1-22-2018

Current, January 22, 2018

University of Missouri-St. Louis

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The Federal Government Shutdown on Friday

The federal government shutdown at midnight Friday night after the Senate blocked a short-term spending bill. The final vote in the Senate was 50-49, short of the 60 votes needed to advance a continuing resolution to fund the government and avoid a shutdown. Government agencies are now in the process of shutting down.

The last government shutdown occurred in 2013. Thousands of federal employees will be placed on furlough—meaning they will not report to work, won’t be paid, but must be on standby to return to work and agree not to take other employment. Employees of agencies and departments that are considered nonessential, including agencies that pay out small business loans and processing passport requests, will cease operation.

Government shutdowns occurred in 2013. Thousands of federal employees were paid retroactively after a budget was agreed upon. One will also be different in that some national parks and museums will be closed on Monday but might reopen for the weekend. Congress and the President still get paid when the government is shut down. The military is considered essential and will still be active, but after February 1, they might not be paid. According to CNN, Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation team will continue to operate.

The Federal Government Shutdown officially happened Friday night because Congress did not approve an operating budget. The last government shutdown was in 2013.

For funding the federal budget, In previous shutdowns, furloughed employees were paid retroactively after a budget was agreed upon. This one will also be different in that some national parks and monuments will be open. However, services that require staffing and maintenance such as campgrounds, full service restrooms, and concessions may not be open. The Smithsonian’s National Zoo turned off its popular panda camera and zoos and museums will be closed on Monday but might reopen for the weekend.

For Congress and the President still get paid when the government is shut down. The military is considered essential and will still be active, but after February 1, they might not be paid. According to CNN, Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation team will continue to operate.

The mail will still be delivered, social security checks will still be cashed, and taxes are still due even though a large portion of IRS employees are furloughed. The shutdown will also affect the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives (i.e. gun permits).

Congress reconvened on Saturday. The House reconvened at 9 a.m. House Republicans said that until the government is reopened, they would stop negotiations with the Democrats over DACA. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer blamed the President in a speech on the Senate floor Sunday, saying that Democrats had agreed to fund part of the President’s promised border wall with Mexico if DACA young people would be allowed to remain in the United States. The House left pointing fingers blaming the lack of a resolution on the other party.

Veterans Center Welcomes Perschbacher as New Manager

McMenamin left the position October 31 and Perschbacher’s first day was January 8. Jim Craig, department chair of military and veterans studies, said, “I am very excited to welcome Perschbacher to UMSL and to the Veteran Center. A GI-Bill veteran himself, Josh knows the struggles of our student veterans personally and

Pershchbacher has previously been at the intersection of academia and veteran affairs. He was a

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The University of Missouri-St. Louis has hired Andrew Kersten to be the new Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Interim Dean Teresa Thiel will continue serving until August 1 when Kersten will take over.

Kersten helped reverse enrollment declines and increase student retention in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences when he moved there in 2014. The college saw a 46 percent increase in incoming resident first-year students, and the rate of retention of first-year students rose to 99 percent from the 2016-17 to 2017-18 academic years.

Kersten led an initiative to launch Idaho’s first online degree programs. This program has proved to be successful at raising external funds and establishing corporate partnerships and has cultivated interdisciplinary relationships within the college.

Kersten’s academic interest is in history. Kersten earned his bachelor’s in history at the University of

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Pershchbacher in front of the student veteran mural outside Clark Hall 211.

What’s Inside:

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Currently Involved Column

This week in the Office of Student Involvement at the University of Missouri-St. Louis:

Welcome back to campus for the Spring 2018 semester. Check this column each week to see what’s happening in the Office of Student Involvement.

– Student Organization Leaders – if you are in need of a refresher of the basics of managing your organization or if you are a newly installed organization leader, you are invited to the Office of Student Involvement’s Spring SOLE (Student Organization Leadership Education). This condensed training session will cover the functions of Triton-Synce (managing your organization portal, submitting a form, etc.), basic financial policies and procedures for student organizations, and a review of how to reserve space and order So-dexo catering on campus. This mini-training will take place on January 23, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Millennium Student Center Century Room C.

– University Program Board (UPB) will be holding a Mix and Mingle for those who want to know more about how to get involved with us. Come meet the team that makes fun campus event happen, like weekly Friday Night Flicks and Late Night Bingo. Eat, drink, and look forward to the spring semester. UPB Mix & Mingle will take place on January 24 from 4 to 5 p.m. in the Office of Student Involvement, MSC 366.

– Commuter students – you are invited to take a break with UPB. Each month, UPB will host a Commuter Break event where you can pick up a free snack to refresh yourself before returning to class for the day. The January Commuter Break will be on January 23 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the MSC Fireside Lounge. We hope to see you there!
The Office of Student Involvement can be contacted at 314-516-5291 or studentinvolvement@umsl.edu.

Emanate (verb): to flow out or come forth.
Sentence: Enthusiasm emanated from the campus this week as students returned to UMSL. Welcome back and happy 2018!
New Scholarships for High School Students

Kay Riddler Managing Editor

I f you have a relative or friend who is a senior in high school thinking about higher education, there is a new scholarship available that might help them offset the cost of tuition.

An anonymous donor has made it possible for 100 St. Louis area high school seniors to pay for tuition costs at every community college and public university in Missouri. This would include the University of Missouri-St. Louis and all public universities in Missouri.

Recipients can opt for any non-profit institution in Missouri like St. Louis University, Lindenwood University, and Fontbonne University. Several colleges in the Metro East are also on the list of schools available for the grant as well.

Students who qualify for this grant are almost exclusively com-

han hopes to use more community oriented police practices to help the communities and help cut down on future crime.

Hayden has a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Washington University where he played football as a wide receiver. In 2012, he graduated from law school and is in management from Fontbonne University. Hayden is 55 years old and a lifelong resident of St. Louis. His wife Debra, a therapist, and three daughters, Ashley, Kathryn, and Kaylynn, have been married for 28 years and have three daughters, Ashley, Kathryn, and Kaylynn.

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Joshua Perschbacher as New Manager

Kersten is currently the Dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Idaho.

**UMSL Veterans Center Welcomes Joshua Perschbacher as New Manager**

Kersten is currently the Dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Idaho.

**Campus Crime Report**

January 10, 2018: UMSL PD discovered a broken water pipe flooding a storage area under the Arts and Administration Building at 2:15 a.m. At 10 a.m., an UMSL staff member reported a lost wallet at the MSC. At 4:23 p.m., an Express Scripts employee reported a handgun stolen from their parked vehicle in the Express Scripts Parking Lot 6:42 p.m., an UMSL student reported two refrigerators on a rear porch had been unplugged at 8:02 p.m. There was a car accident at the J.C. Penney loading dock as a university-owned vehicle struck a fixed object. There were no injuries and minor damage.

January 11, 2018: At 7:10 p.m., an UMSL student refused medical attention after a fall on a basketball court at the Recreation and Wellness Center. At 11:18 p.m., a metrolink passenger was transported to the hospital via ambulance after suffering abdominal pain.

January 12, 2018: UMSL PD checked 8142 Natural Bridge at 12:20 a.m. after wind set off a security alarm on an insecure door. At 10:30 a.m., a fourth tablet was turned in to UMSL PD and the owner was located and the item returned.

January 13, 2018: No incidents to report.

January 14, 2018: An UMSL student reported a person sleeping in a chair at the Bevo Residential Center at 9:36 a.m. The person was not affiliated with the campus and was removed.

January 15, 2018: An UMSL student refused medical attention after experiencing an elevator failure resulting in a severe foot drop at 9:45 p.m. in Express Scripts Hall.

January 17, 2018: A delayed report by an UMSL student stating concern about another student’s conversation on January 16 around 2 p.m. in the MSC. At 10:08 a.m., a minor auto accident occurred between two cars on West Drive. At 3:30 p.m., a found wallet was turned in to UMSL Police and was later recovered by the owner. At 8:16 p.m., an UMSL student was treated and released by paramedics after concern about over-the-counter medication taken.

January 18, 2018: UMSL PD assisted St. Louis County PD with an arrest at 1:00 a.m. at the Arts and Administration Building. At 1:50 p.m., a found wallet was turned in to UMSL PD and later retrieved by the owner. An UMSL student reported a set of lost keys at 2:30 p.m. in Clark Hall.

**New College of Arts and Sciences Dean Kersten to Start August 1**

The Last Jedi is a Step in the Right Direction

CHRIS ZUVER
A&E EDITOR

WARNING: THERE WILL BE SPOILERS

Being someone who goes to the cinema about as often as I mow my lawn in January, I can say I was anxious to see “The Last Jedi” as I rode with my friends on a cold night to the late show.

Anyone engaged with the online zeitgeist has seen their fair share of reviews and takes on the movie. The feedback ranges from those who are seemingly rational, to others who must be living in a galaxy far, far away. I'm one of the latter, and the potential old-school fans from the days of the first trilogy, often quick to point out problems with the new films, especially since they're probably bitter from the prequels. In another you have those who have obsessed over discussing the idea of identity politics at play in the casting and plot, whilst arguing amongst each other if the characters we were nuance people talking about it too.

But I'm not sure.

Despite the public opinion I had been exposed to, I walked into the theater with the clearest mind I could manage. At the very most, I harbored hope that this might just be the same as 2015's The Force Awakens. At the least, I reminded myself that it was the Phantom Menace's last outing.

Well, I can say now that my hopes were met and then some.

As for the plot, the film is more complicated than its predecessor. It is still a sad emo boy. But regardless, there are plotlines that parallel the inevitable pitfalls that many feel the first trilogy, often quick to point out any characters who are lacking in personality. Rey asks Luke to help the Rebel Alliance once again.

Of course, the primary focus is on Rey. During her training, she discovers she has a psychic connection with antagonist Kylo Ren, who used to be a Jedi. She is to become a Jedi. She is to become a Jedi. She is to become a Jedi.

But oh, right... you are probably wondering what happens to the Resistance. Well, Rey lands her ship near the back door of her base. She helps the survivors escape during the showdown between Luke and Ren. Once aboard the Falcon, Leia then reassures the remaining members that they have what it takes to rise again. We are shown a couple more scenes givins signs of hope, and then it cuts to credits.

There are enough strong points in the movie to take away from the inevitable pitfalls that many feel the previous installment set it up for only two years ago. Yes, some of the characters are lacking in personality. Yes, there are plotlines that parallel the original trilogy. And yes, Ren is a different character. I can count over those flaws with reasons that I thought made the film stronger than what detracted from it.

Now, bearing in mind that I still feel that some characters lack in personality (most notably Rey and Finn), it doesn’t take away from the movie at all for me. I still felt that the characters had motivation: Rey is a vagabond, searching for her purpose. Finn is a defector of the First Order, who realized how evil his former employer really was and is now trying to fight for what he thinks is just under the Resistance.

Ren, meanwhile, is torn between two feelings. He shows his doubts of committing himself to the dark side when he hesitates to kill Leia in the opening raid scene, and when he reaches out to Rey throughout the second half of the film. Yet, it’s still unclear whether he killed Snoke for Rey’s sake or his own. Let’s also not forget his attack against the Resistance on Crait as well.

As for the complaints of plot parallels to the original trilogy, all I can say is that I can’t really see what people are disgruntled about. There are only so many plots that can be made that work with a large scale of moviegoers. According to Christopher Booker, author of “The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories,” there are, in the end, only seven plots when you analyze every story ever told. Put yourself in the role of the film's writer/director Rian Johnson for a minute. You’re taking on a huge project. Perhaps the project of your life. You still have a story that you want to tell, which has dominated the hearts of fans for generations. Sure, you could experiment with something far off the beaten path and hope for a victory, and you may even succeed, but chances are, you’re going to play it safe and incorporate familiar elements and tropes to please the fans.

But that doesn’t mean that you can’t try some new things. Sure, the scene in Snoke’s chamber is obviously akin to Luke’s meeting with Darth Sidious in “Return of the Jedi”, but in “The Last Jedi”, we’re seeing a mesh of young and old. While it took Darth Vader most of his life to change his ways, we could see a different development for Kylo Ren in the future.

Let’s forget about some great new characters, such as Poe Dameron, ace pilot. Poe’s trump card is that he doesn’t have to be as witty and clever as he’s already a great pilot, however, he conveniently happens to be as clever as well. During his attack on the First Order’s space fleet to confront him, Poe contacts General Hux, refers to him as “General Hug”, and even puts him on hold.

Aside from the approach to filmmaking, I am glad to see that the soundtrack. John Williams is noth-
UFC Fight Night Lives Up to Promises

Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) Fight Night St. Louis took place January 14 at the Scottrade Center. It was the debut of the UFC in St. Louis. The UFC main card was packed with fan favorites, diversity, legends, and hometown guys. Fight Night St. Louis promised a lot to St. Louis fans and it delivered on every account.

The main card consisted of: Darren Elkins vs Michael Johnson; Kamaru Usman vs Emil Meek; Paige VanZant vs Jessica-Rose Clark; Jeremy Stephens vs Dooho Choi. We were supposed to get a retirement fight from Vitor Belfort but Uriah Hall did not make weight for the fight. Vitor also did not want to fight his last-minute replacement fighter.

The UFC held a great work-out day the day before fight night. It was open to the public and any MMA fan would have loved to have been there. Fans got firsthand looks at light training from fighters and then an autograph/selfie session. Tyron “The Chosen One” Woodley made appearances around town as the reigning Welterweight Champion and the Ambassador to UFC in St. Louis. “It’s great that this is happening; I’ve wanted the UFC to come to St. Louis for a long time,” said Woodley. “St. Louis is a fight city and a great town.”

Fight Night packed a sold-out crowd of 10,052 into Scottrade and it had all the elements of a pay-per-view. Bruce Buffer announced the fighters with his, “It’s Time!” Fans roared for their favorites and in return the punches and kicks were just as audible. The ring girls were in attendance and well represented.

Did you know UMSL has a United States Post Office on campus? Services such as express mail, priority mail, domestic and international mail, insured mail, certified / registered mail with return receipt to include delivery and/or signature confirmation. Stamps will also be available for purchase. Our hours of operation will be Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and daily mail pick up at 3:30 p.m. We accept cash, debit or credit cards.

Please call 314-516-5299 if have any questions or comments.

Roderick M. Wilbon
Sports Editor

The University of Missouri St. Louis Lady Triton’s basketball team held their annual Black Out Basketball Game January 18 versus Maryville. The men also had a great game slated against Maryville too. Students that arrive early to the game were treated to a game shirt, food and first dibs in the spirit competition. Maryville is slated as the hated two hours away rival that comes to town.

Maryville is 4-9 in the wins and losses column overall, while UMSL is 6-5 overall. This is the first matchup between the two teams in the Great Valley Lakes Conference. They say championships are won by defense. Games are won by defense and that’s what the lady Tritons continue to show. The defensive pressure they put on teams is exhausting and smothering.

The first quarter ended with a 14-28 lead by the Tritons. It showed how the game would progress for the rest of the evening. This game was over before many knew it, the defense of UMSL stood out again. It was like a very heavy heated con-

Arielle Jackson goes in for the floater. Jordan Fletcher, senior, marketing with minor in communications, recorded her 1,000th career point during the game and eclipsed it too. She finished the game with 19 points, eight rebounds, two assists and two blocks. All smiles for the big win and her accomplishment from Fletcher. Her milestone was announced mid game and after the game was rewarded with a commemorative game ball.

Jordan Fletcher with 1000 point commemorative game ball.

Lady Tritons will face Rockhurst for the next home game January 25 at 5:30 p.m.
Jeff Sessions is an Absolute Moron

CHRIS ZUVER
A AND E EDITOR

“My argument is: let’s give this guy a chance. Don’t beat the hell out of him now. Wait till he’s been in a year, then if he doesn’t do good, then we can start bang- ing him.”
—President Bill Clinton, July 1993

I was pretty calm with President Trump’s cabinet for the first year. Sure, I had my spats with Bannon and Pompeo in 2017, but I would consider that a rather light touch. Yet, as we enter a new year, I’ve decided that I’m no longer staying silent about one of the Execu- tive’s picks which has bugged me for a long time now: Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The man is singlehandedly continuing the war on drugs which has proven itself to be an absolute failure. Yet, what I find truly infuriating is his vendetta against low-level drug criminals.

And his vendetta has slowly been building up over the years. First, while he was an Alabama Senator, during a Senate drug hearing in April, 2016, Sessions stated “we need grown-ups in charge” in Washington to say marijuana is not the kind of thing that ought to be legalized, it ought not to be mini-imized, that it’s in fact a very real danger.”

This statement was in regards to his concern over high statistics of drivers testing positive in cer- tain states for THC, the active com- pound in those under the influence of marijuana. Sessions added that lawmakers and government leaders ought to “send that message with clar- ity that good people don’t smoke marijuana.”

Last May, in a memo to staff, the now-Attorney General ordered federal prosecutors to “charge and pursue the most serious, readily provable offense” against low-level drug crimes.

Then, three weeks ago, on Janu- ary 4, another bombshell dropped: AG Sessions rescinded a trio of memos from the Obama adminis- tration. These memos had adopted a hands-off approach in support of states which had legalized marijuana, as opposed to being regulated on the federal level. Effectively, this move opens federal prosecutors to St. Louis to decide individually how to enforce laws against cracking down on pos- session, distribution, and cultivation in states where it’s al- ready legal.

As long as certain drugs are ille- gal, I don’t think being hawkish on high-tier offenders is a bad thing, but when it includes the seeking of low-level crimes, including possession that includes those holding marijuana, then it’s just silly. Let us not forget that marijuana is still con- sidered a Schedule I Drug according to DEA.

Here’s what is ironic to me, though. During Sessions’ time in Congress, he was considered one of the most conservative members of the Senate. Yet, Sessions affective- ly agrees with the continuation of the DEA, which gives incentive to increase the size of government, something that conservatives are usually opposed to.

So, if you consider yourself conser- vative or libertarian, wouldn’t you disaim Sessions’ actions, es- pecially when he outright ordered the federal government to infringe on the rights of individual states who are simply practicing their freedoms?

This is nothing more than a continu- ation of the war on drugs. Since it’s beginnings in 1971, this “war” has not stopped the influx of drugs into the country and has caused the number of incarcerated Americans to skyrocket, many whom were locked up under enforced mandato- ry minimum sentences for holding a small amount of an illegal substance.

If one looks back to the prohibi- tion of alcohol from 1920-1933, one can learn two things:

First, that outlawing a substance does not stop it. The barre- ket for fibrations grew staggeringly during this era. This black market became dominated by smugglers and high-level criminals which subse- quently increased the rate of crimi- nal activity and arrests.

Secondly, once the 21st Amend- ment was repealed, ending prohibi- tion, many jobs were created for bootleggers, bars, and other liquor vendors.

One promise that President Trump continues to stress is that he will create jobs for U.S. cit- izens. Do you see where I’m going with this?

In a Harvard-Harris Poll sur- vey last August, 86% of respon- dents voted that marijuana should be legal through one mean or an- other, whether it be for recrea- tional purposes or only medicinal. 57% of those voters said that legalizing marijuana would make society better.

So, Sessions isn’t on the side of the people, which isn’t surprising when it comes to any high-rank- ing politician. Rather, he is on the side of government intervention and outdated stigmas that reel all too much of Harry J. Anslinger. It’s in my opinion that either Ses- sions reconsiders his stance on this whole debacle or President Trump does what he is best known for: termination.

What’s Current

Wednesdays

(A) Asexual Harassment and Assault in Hollywood and on Campuses

Wednesday, February 7, 2018 - 2 PM
MSC Century Room C For Cookies and Conversation*

Sexual harassment and sexual assault have been the focus of a recent surge of media attention. Join The Current and Dr. Zoe Peterson, Associate Professor of Psychological Sciences and direc- tor of the Sexual Assault Research and Education Program, for a conversation on this important issue. Dr. Peterson will briefly present research findings that both support and counter some of the media messages related to sexual harassment and assault. Discussion will address similarities and differences between sexual assault/harassment in Hollywood versus on college campuses, campus policies and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment/assault, and what constitutes appropriate versus inappropriate sexual behavior.

The New York Times feature that will serve as the jumping off point for the conversation is “What the Weinstein Effect Can Teach Us About Campus Sexual Assault” which can be found at: goo.gl/HUVhXS

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

Talking Life, Comedy, and Donut Sprinkles with Brian Regan

CHRIS ZUVER
A AND E EDITOR

On January 12, standup comedi- an Brian Regan returned to St. Louis as he drank his morning cup of coffee. He told me about mem- ories and currently resides in Las Vegas, life, comedy, and whatever else.

Two days before he was to take the stage at the Peabody Opera House. It was his second show of the year after having taken a short winter break at the end of 2017. Regan has been performing standup since the early 80’s and is known for being one of the most successful standups today, but also one of the most family friendly. His brand of humor rarely crosses into the realm of profanity, yet still manages to draw uproarious laugh- ter night after night, year after year.

He is one of a select handful to have signed a two-special deal with Netflix last year. His first Net- fix special, Nunchucks and Flame- throwers, was released late last year. He also played the character Mugsy in last years comedy TV se- ries, Louie.

Though he was born in Miami and currently resides in Las Vegas, he has long been familiar with the Midwest as he attended college in Tiffin, Ohio.

We started off, discussing St. Louis as he drank his morning cup of coffee. He told me about mem- ories of going to see the arch, even though he was afraid of heights, as Continued on Page 8
The Whole U Space in MSC Repurposed
For Prospective Student Tours

KAT RIDDLE
MANAGING EDITOR

StuDents coming back for the spring semester might notice The Whole U’s space in the Millen- nium Student Center is gone.

The Whole U opened January 17, 2017, and their grand opening was February 9. The space was dedicated to serving the well-being of students, faculty, and staff of The University of Missouri-

According to Miriam Roccia, assistant dean of students, the Recre- ation and Wellness Center will work the Welcome Center will work the queue of maintenance jobs on campus to repurpose the space.

Griffin said there was no set timeline for the space, but Griffin estimates it could be up and running by mid-Spring depending on the queue of maintenance jobs on campus to repurpose the space.

Griffin and Lisa Baker, manager of admissions for campus tours and special events, will be finalizing space layout and how the space will be best operated until the tour room officially opens.

Griffin said, “We are excited to be able to utilize the space for our visitors in order to give them a true sense of what it means to be a member of the UMSL family.”

Baker hopes that this will help their goal to evolve the Welcome Center and tour program into the premier tour programs in the country.

They have an idea on how to utilize the space. Griffin explained, “We envision turning the Whole U space into a large room for campus tours and special events for submitting applications and/or tour evaluations, lounge space for prospective students and all of the ‘rah rah’ school spirit we pack into that place.”

Griffin continued, “In addition, we are looking at the possibility of having guided tours that will include the Whole U space in the Welcome Center, but they are continuing to seek alternative locations in the MSC. There is no definitive timeline for a space for that service.”

Talking Life, Comedy, and Donut Sprinkles with Regan

Continued from Page 7

On January 12, standup comedian Brian Regan returned to St. Louis and performed at the Peabody Opera House.

BR: I agree. You hear often about people who grew up with their parents being around for years and 95% of people say ‘I don’t wanna hear their new stuff. I wanna hear their old stuff.” As a comedian who likes to do new stuff, I feel like, ‘I bet you they’d rather play their new stuff!’

TC: Do you still do your old stuff at the end of your act?

BR: Yeah, I’ll do that at the end. I’ll do a bunch of old stuff and if they shout out older bits, I’ll be happy to do them then. But the first hour, I want that to be my show and I want it to be a reason for the people who have seen the Whole U to return for the Wellness Center.”

Roccia stated that they do not have to be a standup comedy and that tour guides that were in the Whole U are not located in the MSC.

While the physical space is getting repurposed, the space that used to be The Whole U will not be eliminated. Roccia said, “I have had several discussions with the Recreation Center staff, and our goal is to be able to bring many of the wellness-related programs and activities that had been housed in the Whole U over to the Recreation and Wellness Center.”

The Whole U’s space in the Millennium Student Center was created about five years ago, but for the past two years have not been used.

The Whole U Space in MSC Repurposed
For Prospective Student Tours

Dr. Drew Griffin, director of admissions, said, “Currently, we use the comedy club room in the Office of Student Retention Services for our campus tours. That space has been nice, but having a larger tour room space for prospective students is better suited to help with tours of campus.”

Roccia said, “The existing space was created about five years ago, but is a multipurpose space that is not ideal for hosting prospective stu- dents for the general information session before they begin their tour. At that point, efforts were made to identify a more suitable space for that activity.”

When did you start doing standup?

TC: Do you still do your old stuff?

BR: Yeah. What the hell’s going on!? It’s always been mostly clean. I’d be going on stage with a clean F-word and sexual references. I did a little bit of everything when I first started, but basically, I’m a clean comedian. I’ve been doing it awhile. I’m hoping to get good at it. So, we’ll see. Maybe I’ll get good at it, I can figure this thing out.

TC: Well that’s good, some comedians reach a peak and say ‘that’s good enough’.

BR: Ha. Yeah. Comedy is weird. You can figure things out about it, but you can never quite get to the finish line. There’s always more to learn.

TC: Are you self-taught?

BR: Yeah. When I started, I didn’t know any other comedians. The only way for me to learn was to just get on stage and keep doing it over and over again. You get to learn from other comedians when you’re in comedy clubs, but basically, I’m self-taught.

TC: How do you think you’ve changed since you began?

BR: I think about how much I’ve evolved. I’ve grown in our minds. We grow physically. Because of that, whatever you do, comedy grows. So, in the last few years, comedy has evolved over the years. Something that switches things out for me is my topic choices. Lately, I’ve been more willing to poke a stick at things that would surprise some people.

TC: That reminds me, in your last Netflix special, you brought up North Korea. What made you decide on that? It certainly surprised some people.

BR: Well, it also surprised Kim Jong Un. He called me personally: ‘Hey, what’s the hell going on?’

I’m like, ‘Hey man. Please don’t push that button because of my jokes!’

But those are the things I’m interested in. Politics, certain things. I figure, why not talk about them on stage? But it’s tricky because I try to do jokes, even if I’m hitting on a certain topic that can be controver- sial, I try to do the types of jokes that both sides can laugh at. Like, I’ve got a handful of jokes about guns. Talk about a divisive subject. I try to do jokes where everyone will laugh and not only do I want that, I want each individual audience member to say ‘Hey, He’s on my side.’ Even though, maybe I’m not, you know?

TC: Has your act always been clean?

BR: It’s always been mostly clean. It wasn’t 100% clean when I started. I had some jokes with the F-word and sexual references. I did a little bit of everything when I started. And then I realized that the stuff that felt most real and natural for me was the cleaner stuff, I guess.

I hate the word “clean” because it isn’t 100% clean when I do it. It’s just stuff that felt most real and natural for me.

Yeah. When I started, I did a little bit of everything when I first started, I would often play bars on comedy nights. You had to go on stage, you had to follow someone who was filthy. And those acts worked great in those environ- ments. I’d be going on stage talking about donuts and donut sprinkles. And you had a room full of people drunk on tequila going ‘Why aren’t you saying the F-word like the other guy?’

So, it was easy to be tempted, like ‘Hey. What the hell’s going on!?’

I’ve seen a lot of entertain- ers, both comedians and musicians that put themselves at the demands of fans. I’ve always thought you should do what you want.

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