Yara, who likes newcomer Noah better than she likes Caroline, her actual owner. There is moonshine and race cars and sketchy revival scenes, but it never goes too far over to become cliché. In a year of weighty, heady reads, Noblin's newest is a refreshingly light but not brainless novel for the inner romantic boonie in all of us.

The Current was provided a free, uncorrected proof copy of "Just Fine With Caroline" for review purposes by HarperCollins Publishers.

Pietrzyk Says To Keep Writing

Continued from page 4

gram at Converse College and at a MA program at Johns Hopkins University. "The thing I love about teaching is that it's exciting when I can see people get better in their work. I love when I can help somebody find a story that maybe they were afraid or nervous to tell, but I know it's the story they were born to tell. I love when students ask questions and ask hard questions that make me think," Pietrzyk said.

The reading was held at 7 p.m. in the Social Sciences & Business Building. Students from Troy's "Chekhov and His American Heirs" course attended the reading, along with other students and faculty. Pietrzyk read "A Quiz" before taking questions from the audience and giving advice on publishing. She said that as a student, she did not feel like she was the best in her program, but she had learned that students need four things to succeed: talent, luck, perseverance, and hard work. She pointed out that students have control over two of those things.

Chelsea Dryer, graduate, English, said, "I felt like Leslie was really knowledgeable about her craft. Usually I get really bored when people read their

stories aloud... But I was really enraptured listening to her read and there were lots of parts where I chuckled. I smirked. I shook my head in recognition of universal truth and experience."

Marie Kenney, graduate, creative writing, agreed and said, "I liked listening to someone who is excited about what they wrote... and [can] inform other writers about how they can do the same sort of thing."

"Learn to be stubborn and persevere," Pietrzyk said. "If what you really need to do is write, you have to find a way to just keep going in spite of all of that... Support writers. Read books. Buy books from writers you care about. Support independent bookstores and literary journals. And if you are interested in being part of a writing community, do the work to help create that for yourself. Start a writing group. Start a journal. Start a small press. It's really not that hard to do those things."

An audio file of Pietrzyk's reading will soon be available on the Natural Bridge's website at blogs.umsl.edu/naturalbridge.

To find out more about Leslie Pietrzyk, visit lesliepietrzyk.com.

What's Current Wednesdays
Who Controls What You Can Know?
Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2016 at 2:00 PM
MSC Century Room C For Cookies and Conversation*

Join The Current and discussion leader Kathleen Butterly Nigro, Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Sociology, Gerontology, and Gender and Director of the Gender Studies Program, for a lively, student-centered discussion. In this session we will discuss who is served and who gains power through censorship. As Voltaire writes, "To learn who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize." Although the First Amendment guarantees that the government will not restrict an individual's right to free speech, censorship is alive and well in America. However, censorship is global, and we will discuss the broad, universal reach of censorship. The article we will discuss focuses on the restrictions of publications on moral grounds through an attempt to prevent a particular genre as a corrupting influence.

The New York Times feature that will serve as the jumping off point for the conversation is "Romance Novellas by Women in Nigeria Challenge Tradition" which can be found at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/08/17/world/africa/ap-af-nigeria-subversive-love-stories.html>

"What's Current Wednesdays" is a monthly forum for faculty and student discussions about current events, co-sponsored by The Current and the New York Times, with support from Community Outreach & Engagement at UMSL.

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For more information, visit The Current website at www.thecurrent-online.com.
* Cookies/dessert and beverages provided to the first 25 students.

Clinton and Trump Square Off In First Debate

LIZ WILEY
STAFF WRITER

On September 26 at 8 p.m. CST, like many people in America, I tuned in to watch the first Presidential debate for the 2016 election on my local news channel. The following are some highlights from the debate and my response to the answers from the candidates.

The candidates walked on stage after riveting camera footage of the audience chattering for a full 15 minutes. They each began by giving a comprehensive list of why Americans should elect them president in the upcoming election.

The Democratic nominee, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, gave a nice speech about “investing in Americans” and detailed her plans on how to change America’s future into a bright one. She included taxing the wealthy, providing paid leave for employees, building up America’s small businesses, expanding renewable energy efforts, and creating manufacturing jobs as a way to boost the economy in her speech. Then, like the clang of a hammer on an anvil, came Donald Trump.

Trump did not waste any time with subtleties, but then again, what did we expect? He began his persuasive monologue by blaming China and Mexico for stealing American jobs. His comprehensive plan for changing America can be summarized as starting to tax companies that outsource to other countries and deporting of illegal immigrants that are “stealing” American jobs.

One of the highlights of the debate was Trump’s criticism of Clinton’s participation in the NAFTA trade agreement. Clinton responded to this criticism by stating that the agreement was successful in some ways, but not necessarily in the ways in which it was intended to be. Clinton followed up by citing her 26 years of experience in politics, which she claimed has enabled her to know what best fits American needs.

Trump interrupted Clinton (several times, actually), shouting, “You have no plan!” Clinton responded to this accusation by suggesting that Trump pick up a copy of her bestselling book which illustrates her plan for America. She also detailed her plan for America in the first part of the debate, but who was really listening to that anyway?

Another staple of the debate was Trump’s charge that Clinton will “over-regulate” businesses and “increase red tape” that will harm the economy. Clinton denied that this was part of her plan and claimed the opposite. She also stated that “the wealthy need to pay their dues.” Trump voiced his disapproval of this plan, which raises the question of whether or not there is a conflict of interest there, since Trump himself is extremely wealthy.

The moderator, Lester Holt, asked Trump specifically why he had not released his tax returns like every pres-



idential candidates (except for Gerald Ford) have done for the past 40 years. Trump immediately became defensive and deflected the question by making an ultimatum, “I’ll release my tax returns when former Secretary Clinton releases her emails.” Clinton admitted that using a private email was a mistake, and that she would change that choice if she could.

Holt asked Trump about his tax returns once more. Trump then claimed he couldn’t release his forms because he was under a “routine audit” and promised to release them after the audit was finished. Holt and Clinton both clarified that it is possible to publicly release tax returns while under audit.

To this, Clinton suggested that Trump might have a reason to hide his tax returns. She listed several possible reasons why he might do so, and then stated that Americans “had the right to know” the financial status of their future leader. Trump limply responded

by complaining that “other people” he knows “do not get audited” and vaguely suggested harassment by the IRS. He also alluded to not paying federal income taxes, which he views as a “smart” move.

When the debate eventually moved onto the topic of racial divide in America, Clinton admitted there was a problem. She said that the answer was to foster trust between communities and law enforcement, to provide police with better training, and to stop a “plague of gun violence” by implementing stricter gun safety laws. She also gave her support for community policing.

Trump also admitted that there was a racial divide, but endorsed “stop and frisk” as a method for fixing these issues. Holt immediately clarified that “stop and frisk” was deemed unconstitutional, which Trump denied.

These were only some of the major high points of the debate, but themes could be drawn from each of the candi-

dates’ answers. Clinton used words like “investing,” “plan,” “we,” and “I” frequently. Trump used words like “they,” “enemy,” “important,” and “endorsed” throughout his arguments.

Some common reactions to the debate from the general public have been that Clinton was not as aggressive as she should have been, that Lester Holt did not mediate as well as he should have, and that Trump “bullied” his way through the topics of debate. A CNN poll found that 62 percent of the public thought that Clinton had won the debate, leaving only 27 percent siding with Trump, and 11 percent unsure.

Regardless of your political preferences, please watch a rerun of the debate and draw your own conclusions. There are a couple more presidential debates scheduled, so make sure to tune in for those. Most importantly, please go out to vote on November 8 for the next president of the United States.

It Is On Us To Combat Ageism In College

SARAH HAYES
A&E EDITOR

Here are the things that people will say if you are an incoming college student, returning or otherwise, over the age of 50. You need help. You need lots of help. You do not know how to surf the internet or send an email. You might not even know how to use a computer. You are probably auditing the class and will drop in two weeks anyway, so why bother talking to you? You are doing this because you have nothing better to do. You are intrinsically less smart than your classmates. You are out of touch. You will waste the university’s time pursuing a degree; you are so old, why are you even here? Are you someone’s parent? You must be the instructor because you’re the oldest person in the room. Your input is invalid. Remember how clueless you

are at anything more advanced than a rotary phone. Consider online courses. Consider not talking so much in class. Consider dropping. Have you thought about taking up golf? You look tired.

If you are a college student over the age of 50—hell, over the age of 30 in some cases—you may be facing this kind of age-based discrimination on a regular basis. You have been deemed less worthy of a college education simply because you are older than most students. You are not being judged by your academic standing or character, but by a number out of your control. Ageism is very real on college campuses and should be addressed, but it does not feel like there is enough emotional and psychological support for adult learners as there is technological and academic support, and both kinds of support are crucial during the college experience.

This ageist phenomenon seems to

be more heavily present at four-year colleges than two-year colleges. The average age of the community-college student tends to be older—someone who has a full-time job and/or a family and responsibilities aside from classes. However, four-year college student bodies tend to bend towards the younger side: 18-to-22-year-olds, many fresh from high school, who live at home or on campus and do not have a spouse or child.

The responsibility actually falls upon the traditional student to make the college experience welcoming for adult learners. We are the ones older students interact with on a regular, daily basis, more than the professor. Our attitude and behavior sets the mood; let’s make sure that mood is an inviting one.

When you meet an adult student in one of your classes, make time to

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Completion of Great Streets Project Marked With Fountain

Continued from page 1

project for ten years, and I think it turned out more beautifully than I ever anticipated. I think the fountain, which is a relocation of a famous historic St. Louis fountain, turned out beautifully and I couldn't be happier," said Betty Van Uum, Assistant Chancellor for Public Affairs and the Chair of University Square Community Development Corporation.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis Brass Ensemble, directed by Gary Brandes, Teaching Professor of Music, Director of Bands at UMSL, and Chair of the Department of Music, opened the dedication ceremony. The UMSL Brass Ensemble was followed by Van Uum's introductory speech. The Mayor of Normandy, Patrick Green, who also spoke, thanked everyone who attended the ceremony and said that the Great Streets Project is dedicated to the community.

"On behalf of the University Square Committee, I would like to thank the city of Normandy, Missouri Department of Transportation, University of Missouri-St. Louis, Great Rivers Greenway, St. Louis County, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, and North County Inc. for their efforts and their continuous support to improve our city for our community," said Van Uum as she invited all parties involved to come forward.

The project began when Van Uum saw that East-West Gateway had a Great Streets competition in 2006. Out of the 36 applications for street projects, University Square was in the top four. The group held many town hall meetings and updates to keep the community aware of the project and to figure out the cost. University Square was the biggest and most expensive of the projects in the top four. The project took about



The newly completed University Square fountain.

MICHAEL PLUMB/THE CURRENT

10 years to complete.

In 2012, Van Uum was able to convince four of the six commissioners of the project that the street beautification project was a good idea. East-West Gateway was just the first of many partners that needed to be brought on board for the project. These would grow to include the Missouri Department of Transportation, the City of Normandy, Great Rivers Greenway, St. Louis County, and North County Inc.

Van Uum described what she was looking forward to about the newly finished project. Along the road, there are trees that will bloom in the spring. The trees are planted in such a way that the shades are ordered from white to red as one moves closer to the fountain. While the trees were just planted in summer, Van Uum estimates in about two years, those trees will be big and full of color

for passersby to admire. Soon after Van Uum's speech, the second Vice Chair of East-West Gateway Council of Governments and St. Louis County executive, Steve Stenger, who is also an UMSL alumnus, was introduced by UMSL Chancellor Tom George.

"I graduated from UMSL in 1993... That was a long time ago and I've seen the city's progress throughout the years... The goal of the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative is not only to move more vehicles faster, but this is also to center our communities around attractive and lively historic streets that serve all means of transportation," said Stenger.

In lieu of ribbon cutting, Stenger invited everyone to gather around the fountain with super soakers and gush water onto the fountain. The event went on with music at the Fountain

Plaza. At 8 p.m., the fountain light show began. Then, for the finale, a torch was lit and carried from Glen Echo Country Club, the site of the 1904 Olympic golf championship, all the way to the plaza, where it was used to light the fountain. The torch light went off twice in an attempt to light the fountain. After their third try, the fountain was successfully lit, to the amusement of attendees." I have been living in Normandy for 10 years and I am delighted to see that everyone gathered to celebrate our community. The improvements that they made definitely will give people who live outside our county a different, but a positive outlook," said Kevin Woods, a Normandy resident.

University Square invites everyone to visit their Facebook page at [facebook.com/University-Square-CDC-176146736144744/](https://www.facebook.com/University-Square-CDC-176146736144744/).



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