

1-22-2018

Current, January 22, 2018

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/current2010s>

Recommended Citation

University of Missouri-St. Louis, "Current, January 22, 2018" (2018). *Current (2010s)*. 282.
<https://irl.umsl.edu/current2010s/282>

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Newspapers at IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Current (2010s) by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact marvinh@umsl.edu.

The Federal Government Shutdown on Friday

KAT RIDDLE
MANAGING EDITOR

THE FEDERAL government shut-down 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 process passport requests, will cease working effective immediately until Congress is able to agree on a bill



The federal government officially shutdown 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. 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 funding 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.

UMSL Hires New Dean of CAS Starting August 1

KAT RIDDLE
MANAGING EDITOR

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.

The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest college at UMSL with approximately 4,000 undergraduate and 800 graduate students with a wide range of accredited baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees and multi-disciplinary certificates through 18 departments and numerous centers. There are nearly 5,000 additional high school students in the Advanced Credit Program.

Kersten is currently the Dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Idaho. Kersten's administration experience started at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. While there for two years, he was the associate

vice chancellor, associate provost for academic affairs and director of graduate studies before he was the chair of the Department of Democracy and Justice Studies.

At the University of Idaho, 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 residential 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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Veterans Center Welcomes Perschbacher as New Manager

KAT RIDDLE
MANAGING EDITOR

COMING BACK from winter break, students will see a new face in the Veterans Center in Clark 211. Joshua Perschbacher took over for Rebecca McMenamini as the office's Manager of Veteran & Military Services and VA Certifying Official.

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

his experiences as a VA certifying official in his previous job will ensure UMSL veteran programs don't miss a step. He is the right person for the job and I am proud to call him our new colleague."

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

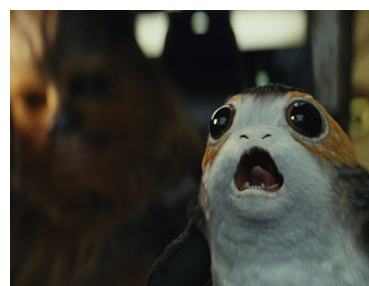


Perschbacher in front of the student veteran mural outside Clark Hall 211.

What's Inside:



STL Police Chief pg. 3



'The Last Jedi', pg. 5



Black Out Game pg. 6



Whole U, pg. 8

CURRENT STAFF

EDITORIAL
Editor-in-Chief
 Michael Plumb
Managing Editor
 Kat Riddler
News Editor
 Now hiring!
Features Editor
 Now hiring!
Sports Editor
 Roderick Wilbon
A&E Editor
 Chris Zuver
Opinions Editor
 Kyle Mannisi
Copy Editors
 Alex Neupert

Staff Writers
 OPEN

Staff Photographer
 OPEN

DESIGN
Production Editor
 OPEN

Photo Editor
 OPEN

Web Editor
 OPEN

Multimedia Editor
 Roderick Wilbon
Cartoonist/Artists
 Mike Diliberto

BUSINESS

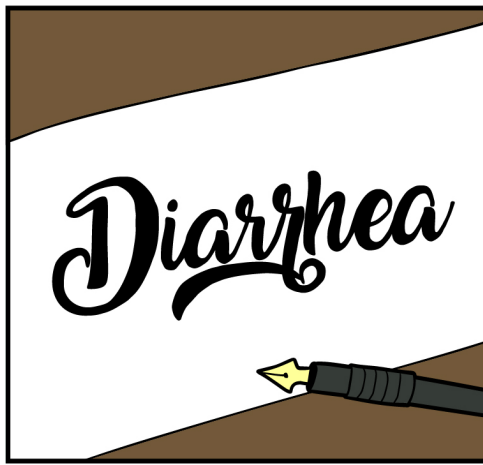
Business Manager
 OPEN

Advertising Director
 Michael Plumb
Ad Representatives
 Now hiring!

Distribution Manager
 Chris Zuver

Social Media Team
 Michelle Reynolds

Archivist
 OPEN



ON THE QUAD BY MIKE DILIBERTO

Celebrate National Handwriting Day with the RWC
 by participating in a
CALLIGRAPHY CLASS

TUES. JAN 23
4PM, RWC
STUDIO 4

Registration required.
 Register online or in person
 at the Triton Trading Post.

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-Sync (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 Sodexo 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.

CONTACT US

388 MSC, 1 University Blvd
 St. Louis, MO 63121-4400
thecurrent@umsl.edu
thecurrent-online.com

Newsroom
 314-516-5174

thecurrenttips@umsl.edu

Business/Advertising
 314-516-5316

thecurrentads@umsl.edu

Fax
 314-516-6811

Editor-in-Chief
thecurrenteic@umsl.edu

Internships and Volunteer Positions
thecurrentjobs@umsl.edu

Letters to the Editor
thecurrenteic@umsl.edu

Twitter
 @UMSLTheCurrent

Facebook
 /TheCurrentStudentNews



SIGMA TAU DELTA

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

PRESENTS



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!



HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

- Get even More News and Content online at thecurrent-online.com
- Send Story Tips to thecurrenttips@umsl.edu
- Respond to stories with Letters to the Editor
- Volunteer, Intern, or Work for the Paper
- Be Featured or Feature an Undercurrent
- Like us on Fb /TheCurrentStudentNews
- Follow us on Twitter @UMSLTheCurrent

MON **57**
32

TUE **40**
26

WED **44**
28

THU **56**
36

FRI **55**
44

SAT **51**
28

SUN **34**
19

John Hayden Named St. Louis Police Chief

KAT RIDDLER
MANAGING EDITOR

AFTER A long nationwide search, John Hayden, a 30-year veteran of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, was named Police Chief of St. Louis on December 28, 2017.

Hayden was previously the Commander of North Patrol Division since September 2015. During that time, his crime strategies resulted in significant crime reduction in several neighborhoods according to the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department website. As the Commander of the Internal Affairs Division, Hayden oversaw more than 1200 investigations of employee misconduct. He has experience with the Fourth District, Vice and Narcotics Division, and the Detective Unit.

From 2001 to 2007, Hayden served as the Executive Aide to the Chief of Police gaining experience managing the department from the executive level. He has extensive teaching experience from his time in the Police Academy, where he served as both an instructor and training coordinator. The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department website said, "While in the Police Academy, Colonel Hayden was re-

sponsible for teaching and developing training on a topic that is still his top priority—ethics."

He is St. Louis City's 35th Police Chief. The appointment was effective immediately. Hayden will earn a salary of \$153,000 and will have a department budget of \$170 million dollars. The police department budget is a third of the City's overall budget. He will also oversee 1,300 officers and 400 civilian employees. He is in charge of the second largest police department in the state of Missouri.

Hayden replaced interim chief Lt. Col. Lawrence O'Toole who was appointed in April after then-Police Chief Sam Dotson retired on Mayor Lyda Krewson's first day in office.

The search marked the first time in modern history that St. Louis considered external candidates for the position. Hayden was one of only three internal candidates. Missouri law forbade hiring a chief from outside of the department when the department was under state control before 2013.

Mayor Krewson said, "Many of you thought we were taking too long to find a new chief. Our thought has always been, we'll take as long as it takes to get it right. And today, we got it right."

Hayden told St. Louis Public Ra-

dio his first priority as chief, "'The first thing for me to tackle is going to be violent crime."

St. Louis has had national attention with being ranked the most dangerous city in the United States. According to Riverfront Times, St. Louis has a murder rate that is 20 times higher than the national average. In 2017, RFT cited that the City of St. Louis had seen more than 200 homicides.

Hayden elaborated in his inter-

view with St. Louis Public Radio that he has identified an area between Goodfellow and Vandeventer running east and west, and Dr. King and West Florissant north and south where a lot of the violent crime has occurred over the last few years. He will pay particular attention to where there are open drug sales.

Hayden hopes to use more community policing to build trust with the communities and help cut down on future crime.

Hayden has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Washington University where he played football. He also has a master's degree in management from Fontbonne University. Hayden is 55 years old and a lifelong resident of St. Louis City. He and his wife, Michelle, have been married for 28 years and have three daughters, Ashley, Kathryn, and Kaylynn.



KAT RIDDLER
MANAGING EDITOR

THE FOLLOWING is a series of daily crime and incident reports issued by the University of Missouri- St. Louis Police Department between December 1, 2017 and January 18, 2018.

December 1, 2017: At 3:45 p.m., an UMSL student reported theft of an unattended book bag. At 5:43 p.m., UMSL PD responded to two individuals acting strange in the J.C. Penney building. All was in order. At 5:50 p.m., UMSL PD responded to a student concerned over family issues at Oak Hall. All was in order. A delayed report was taken as an UMSL student reported a bicycle stolen on November 29 from Oak Hall.

December 2, 2017: At 7:30 a.m., A backpack was found on November 29 and turned into UMSL PD. A message was left for the owner.

December 3, 2017: UMSL PD responded to a report of loud music at 1:01 a.m. at Mansion Hill. All was in order and the person turned down the music. At 3:39 p.m., UMSL PD discovered two open doors on university owned property. All was checked and in order. At 7:23 p.m., UMSL PD and Northeast Fire Department responded to a brush fire on the Normandie Golf Club.

December 4, 2017: Graffiti was reported on a trash can, window, and wall of the Millennium Student Center at 8:51 a.m. At 1:15 p.m., a set of keys were found on a shuttle bus and turned in to UMSL PD for safekeeping.

December 5, 2017: Two vehicles had a minor accident at 11:05 a.m. at West Drive Parking Garage. At 2 p.m., another two-car accident occurred at the West Drive Parking Garage.

December 6, 2017: UMSL PD contacted students that were passing out flyers at the Millennium Student Center at 2:55 p.m.

December 7, 2017: A cab driver was transported to the hospital via ambulance after experiencing unknown medical issues at Express Scripts at 10:03 a.m. At 11:20 p.m. An UMSL officer on patrol found a notebook with personal and financial information in Marillac Hall. UMSL PD held it for safekeeping.

December 8, 2017: A found wallet was turned in to UMSL PD that was found at Mercantile Library. The owner was notified.

December 9, 2017: No incidents to report.

December 10, 2017: No incidents to report.

December 11, 2017: An UMSL student reported a lost cell phone at 3:44 p.m.

December 12, 2017: An auto accident between two vehicles occurred at West Drive Garage at 2:10 p.m. At 8:30 p.m., an UMSL student refused medical treatment after breaking a window with their hand during a fall at Oak Hall.

December 13, 2017: A found driver's license was turned in to UMSL PD at 1 p.m. At 6:45 p.m., personal items and ID belonging to an UMSL student were turned in to UMSL PD and the owner was notified.

December 14, 2017: A delayed report was filed from a former student receiving a fraudulent check from an apparent fraudulent part-time job in February 2017.

December 15, 2017: A non-affiliated person was arrested for several outstanding traffic warrants following a traffic stop on campus at the Millennium South Parking Garage at 9:47 p.m. The individual was booked and transported to St. Louis County Intake Services.

December 16, 2017: At 7:30 a.m., an UMSL staff member reported cleaning supplies were stolen from Oak Hall. At 9:38 p.m., UMSL PD contacted a student at the request of their parents. All was in order.

December 17, 2017: UMSL PD and facilities responded to a patron stuck in an elevator for 30 minutes at 10:25 a.m. at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center.

December 18, 2017: At 7:52 a.m. a visitor to campus was transported from the University Meadows parking lot to the hospital via ambulance due to intoxication. At 8:40 a.m., a purse was turned in to UMSL PD and returned to the owner. At 1:15 p.m., an UMSL student reported receiving a fraudulent check for an item they were selling online. At 11:04 p.m., UMSL PD checked the welfare of a student at the request of a parent, officers were unable to locate the student. A short time

later, the parent called after making contact with the student and all was in order. At 11:28 p.m., UMSL PD and Northeast FD responded to a malfunctioning stove in University Meadows. There was no damage.

December 19: At 11:34 a.m., a flat-screen TV was reported stolen from the Mansion Hills clubhouse.

December 20, 2017: No incidents to report.

December 21, 2017: UMSL PD responded to a report of two people arguing at 7:08 a.m. at Mansion Hills. At 7:08 a.m., a coat was located in a bathroom with personal items in it at the Kathy J. Weinman Center. At 7:08 a.m., UMSL PD and Northwest FD responded to a report of a fire at the softball field on north campus. At 1:20 p.m., an UMSL employee reported their headphones had been taken in Express Scripts Hall.

December 22, 2017: At 7 p.m., a suspicious person was reported walking around Villa Hall and attempting to enter the building. The person was identified as an ex-boyfriend of a current student.

December 23, 2017: At 11:16 a.m., UMSL PD assisted Bel Nor PD with a sick case. Around 11:19 a.m. on Lot L, there was a pitbull found walking around. Animal Control responded and picked up the dog.

December 24, 2017 to January 4, 2018: No incidents to report.

January 5, 2018: At 6:57 p.m. there was an accidental activation of a fire alarm in Provincial House during a testing. There was no fire.

January 6, 2018: At 1:45 p.m. a non-student was escorted from campus for trespassing at Villa Hall.

January 7, 2018: A delayed report was taken about a camera stolen during a wedding on January 6 in Provincial House.

January 8, 2018: At 12:20 p.m. in Stadler Hall, a contract employee reported a stolen purse.

January 9, 2018: At 1:58 p.m., UMSL PD and facilities employees responded to individuals stuck in an elevator in the Millennium Student Center. At 5:41 p.m., An UMSL student reported a possible maintenance issue with their apartment at Mansion Hill. At 8:06 p.m., UMSL PD and Northeast FD responded to a fire alarm caused by a faulty outlet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Police Chief Hayden

New Scholarships for High School Students

KAT RIDDLER
MANAGING EDITOR

IF 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.

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-

ing from low-income households, according to Executive Director of the Scholarship Foundation Faither Sandler. Students must also maintain a grade-point average of 2.0 or higher and have "good character."

The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis received a \$1.2 million gift to have 100 students who participate in Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri, College Bound, or the Wyman Teen Leadership Program apply for a \$12,000 annual grant. Previously, the Centennial Collaboration Scholarship offered a \$10,000 annual grant to about 20 high school seniors who participated in Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri.

On top of the monetary help, students will also receive advising from the Scholarship Foundation. Applications are open now and are due April 16.

COURTESY OF ST. LOUIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

UMSL Veterans Center Welcomes Joshua Perschbacher as New Manager

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
military student services advisor at the Chamberlain College of Nursing from 2014 to 2016. At Northeastern Illinois University, he was the acting director of veteran services for a year and a half. He said, "I'm already impressed and happy to be coming into an organization that is doing as much as it is doing."

Perschbacher was born in Centralia, Illinois and moved to Mount Vernon before moving to complete his college education. He completed his undergraduate at SIU Carbondale in social science education before joining and serving in the navy from 2009 to 2013. He joined the Navy because of family history with the military branch: he had two grandfathers in the Navy in World War II. He went back to school at Northern Illinois University to complete his master's degree in higher education administration.

Perschbacher says his short term goal is to become acclimated to the city and the campus. According to Perschbacher, Chicago has a strong network of veterans and he hopes to look into the community in St. Louis. He said, "[Chicago] is a really strong, healthy veteran ecosystem that does take care of one another. I want to get involved in that environment here and find out what is being done and then see if there is any of those services, organizations, and infrastructure set up elsewhere that can be imported in to help everyone in the St. Louis area."

Specifically to UMSL, he is



Perschbacher previously worked at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

thinking about reaching out to students in person and via survey. "I need to find out what things are we doing here and what are we doing well and keep doing that," he said. "What could we be doing more as the Vet Center to support and transition from active duty to college and to job placement?"

Perschbacher was an associate instructor for FourBlock, a national nonprofit that works on career preparedness for veterans. He hopes to bring this type of a program here to

UMSL and St. Louis. This 10-week FourBlock program was hosted at Accenture and it worked on developing different skill sets like personal branding. The other half of the time, participants would go on field trips to industries in Chicago like KPMG and Deloitte. They would also meet with career-preparedness veterans from the military employee resource group (MERG) representatives.

There is another group called the Veterans Leadership Council

who, at their December meeting, said they were interested in expanding into St. Louis and Washington, D.C. This group has a monthly meeting of mostly post 9/11 veterans, but there are also older veterans as well who use this as a networking opportunity to meet people in different industries. Perschbacher described this group as a type of alumni association of those who completed the FourBlock program and work at different companies. Through this group they network and help others with the shared veteran experience.

Perschbacher said, "Some of the studies they have looked at say that 48 percent of enlisted veterans end up leaving their first job within the first year. So what can we do to make companies more veteran friendly and decrease those attrition numbers and increase retention?"

While Perschbacher comes from his previous employment in Chicago, he said he is a Cardinals and Blues fan. His wife Megan, and their year-and-a-half-old son EJ, plan to join him in St. Louis in the summer. They are expecting their second child later on this year. He brought them to tour the campus when he was applying for the position and the family enjoyed the campus and the city.

They are looking at different neighborhoods currently. Perschbacher said, "The age old question my son is going to be asked is 'where did you go to high school?' I have to start thinking about that now."

Campus Crime Report

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3
There was no damage.

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. At 6:42 p.m., an UMSL student reported two refrigerators on a rear porch had been unplugged at 8026 Natural Bridge. At 8:10 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 1:20 a.m. after wind set off a security alarm on an insecure door. At 10:30 a.m., a found 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 Kathy J. Weinman Center at 9:36 a.m. The person was not affiliated with the campus and was escorted to the Metrolink. An UMSL police officer refused medical attention after experiencing an elevator failure resulting in a several foot drop at 5:45 p.m. in Express Scripts Hall.

January 15, 2018: An UMSL student refused medical treatment after experiencing a seizure in the MSC at 8:40 a.m. Residence Life staff and UMSL PD responded to an odor of marijuana in Oak Hall at 2:25 p.m. A student stated they were smoking off campus and no drugs or paraphernalia were present. At 10:28 p.m., a pair of car keys were found at Oak Hall and turned in to UMSL PD.

January 16, 2018: At 7 a.m., UMSL PD verified a sex offender registration.

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 11:30 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 3:30 p.m. in Clark Hall.

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

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Wisconsin-Madison and went on to the University of Cincinnati for his master's and doctoral degrees.

He joined the faculty at Wisconsin-Green Bay in 1997.

He is the author of such books as "Race, Jobs, and the War: The FEPC

in the Midwest, 1941-1946," "A. Philip Randolph: A Life in Vanguard," "Labor's Home Front: The American Federation of Labor and World

War II," "Clarence Darrow: American Iconoclast" and "For Jobs and Freedom: The Selected Speeches and Writings of A. Philip Randolph."



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

COURTESY OF ANDREW KERSTEN

'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. In one corner, you have the 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 whom have obsessed over discussing the idea of identity politics at play in the casting and plot, whilst arguing amongst each other. I think there were some more nuanced people talking about it too, but I'm not sure.

Despite the public opinion I had been exposed to, I walked in to the theater with the clearest mind I could manage. At the very most, I hoped that I would find it as good as 2015's *The Force Awakens*. At the least, I reminded myself that it wasn't "The Phantom Menace".

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

"The Last Jedi" does what "The Force Awakens" did right and capitalizes on it: That is to say it's a combination of good elements from both the original trilogy and the prequels while avoiding most of the flaws from each era.

Something I feel sets Episodes VII and VIII more in line with the originals is the aversion from computer animation, which gives everything a more authentic look. While there are obvious usages of CG, they are a lot less frequent than they were the last time George Lucas was in charge of an installment.

Another key difference since Episode VII has been the physics. Gone are the wire acts a-la *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Jedi*. While it's true that it was satisfying watching Yoda leap around in "The Clone Wars", I am glad to see that the series has ditched the choreographed fight scenes for something more grounded.

As for the plot, the film is more complicated than its predecessor. It opens with the First Order's space fleet approaching the Resistance's base. Poe Dameron leads a counterattack, which proves to be costly but effective. The Resistance, led by General Leia Organa (R.I.P. Carrie Fisher) evacuates their base and leaps into hyperspace to escape. Alas, the First Order's fleet tracks their ship and follows.

From there, the film continuously switches between the three main characters: Rey, Finn, and Poe. Rey spends a good amount of the movie on the distant planet Ahch-To, convincing Luke Skywalker to train her to be a Jedi. Meanwhile, Poe and Finn, with the help of BB-8 and Resistance member Rose Tico devise a plan to disable the tracking device that the First Order is using on the Resistance's ship in order to ensure their escape.



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 train under Skywalker before turning to the dark side. The two of them communicate distantly as Ren explains to Rey that Luke tried to kill him. Luke, on the other hand, claims that he momentarily considered killing Ren, upon realizing that he had switched to the dark side, which then caused Ren to retaliate and leave. Regardless, Rey is convinced that she can redeem Ren and decides to travel to the First Order's space fleet to confront him.

Upon boarding the ship, Rey is captured by Ren, who then escorts her to the First Order's Supreme Leader Snoke. A climactic meeting occurs between the three of them, resulting in Ren killing Snoke. It remains uncertain if this move is a result of his distrust of the dark side or if it was only a power play to become head of the First Order, a title which he quickly assumes after the assassination.

Nonetheless, Rey and members of the Resistance escape to the planet Crait, a salt-covered world with underlying red soil which makes for some dramatic footage in the last leg of the film.

The Resistance take refuge in an abandoned base built into the side of a cliff. Newly-appointed leader of the First Order, Kylo Ren and his soldiers, land on Crait and start powering up a cannon to break through the walls of the base. Then, in the middle of the chaos, Luke Skywalker appears and steps out in the way of the army.

Ren, upon recognizing Skywalker, orders all guns to open fire. Yet, this doesn't work, as Skywalker stands, seemingly unscathed in the aftermath. Ren then confronts him for a one-on-one lightsaber duel. As Ren thinks he is about to strike Luke down, Luke warns Ren that this is a bad idea for his own sake, similar to how Obi-Wan gave Darth Vader a similar threat upon his own sacrifice in *A New Hope*.

Ren hacks away, only to realize that he didn't hit Luke. What he had been fighting was merely Luke's projection. Luke was on Ahch-To

all along. The camera cuts to him, meditating his projection from a cliff from the far-off world. He then turns to dust, as he "becomes one with the Force."

But oh, right... you are probably wondering what happens to the Resistance. Well, Rey lands her ship (which happens to be the Millennium Falcon) near the back door of their 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 giving 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 still a sad emo boy. But regardless, I can counter all of 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 fully 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 lifetime, based on a film franchise 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 may see a different development for Kylo Ren in the future.

Let's not forget about some great new characters, such as Poe Dameron, ace pilot. Poe's trump card is that he doesn't have to be witty and clever, he's already a great pilot, however, he conveniently happens to be clever as well. During his attack on the First Order in the opening scene, Poe contacts General Hux, refers to him as "General Hugs," and even puts him on hold.

As for fans of the cutesy culture of the franchise, there are the Porgs: native creatures on the planet Ahch-To which resemble a cross between guinea pigs and penguins.

Aside from the approach to filming, there is also the strength of the soundtrack. John Williams is nothing short of a musical genius as he has proven even during the series' darkest hours in the early 2000's. The symphonic music reflects classic themes from the original trilogy while adding new twists, as well as the inclusion of new scores. It's hard to describe music much further through words. In other words, it's easier to prove my point by watching the movie.

In conclusion, I think that "The Last Jedi" is a good entry in a great series. It is not at the top of my list of Star Wars films, but it ties with "The Force Awakens", which outranks the prequels. If you're still on the fence, watch this movie. At the least, you'll know what all of the fuss is about.



Adam Driver as Kylo Ren in 'The Last Jedi.'

Lady Tritons Black Out Maryville's Offense

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 8-5 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 com-



Arielle Jackson goes in for the floater.

forter. UMSL put Maryville's offense to sleep, quickly and aggressively. Which in turn only fueled more of-

fense from the Tritons. The Tritons were on guard for every switch, ball-screen and pass. Maryville is just a

bad team, and players are supposed to soundly beat those teams. The Tritons certainly did that and took

care of business at home.

Imagine the Golden State Warriors if they were all girls. That is how the Tritons looked against Maryville. Great lock down defense, raining three-pointers from heaven, and some easy inside baskets. The game would end 83-64, with the Tritons taking the win. Shown-ta Johnson, senior, communications, started the game as usual, but seemed to be playing on an injury. Seems to be a quad or hamstring injury, which could be seen wrapped with athletic taping. It did not slow her down much and she still ended the game: 10 points, eight rebounds and six assists.

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.

Lady Tritons will face Rockhurst for the next home game January 25 at 5:30 p.m.



Jordan Fletcher with 1000 point commemorative game ball.

UFC Fight Night Lives Up to Promises

RODERICK M. WILBON
SPORTS EDITOR

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 workout 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.

CONTINUED ON
THECURRENT-ONLINE.COM

UMSL Postal Services



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.

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 banging him.”

-Barry Goldwater in regard to 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 Executive’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 crimes.

And his vendetta has slowly been building up over time.

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 minimized, that it’s in fact a very real danger.”



Attorney General Jeff Sessions, perpetuates the War on Drugs by advocating for harsher marijuana sentencing laws.

This statement was in regards to his concern over high statistics of drivers testing positive in certain states for THC, the active compound in those under the influence of marijuana.

Sessions added that lawmakers and government leaders ought to “send that message with clarity 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 January 4, another bombshell dropped: AG Sessions rescinded a trio of memos from the Obama administration. 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 decide individually how to enforce laws against cracking down on possession, distribution, and cultivation of marijuana in states where it’s already legal.

As long as certain drugs are illegal, 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 considered 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 affectively 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 conservative or libertarian, wouldn’t you dismiss 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 continuation 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 mandatory minimum sentences for holding a small amount of an illegal substance.

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

First, that outlawing a substance does not stop it. The black market for libations grew staggeringly during this era. This black market was dominated by smugglers and high-level criminals which subsequently increased the rate of criminal activity and arrests.

Secondly, once the 12th Amendment was repealed, ending prohibition, many jobs were created for breweries, bars, and other liquor vendors.

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

In a Harvard-Harris Poll survey last August, 86% of respondents voted that marijuana should be legal through one mean or another, whether it be for recreational 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-ranking politician. Rather, he is on the side of government intervention and outdated stigmas that reek all too much of Harry J. Anslinger. It’s in my opinion that either Sessions reconsiders his stance on this whole debacle or President Trump does what he is best known for: termination.

What’s Current Wednesdays

Sexual 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. Zoë Peterson, Associate Professor of Psychological Sciences and director 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

“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.

The Current

UMSL’S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1966

For more information, visit *The Current* website at www.thecurrent-online.com.

* 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 comedian Brian Regan returned to St. Louis and performed 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 not only 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 laughter 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-

flix special, *Nunchucks and Flame-throwers*, was released late last year. He also played the character Mugsy in last years comedy TV series *Loudermilk*.

Two days before he was to take the stage at the Peabody, I was able to sit down and talk to him about life, comedy, and whatever else came to mind.

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 memories 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 RIDDLER
MANAGING EDITOR

STUDENTS COMING back for the Spring semester might notice The Whole U's space in the Millennium Student Center is gone.

The Whole U opened January 17, 2017, and their grand opening was February 1. The space's main purpose was dedicated to serving the well-being of students, faculty, and staff of The University of Missouri-St. Louis.

According to Miriam Roccia, assistant dean of students, the Recreation and Wellness Center's team that had been running The Whole U moved out mid-December to repurpose the space.

During the fall semester, according to Roccia, there were talks about the need for a more suitable tour room space for prospective students. Drew Griffin, director of admissions, said, "Currently, we use the conference room in the Office of Student Retention Services for our campus tours. That space has been nice, but having a larger tour room located directly across from the Welcome Center will work much better for us. As it is, we have to walk students/families down the hall, through a noisy radio station, and into an almost 'study hall-like' environment. It is not an ideal way



Whole U advertisement for its grand opening in 2017. The space is being renovated for prospective students.

to begin our campus tours."

Because the Whole U's space was so close to the welcome center, the university thought it might be 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 students 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."

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 is officially open. Griffin said, "Baker and I will be touring a few other schools later this week to get a feel for how they have used their

tour space(s). We plan to incorporate ideas from some of our peers in order to make our tour space (and tour program) as best as it can be."

Baker 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. We want to reflect the wonderful campus and community we all share and spread the word about how great our university is." Baker hopes that this will help their goal to evolve the Welcome Center and tour program into

one of 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, complete with computer stations for submitting applications and/or tour evaluations, lounge space for parents or chaperones, and all of the 'rah rah' school spirit we can pack into that place."

Griffin continued, "In addition, we will add a break room for the tour guides so they have a hidden space to stuff packets, fold t-shirts, and lock up coats, or book bags while they are on the clock."

While the physical space is getting repurposed, the programs the Whole U offered 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."

Roccia stated that they do not have a suitable solution for the napping stations that were in the Whole U, but they are continuing to seek alternative locations in the MSC. There is no definite timeline for a space for that service.

Talking Life, Comedy, and Donut Sprinkles with Regan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

well as seeing a Cardinals game, though it was back when they were in the old Busch stadium.

The Current (TC): When did you start doing standup?

Brian Regan (BR): It was either 80' or 81'. When I was in college, I tried it a handful of times. So yeah, I've been doing it awhile. I'm hoping to get good at it. So, we'll see. Maybe if I get good at it, I can figure this thing out.

TC: Well that's good, some comics reach a point 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: Human beings grow. We grow in our minds. We grow physically. Because of that, whatever you do should grow. So hopefully, my 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 January 12, standup comedian Brian Regan returned to St. Louis and performed at the Peabody Opera House.

on that? It certainly surprised some people.

BR: Well, it also surprised Kim Jong Un. He called me personally: 'Hey. What the hell's 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 controversial, 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 'Oh, 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 conjures a connotation that I don't think quite fits with what I do.

But one of the reasons I decided to go 100% was because I'm very anal. Why be 95% something when you can be 100%? I decided to work completely clean because it was a fun challenge.

It was very hard in the early years when I didn't always get to

play in good rooms, good environments. 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 environments. 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 I should give them what they want. But I don't wanna give them what they want. I wanna give them what I wanna give them.

TC: I've seen a lot of entertainers, both comedians and musicians that put themselves at the demands of fans. I've always thought you should do what you want.

BR: I agree. You hear often about people who go to see a band whose been 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 go back after the encore 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 relatively new stuff.

TC: I was wondering, we're living in a very sensitive time. Has it ever been this tense in your whole career?

BR: No. I don't think so. I think more and more people are trying to divide. We're being asked to take sides and everybody's being split up. Trump supporters against Trump haters. The recent one is men against women with what's been going down. A wedge is being put between the sexes and a lot of comedians like to do the comedy that takes a side on issues. I've always liked to do the kind of comedy that makes everybody turn into one thing. I wanna make that audience one.

I've always felt like doing a comedy show is like playing an instrument. I'm trying to get as much noise out of that audience as I can. I'm trying to get as much laughter out of that thing. I think of it as one thing, not a thousand individuals. I try to make it one and I try to get

CONTINUED ON
THECURRENT-ONLINE.COM