

THE BENT TREE

Volume 33, Issue 4

Clayton College & State University

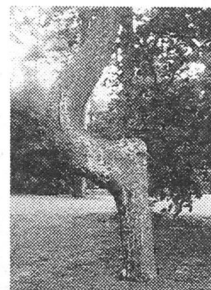
CCSU STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Get to Know Your
Professor: Featuring
Dr. Jane Thompson

Political Knowledge
Do you have it?

Campus News
Page 3

Campus Chat
Page 8



February 12, 2003

Thoughts Under Glass - 2

Campus Chat - 3-4

Valentine's - 6-7



The Origin of Love



Valentine's Day in a Nutshell

By Brian Gardiner

Where did Valentine's Day come from? Did it spring forth from the creative minds at Hallmark, or from money grubbing women only trying to drag even more dignity away from their kicking and screaming mates? Fortunately the answer is much more intriguing. "One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men — his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured" (Taken from www.historychannel.com).

While in prison for his actions Valentine actually started the traditional Valentine's Day card (I would have bet on Hallmark for that one). In prison Valentine supposedly fell in love with a young girl (according to legend it was the jailor's daughter, this guy never learns) and as a result of his relationship with her he wrote her a letter, and yup, you guessed it, signed it "From your Valentine". (Notice here that there is no mention of diamonds or elaborate gifts). Of course this is the most romantic idea of where Valentine's Day came from, but it is not the only idea. In addition to the story of Valentine, some also believe that Valentine's Day was created by the Catholic Church, in order to draw attention away from the pagan holidays that traditionally took place in the middle of February. In particular, the Catholic Church really didn't like the Roman tradition of pairing that took place in the middle of February. Pairing was the traditional celebration in which all of the Roman women placed their names in an urn. Later that day all of the city's bachelors would choose a name from the urn and would, um, let's just say have a good old time...for a year! So, Pope Gelasius declared February 14th St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D, the Roman 'lottery' system for romantic pairing was deemed un-Christian (www.historychannel.com) and Valentine's Day was born.

Mutuality and Personalization

By Michelle Lawrimore

For the past two years, my boyfriend has sent me a dozen of the most beautiful, velvety red roses for Valentine's Day. The first year he also sent me a teddybear. He always finds the perfect pink and red card, and we always have a nice evening out. What can I say? I'm a lucky girl. The most amazing and wonderful part of the holiday has nothing to do with the things that he buys for me though.

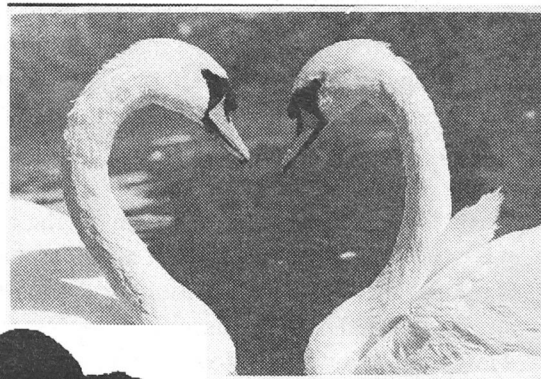
More than anything else, I enjoy reading his personal message that he writes in the card and exchanging our homemade, creative gifts. I could live for the entire year on the happiness that I get from seeing these thoughtful testaments to his love for me and on his smile when he receives his gifts.

Yes, I did say "his gifts." I believe that Valentine's Day is not just a holiday for men to show their love to their wives and girlfriends. It is a day for both men and women to express their mutual adoration for each other. I don't think men should feel like it is a day of homage to their female counterparts. I don't think that it is right for television to bombard them with images of other men giving their

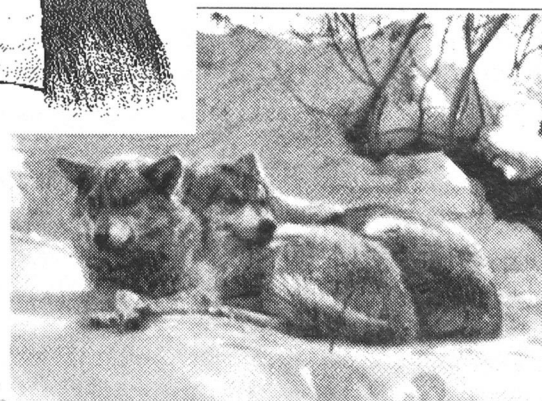
wives and girlfriends ridiculously expensive jewelry. I think that representing flowers, chocolates, and stuffed animals as the token gifts of the holiday inhibits our creativity in giving unique symbols of our feelings to the people that we love.

Don't get me wrong. These are some of the sweetest gifts to give, and we women (and some men) will always welcome them. I have to admit, I do squeal with delight when the deliveryman comes to the door and I know he has those gorgeous roses for me (although, roses are my weakness any time of the year). My point is just that it is important for people to also make sure that they actually put some thought and time into the Valentine's mementos through which they express themselves to their loved ones. And ladies, I think that men deserve to be assured of your love in the same ways that they assure you.

To my valentine: Thank you for making this holiday so perfect and every other day that you have been in my life completely wonderful. Like I said, I am a lucky girl. I love you, Sweetie!

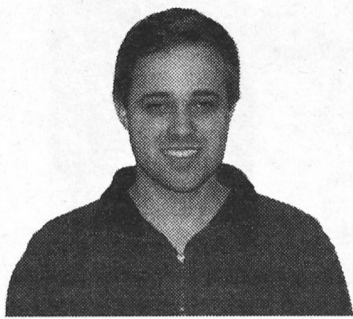


*Show the ones you
love how much you
care this Valentine's
Day*



The Bent Tree would like to give a special thanks to the Office of University Relations, the Athletic Department, Student Life, and the Office of Public Safety

Thoughts Under Glass



Identity Theft in Georgia Third Worst in Nation

So why do we use the SSN as the primary form of ID on campus?

Jonathan Gillespie
Staff Columnist
csu12323@mail.claytonstate.net

I honestly don't understand the obsession this campus has with social security numbers; or why we don't move on to another closed ID type that does not allow quite the same power that knowing one's SSN does?

Identity theft in the south as a region is bad enough; in Georgia it is appalling. The FBI calls Identity theft "the fastest growing white-collar crime in the nation". Of the personal information sought after by criminals, the social security number is usually one of the hardest to obtain, and yet it is the "Holy Grail" of access to a person's identity. With it, a criminal can obtain personal addresses, apply for credit card accounts, apply for real estate and automotive loans, and obtain personal records via the Internet.

And yet the campus *still* uses the social security number as the primary source of student identification when conducting searches against student records, or altering student information. Further, students have to use the number for access to their own records via the DUCK.

These are very big risks the campus is so casually taking. All a criminal has to do is overhear this number (or gain access to it via other methods) and they have a significant step towards ID theft.

Now I'm not saying Clayton's security standards aren't adequate—I believe they are—but there is still too much a chance for these numbers to slip out, because the campus treats SSNs almost like public domain. So many faculty and staff members are exposed to these numbers, and students usually given them out in very public settings. Forms are dropped into boxes that sit atop counters where they could be easily reached by dishonest hands. Virtually every paper form the Campus has includes an SSN field. Many of the drop boxes on campus even lack covers. I mean, the state of Georgia says that ID theft has gotten so bad you shouldn't even have your SSN on your driver's license, and here we are, pasting a student's SSN all over campus, and encouraging them to do the same anytime they need critical data or personal information?

The school needs to quit procrastinating and come up with a new system for generating unique student ID numbers. The bottom line is that we are using the SSN because it is merely the easiest solution. But better answers lie out there. Some colleges employ a random number generator for student ID numbers. I'd love to see such a system here.

Surely there must be some solution to the issue. This one has been ignored long enough. Clayton State needs to progress a little and quit sitting on its hands.



WAR...The Preface to Peace

By Kevin Dixon
Staff Columnist
csu10191@mail.claytonstate.net

In 1938, a new power was rising in Germany, a power that would soon wreak havoc on the entire continent of Europe. Ignored by the United States until we were forced into war, Germany began to spread its terror and eventually began to commit genocide of the greatest kind the modern era has ever seen. This is what a strong dictator can do, and Hitler did it with just guns and tanks. Imagine what a man of the same lunatic mindset can do with nuclear and biological weapons. If Hitler would have had access to VX gas, small pox, Ebola, or even plague do you think he would have used them? If Joseph Stalin would have had access to those things do you think he would have used them? Well, what about a man who is considered the "student of Stalin," a man who murders all those who question him, a man who tortures and kills children to get false confessions from their parents, and what about a man that harbors those who willingly and openly want to kill innocent Americans? Saddam Hussein has been a horror to his people for many years, and many times the United Nations has come in and tried to disarm him. However, he continually and deliberately chooses to hide his weapons and deceive the UN inspectors. Under article 1441 of the UN resolution this is the 17th time the UN inspectors have gone into Iraq to see if he is hiding weapons of mass destruction. In 1998, it was known he had 20,000 weapons of nuclear capabilities, and now he says that he has none. But he has shown no proof that he has destroyed them, and has no intention of showing the UN. We did find 19 empty nuclear warheads, but where are the other 19, 981? Recently, Colin Powell (Sect. of State, USA) presented proof that Hussein and Iraq were deceiving the UN and were indeed hiding weapons of mass destruction, but the world continues to question the US's intentions and wants to give the UN more time. Countries, such as France (who would be speaking German if not for the USA) want to continue to let Hussein be the Middle East's problem and no one else's. How long will the UN allow him to keep up this cat and mouse game? How long will we have to watch him kill innocent people in his country?

The other day I drove through downtown Atlanta and saw several protestors wanting peace marching outside on the streets, holding signs saying "we are anti-military and against war", and so I stopped and talked to one of them. I asked him why he was out here on this cold day and he stated, "Because it's my freedom of speech and I have the right to voice my opinion!" I didn't disagree with him, but I did tell him that his sign was metaphorically drenched in blood. I replied to him, "Sir, I see what you're doing and I want peace just as much as you do, but with all do respect you would not be able to be out here voicing your opinion if brave soldiers had not died to give you the right of freedom of speech. Millions of young men and women have spilled their blood and died making sure people like you can live here in peace, yet you don't want to do the same and expect to receive the equal privileges that they have? Personally, Sir, I am embarrassed to admit you're an American. Everyone wants peace, but sometimes it takes war to maintain that peace." He didn't reply to me, but just walked away and I felt that he was blind to the obvious. I realized that they have great intentions but have lost sight of reality.

I come from a military family, and the military runs three generations, from my grandfather, to my father, and now to my brother. They have served and do serve proudly, all willing to risk their lives for the country they live in. I would be affected the same if not more if the US decides to go into Iraq, but you don't see me protesting... you might even see me joining the ranks after my graduation this May.

Do we really want to sit back and just guess if Saddam Hussein will in fact use biological and/or nuclear weapons against Americans or other countries? Do we really want to take the chance of losing more innocent lives to these acts of terror? People say that they want to see a smoking gun as proof before we act, but people, in order for there to be a smoking gun it would have to be fired first, and if the gun fires, only bad things can come from that. We've already seen the smoke clear once and saw over 3,000 unsuspecting people lose their lives. This is not a war that we can just let go by; it's a war that has to be finished, one that we failed to complete in 1991. Georgia Senator Zell Miller said it best by saying, "Sometimes small battles must be fought to prevent the large wars." Well, here's one battle we can fight and one that we can win.

So I ask you, do you think this war is necessary? If not, put yourself in Iraq, imagine you're the one watching your kids, husband, wife, brother or sister being tortured, beaten with a hammer, having their fingers and toes cut off one by one and eventually being murdered. Picture them begging for help, their voice dying from the screams and eventually their bodies falling limp to the ground, lifeless and breathless. Don't be the one, years from now, complaining that we didn't stop him when we had the chance. We must act now and remove this man from power before he does something that we will all regret and wish we would have acted sooner!

**Get to Know Your Professors:
Featuring Dr. Jane Thompson**

By: Ashley Spillers

You could say that Dr. Jane Thompson's life revolves in cycles. She takes great comfort in the various cycles of life. In her words, "I believe in a cycle of life—the changes. I don't have a fear of my own mortality. I'm a Christian, but I do believe in reincarnation. I find it comforting." As a little known fact of Dr. Thompson, she owned a motorcycle in college. But now, it is her career that reflects a cycle. She has come full circle since her early days as a teacher—starting out as a teacher, becoming part of school administration, and now, returning to a full-time teaching position at Clayton College and State University.

Dr. Thompson describes her home life as an "unusual family situation." She has a close-knit extended family who helps her take care of her daughter, Caroline. Caroline is fourteen years old. Dr. Thompson adopted her when she was three months old. Dr. Thompson has never been married. She comments that, "I just really did not want to get married. I didn't see that as a lifestyle I was interested in." Her home is also a home for many animals. At this time, she has two dogs and two cats. However, at one time, she took in five abandoned puppies that she found behind her home. She took care of the puppies—feeding them with bottles, taking them to the vet—and they all survived and found new homes with members of the CCSU community. A short while ago, she also housed a four foot long iguana. As a result of moving into a smaller home, she had to find a good home for her as well. The iguana found a home with a CCSU faculty member, as well.

Finding time to travel and relax is very important to Dr. Thompson. She considers a tent camping trip across America with her daughter and two other campers her best traveling experience yet. She and the other travelers lived in tents in various locations all the way to the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington. During the trip, they visited sites along the way, such as Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon. She and her daughter had a recent trip to Scotland, and most summers, Dr. Thompson and her extended family gather at Amelia Island to vacation together. The place she enjoys to retreat to for relaxation is a cabin in the north Georgia mountains; the cabin is located along the river. Another way that Dr. Thompson relaxes is by doing some form of folk art—basket weaving, painting, or sewing. She also enjoys reading and is "addicted" to listening to books on tape in her car.

Dr. Thompson grew up in a small town named Alma, located near the Okefenokee Swamp in South Georgia. In high school, she was a self-described "quiet and bookish" student. Her friends were the "smart people" in school. She teases her daughter now, saying that she should "hang out with [smart people] because [they] are very successful later on." She never felt unpopular at school; she always felt comfortable. She

jokingly admitted that, "I never got to date the people I wanted to until later; then I found out they were jerks." She revisits her hometown to attend an occasional class reunion at her old high school.

At eighteen years old, Dr. Thompson left Alma, Georgia, to attend college. Her first destination was Macon, Georgia, where she attended Wesleyan College. It was there that she received her bachelor's degree in English. Dr. Thompson completed her student teaching at public schools in Macon while they were still sexually segregated. She commented that she taught eighth grade boys and "it was fun." She attended the University of Georgia for "about a week" to get her master's degree, but decided that she was tired of going to school. She opted to teach high school English at a high school in Glynn County in Brunswick instead. One summer, she chose to return to school for a summer to take counseling courses at Georgia Southern University. She thought it would make her teaching more effective. She enjoyed the classes so much that she elected to stay. She picked up a six-year degree in counseling at Georgia Southern, and after three years of working in the counseling office there, headed off to University of Georgia to earn her Ph.D.

You may be asking yourself: what inspired Dr. Thompson to change her career from teaching to counseling and administration? Part of the reason for the change was the stress that came from teaching and the challenge of teaching children from so many backgrounds and so many educational levels. Some children had tragic situations in their lives and Dr. Thompson became a self-described "emotional basket case." The counseling courses were intended to better her teaching skills but began to appeal to her as a career. Another reason for her change in career came in the form of a professor named Dr. Mabry. At first, they butted heads. Then, to make up for it, the two became very close. Dr. Mabry became her mentor, and the two still correspond to this day. Dr. Thompson describes Dr. Mabry as "a brilliant man, a renaissance man," and their friendship made her feel "really intelligent, really capable, because he expected a lot. He never doubted for one second that I could do anything."

After switching to counseling and administration, Dr. Thompson took a job at Berry College in Rome, Georgia as an associate dean. She stayed there for four years, and then she went to Georgia Southern University as an administrator and graduate faculty in the College of Education. She remained at Georgia Southern for twelve years, and then came to Clayton College and State University in 1996. Since then, she has served the university as the Vice President and Dean of Students.

Dr. Thompson now wants to return to teaching. CCSU now has given her the chance. Her career has come full circle, and this semester, Dr. Thompson is teaching Psychology and Human Development. She is eager to begin teaching again and to have a direct interaction with students on a daily basis. As a last note from Dr. Thompson, she offers this advice: "Put passion into people, not into plans, structures, organizational charts and goals, or objectives."

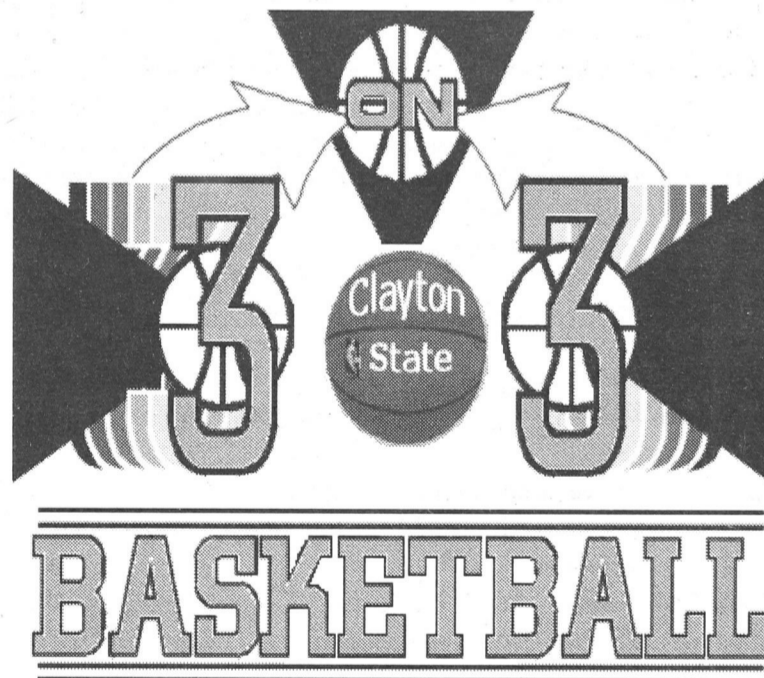


It's been over a year since our last update for the student body, but we have the results in once again. To those of you who are new here, this is where you can see what faculty and staff members have outstanding parking citations. While we students receive holds on our records for unpaid tickets, they receive a slap on the wrist. So, without further ado, here's Clayton State's MOST WANTED!

- E. Bakhtim
- Katrina Barnes
- Dave Hanson
- Edward Hohlbein
- Robert Serredell
- John Shiffert
- Alejandro Sitar
- Bethany D. Stillion
- Thomas Barnett

If you have any questions please contact the Office of Public Safety!

3-on-3 Basketball Tournament



Don't miss your opportunity to enter a team for the 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday, February 22 (open to students, faculty, and staff). The registration deadline is Friday, February 14.

Please go to the Clayton State Intramural website for more registration information and required forms:

http://admins-services.clayton.edu/studentlife/Intramural%20Sports/intramural_sports.htm

Parking...Is it a Problem???

By Kevin Dixon
Staff Columnist



It's 9:25 in the morning and you have just pulled into the campus... whew, you're saved. You still have five minutes to run into the building and beat the professor to class. But wait...not again; all the parking spaces are gone! You spend the next 20 minutes making U-turns hoping to find a space close to the Technology or A&S Building. So, you get to class 20 minutes late after finally deciding to double park and just pay the \$5.00 fine for a ticket. Immediately after class you go straight to the library and write a strong worded e-mail to the Student Government whining about the parking nightmare on campus.

But to your surprise, you're e-mail is returned with the subject line, "What parking nightmare?" You see, we live in an era of spoiled citizens. Two things happen, we whine and then we get! Well, sorry folks, things have got to change. If you're too lazy to walk a small ways, then please find another university to attend. Everyday there are close to 200 empty parking spaces located at Spivey Hall, the Music Building, CE Building and the Athletics Building. All of which are no more than a ten-minute walk away from your destination. However, on a daily basis you will see students circling the same lot 20 times before they decide to illegally park somewhere.

What they don't realize is how good they have it. Let's say you attend a larger university in the downtown Atlanta area, and are told you have to take MARTA to get to class or that your 9:30 class is five miles away from your 11:00 class. What will you whine about then? If you whine loudly about this small parking issue may God help the Student Governments at larger universities.

So, solutions...what are they? More parking spaces? NO! One, you could actually get to class early instead of stressing yourself out and getting here five minutes before it begins. Two, you could actually get the exercise you probably need and walk a very small ways to class. Three, you could withdraw from college, go home and rot away because you were too lazy to actually get a quality education! Take the initiative and break away from the lazy lifestyle that the American Society has so strongly embraced. Besides, the cold will soon be gone and the amazing spring weather will be upon us, and the walk will actually be enjoyable. So, I say again...parking problem...what parking problem?



A CCSU Text Book Monopoly

Redd Horrocks
Entertainment Editor

How much did you spend on your textbooks this semester? I spent \$300 on mine. It's very depressing that the bookstore has a monopoly on textbooks now in this area and that they are all so expensive. Look at it this way, I paid about a quarter of my rent for the whole semester for my textbooks. That's a whole month that I could have a roof over my head in exchange for four books that I barely use. It's not so bad when you are actually getting a lot of good use out of your textbooks, but when your Professor can barely remember their title you know you just wasted a huge amount of money.

For example, last semester I bought a Math book. It cost me \$105. It came with lots of pretty software that was supposed to help you through the course. I never opened that software, I got a high B anyway, and when I tried to sell the books back, they would only give me \$16. Goodbye \$89, goodbye 40 cups of good chai tea at Starbucks, goodbye 18 trips to see a new movie, goodbye being able to have breakfast for six weeks. Isn't it sad? They are too expensive when you compare the use that you are getting out of them. The worst thing is that you can't buy used books from the school bookstore that have had software come with you. In almost every Math course you have to buy a brand new book.

Other expensive courses include the sciences, and I even heard of a Logic book for \$80. People really haven't quite figured out that we are student and as such have no money!

Then there are the hardback books that we know would be maybe \$15 less expensive in paperback, but we don't get that option.

I caved in and searched for one of my English books on the internet this semester, a desperate attempt to find it cheaper. I finally found one on Half.com saving me \$10. So I ordered the book, my card was charged...and it took five weeks for the book to arrive! The unreliability if purchasing on the internet means that we really aren't left with an option other than to buy from the school bookstore.

So what could be done about this? Well, unfortunately, not a lot. Although it would be nice if the professors seriously considered the price of the books when they choose them, along with how much they actually plan for us to use them. Perhaps the bookstore could look again at their profit margin and see if they could give us a couple more dollars of breathing room. Ah well, here's hoping. I guess I'll just tighten my belt and make sure I choose courses next semester with those three magical words next to them... 'No Textbook Required'.

Classified Ads at Clayton State

Stephen King book- *Wizard and Glass*. Hardcover. Great conditon but slight tear of dust cover. \$8 O.B.O Please e-mail redssky@hotmail.com with offers, with Bent Tree Classifieds in subject line.

Limp Bizkit- Significant Other CD. Perfect condition. \$5, O.B.O
Please e-mail redssky@hotmail.com with offers, with Bent Tree Classifieds in subject line.

Nintendo 64 Game System, rarely used. Comes with 2 games, 2 controllers. \$50 dollars, O.B.O.
Contact me at csu10191@mail.claytonstate.net with Bent Tree Classifieds in the subject line.

Left Behind books for sale. *Tribulation Force* and *Nicolae*. Brand new condition. \$7.00 per book. Contact csu13263@mail.claytonstate.net with Bent Tree Classifieds in the subject Line

Babysitter in search of employment! I am a 22-year-old female student at CCSU. Lots of babysitting experience: newborns through adolescents. Will babysit at my home in Fayetteville or your home if in south metro area. Work for \$6 and up depending on the number of children. Contact csu13263@mail.claytonstate.net

Virginity for Sale: One lonely female wants to sell virginity in order to pay for breast enlargement surgery. Serious buyers only. \$2,000. 555-555-5555... or btree@mail.clayton.edu

Large personal enhancement pump for sale: You've seen the infomercials now try the real deal. This wonderful tool has added inches to my.....um self. I have cleaned it up pretty good and it has been professionally disinfected. Buy now and become the life of the party. 555-555-5555... or btree@mail.clayton.edu

If you would like to place a classified ad in the Bent Tree, please contact us at Btree@mail.clayton.edu for rates.

Looking for Reality-Based Spirituality? Check out Christian Campus Ministries

By Ashley Spillers
Assistant Editor



The truth is Campus Ministry has not changed much over the years. The lectures and discussions Campus Ministry offers can often be described as general or standard. The Christian Campus Ministry at CCSU is trying a new approach. The discussions will be in-depth and will focus on the reality of the Bible and the questions that may arise from puzzling aspects of Scripture. The focus of this organization is to question and does not shy away from asking "why." Faculty sponsor of CCM and Campus Ministry enthusiast Dr. Greg Hampikian notes that, "Reality-based shows are a hit, and reality-based spirituality is what a lot of people are looking for. It turns out that truth and mystery are quite comfortable together."

The goal of this organization, according to Dr. Hampikian, is to "make the Gospel real, [and] let it stand up to scrutiny, academic investigation, [and] comparisons to other faiths and philosophies." The intention of the meetings is to allow students to question their faith and to learn more about the Bible as a whole. The purpose of this organization is to not only discuss beliefs, but also to discuss why people believe them.

CCM will discuss and study many topics, such as: how the Bible was written, what the Bible and Church say about sexuality in all forms (premarital sex, birth control, abortion, and homosexuality), scriptural poetry and comedy, and ideas about Evolution and Creation. CCM will also explore other faiths and religions. Speakers and practitioners from other faiths, such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Humanism, and Atheism, will inform the group about what they believe. Christian Campus Ministries is open to discuss controversial topics, but does not look for controversy. Dr. Hampikian invites everyone and anyone to attend meetings and "hopes that the group is always honest and humble enough to attract people who have very different beliefs, just want to hang out, or maybe get a free lunch. Diversity is to learning what creativity is to art."

Christian Campus Ministries meets every Tuesday at noon in room B-10, and usually has a free lunch. Everyone is welcome.

Last semester at Finals, Christian Campus Ministries sponsored a Study With Your Professors Night in the cafeteria. It went very well, and some of the local Methodist churches fed us a nice meal. We had 10 professors and more than 70 students who studied and tutored from 7-10PM. We would like to do it again, and invite any other campus organizations that might want to co-sponsor to join in. I can't think of any better way to serve our students, and still provide a fun time of social interaction.

The dates will be
MIDTERM: Tuesday, February 18, 7-10 PM
FINALS: Tuesday, April 22, 7-10 PM

Well Whataya Know, Common Sense...at Clayton State!

By Brian Gardiner
Opinions Editor

Most of the articles that I have written for the Bent Tree have revolved around the stupidity of someone. Whether I am writing about a single person, or a group of people, the central idea is that the subject of my article is someone, or something, completely and utterly stupid. So today I have decided to focus on the more positive aspects of life, in particular life on the Clayton State Campus. While this semester began with an increase in parking headaches and an increase of brain dead morons that don't belong in college, something else has also happened. A wave of common sense seems to have swept over the campus during our winter break and the student body (for the time being) is reaping the rewards. For example, last semester our campus experienced a few problems with laptops being stolen from the holding area adjacent to the campus store. You know, that area where we are stripped of our belongings and forced to leave them unattended, at least, that's how it used to be. This semester someone came up with the simplistically brilliant idea of checking in our bags at the door in order to prevent theft of student's belongings. While this is by no means the invention of the wheel, it does illustrate the point that the common sense bug seems to be spreading at Clayton State. In addition to the campus bookstore improving its ability to provide some sense of security for students, administration has also begun to create some simple, but effective, initiatives to improve life here at Clayton State.

The increased use of the hybrid courses at Clayton State has also improved life on campus in a simple and effective way. The initial problem that the hybrid course was created to combat was scheduling. Clayton State, being a commuter campus, has some unique problems. In particular, many of the students enrolled at Clayton State must work either full or part time jobs while attending classes and as a result many students are available to take classes at wildly different times. Classes at Clayton State range from 7:30 am to 9:30 pm and even some brave souls attend classes on Saturdays. Even though some students may be willing to take classes on Saturdays, many are not. As a result, many students would like to see more classes offered online. However, the faculty understandably has a problem with offering certain courses in an online format. The major problem with offering some coursework in online format is that the student-professor interaction is greatly reduced, no matter how many emails you send it is extremely difficult to replicate the personalized learning that can take place between a professor and a student during a face to face discussion. The hybrid classes (hybrid meaning half online half lecture) allow students to have greater flexibility and also allow for greater interaction between the students and the professor. Once again this simplistic answer to a complicated problem seems to have resolved many problems concerning quality of learning and availability of classes.

If Clayton State continues to draw larger number of students each semester as it has in the past couple of years, and it continues to build as it has in the past couple of years, then simple solutions to complex problems will be exactly what the University will need to strive and to grow. It is these simple solutions to life's daily hassles that makes life better. Don't get me wrong, new buildings are great and fancy new classrooms are wonderful, but no amount of building or technology can make a student forget that their laptop was stolen from a mandated drop zone. That can only be done by using common sense, nothing else.

Questionable Freedom

By Tim Grantham
CCSU Student
csu10437@mail.claytonstate.net

In this great land of ours where all are created equal and given certain inalienable rights, one must question, "Are we all free to express ourselves in the manner we are created?" Are all Americans equal or does it only appear to be that way? "Liberty and justice for all," is it really adhered to? Does this nation truly believe in what it preaches? Many people in our society would, without question, respond, "yes". Yet, I would have to disagree with them.

Everyday, 2-10% of all legal law-abiding Americans are disrespected and denied certain human rights lawfully. Who? You may ask. Well, it is our homosexual community.

I personally know an individual who honorably served in the U.S. Army as an Airborne Ranger.

His specific duties were to acquire and maintain the highest levels of secret materials this nation had to offer regarding real world intelligence. His career placed him in some of the most elite, secretive and dangerous military units in the world such as: the 75th Ranger Regiment, 10th Mountain Division (Commandos) and the 18th Intelligence Battalion. He helped to gather much of the intelligence regarding the Iraqi Republican Guard (their special forces), before and during Desert Storm in the early 1990's. Yet, none of this would have been possible if he had told them that he was a bi-sexual. During his service career the "don't ask, don't tell" policy wasn't even an issue. I know this, because I am that man.

Putting it mildly, had I made my sexual orientation known or suspected, I would have been given a dishonorable discharge. Something considered so extreme and frowned upon in our society, I would hardly be able to find a job in the civilian world. Moreover, our government, to this day, would bar me from re-enlistment even with all the knowledge I possess (most

of this knowledge and secretive information is so sensitive that I am under contract for 50 years before I am allowed to even speak a single word of it) regarding the enemies of our nation. Not because I have loose lips, poor eye-sight or cover under aggressive behavior...NO...I have proven my abilities to maintain sensitive material and have exceptional skills for long distant and hand to hand combat. I would be barred for one simple reason: Sexual Orientation. See, the right to defend our nation or its policies is not granted to me or others like me.

Other rights not guaranteed to my community are the right to live where I want, the right to a higher education, the right to possess health or life insurance, the right to possess a job, the right to visit a loved one dying in the hospital, the right to pay fair taxes and the right to marriage. So I ask you, do you believe that all are created equal? Do you believe in liberty and justice for all? If you do, would you join me in the effort of bringing some of that belief to this campus by starting an Alternative

Awareness Association (Gay and Straight organization).

We are known nationally as the most diverse university in its population. And I know by pure statistics that our student body has anywhere from 110 to 550 lesbian, gay, bi, and transgender persons in it. Therefore, I challenge you to take a step forward to join me in the effort of bringing a minority population a place to feel free and accepted without the fear of prejudice and discrimination here on this campus. Let us all feel the FREEDOM our country so proudly proclaims.

If you have any questions about our campus diversity please contact the Office of Diversity and Disability Services.

Love from a Professor

Stories compiled by
Ashley Spillers and Kevin Dixon

How many times in your life have you had a moment where you stop and say, "That'll be a story I'll share with my grandkids one day?" Most of the memories we choose to remember are those that we shared with our loved ones, and what better place to share those stories than with the staff at the *Bent Tree*. The following stories are fictional but are actual events that happened to a select few of Clayton State's esteemed faculty. Having the chance to better acquaint ourselves with them, helps reassure us that they actually have lives away from campus. I hope you all enjoy these stories as much as we did! Happy Valentine's Day!

A Valentine's Day Story

Dr. Steve Spence

I grew up in South Florida, and my most memorable Valentine's Day is definitely the night that I took my new girlfriend down to the beach to look at the moon. We had a blanket, a bottle of champagne, and a beautiful, warm evening. Everything was working perfectly, and I hoped that this would be the night we took our relationship to a new level. Imagine how I felt then—halfway to the beach—when I dropped the champagne bottle on the curb and it exploded. A piece of the glass blew straight up, gashing my elbow on its way past my head. One minute I was Don Juan; the next I was bleeding. Fortunately, an off-duty lifeguard heard the explosion and came over to patch me up. My girlfriend and I spent the rest of that Valentine's Day on the couch, watching television.

The Delayed Surprise

Debra Durden

A couple of years ago, when I was having some medical problems, I got a really neat present for Valentine's Day. I was having pains through Thanksgiving and our anniversary is December 1, so we didn't exactly have a great anniversary because I was sick the whole time. We made it to Christmas still in pain but by then they finally figured out that it was my gall bladder, but I wasn't allowed to eat much without having an attack. I was living on rice and very bland type of foods. I had to go through Christmas without the goodies and was dropping pounds left and right. Finally, they set up the surgery for February and I had it right before Valentine's Day. So, my husband decided to treat me to a wonderful Valentine's Day gift (celebrated during Spring Break because of my surgery) with a trip to Aruba. So, it was just the two of us for a very romantic four days in a sunny paradise!

A Classic Love Story

Dr. Donna McCarty

I met my husband, John, at a Christmas job when I was still in high school and he was a freshman at Ga. Tech. We really clicked, but I was dating my high school sweetheart (Russ) so we didn't go out at that time. John would check with me every year or so to see if I was available but I was always still dating the same guy. John and I worked together a second Christmas, and I could never quite get him out of my mind. Finally, John graduated from Tech and took a mechanical engineering job away from Atlanta for a couple of years. He realized he didn't really like being an engineer, so he quit his job, took his savings and went to Kenya, Africa for 3 months to go through a physically rigorous program with the National Outdoor Leadership School; then, he was asked to stay on as a teaching assistant for another 3 months. By this time, I hadn't heard from him in almost two years, and thought I would never see him again. Right before he left Kenya, he was sailing down the coast of Africa from Lamu to Mombasa on an African "dhow" (a fishing boat used on the Indian Ocean), when he thought of me and decided to call me one last time when he got home. At that point, I was in graduate school at UGA in Athens and my Mom was visiting me. When John returned to the United States and called my house, my Dad was being silly because he thought it was my Mom, and answered the phone "Kelly's Pool Hall." John almost hung up (thinking our number had changed!), but decided to double-check the number. My Dad remembered him, apologized for the confusing way he'd answered the phone, and then told him where to find me. John came to Athens to visit me and, when I opened the door to my apartment and saw him standing there, tan and fit, with his hair long and bleached from the African sun, my knees actually went weak (the first and only time that has ever happened to me in my life). I was engaged and was supposed to be married in just a few months to Russ, but when I opened that door and saw John, I knew that it wasn't going to be Russ I was going to marry! When I told Russ that I couldn't marry him because there was someone else I kept thinking of, he looked right at me and said, "I'll bet it's John McCarty!" — even he felt the connection between us. Nine months later, John and I were married, and we will be having our 25th wedding anniversary next month on March 18th, 2003! (By the way, Russ met someone wonderful who was perfect for him, and he is still married to her, so it worked out well for him, too!).

Our First Dance

Dr. Greg Hampikian

I was 20 years old when Janet Callahan moved into the Lab Science House. It was a new concept at the University of Connecticut, let a bunch of science majors share a dorm with an actual computer monitor, hooked up to the big campus main frame. I was the Resident Assistant, and among the perks of the job was a single room—the only one in the house—right next to the dining hall. I remember when Janet checked in, I recognized her from a chance meeting the year before. She was tall and beautiful, with curly blond hair and intelligent, alluring blue eyes. The Lab Science House (which we called Lab Science Dorm, because of the acronym) attracted some very focused, serious engineering types, and a few people like me. Janet was one of the most conservative engineering students in the house, and I was an amateur philosopher/comedian, who liked to stay up late, keeping the dining room open until the wee hours of the morning.

We didn't see too much of each other that first semester, because Janet always retired early, and had little time for my expositions on politics, science and other things that I knew a little about. One day, I was arguing with a senior philosophy major about ethics, playing the devil's advocate in front of a crowd—and winning. When Janet came down for the meal, I really let it rip: expostulating with wit and arrogance. Some of our dorm mates chimed in with their own considered opinions, and so I turned to Janet and asked, "And what do you think about this?" She paused, and then said without emotion, "I just think you're wrong." During the second semester, I spent a lot of time at her supper table, and was pleased that she began to speak with me. Sometimes when I delivered the mail, she would play a jig on her recorder, and going down the hall I would do my best imitation of Highland dancing. A few days before the big holiday dance, she actually invited me to sit in her room for a while, and offered me a cup of tea. I considered this a very fortunate circumstance and one that might portend an actual date. I was right. She was trying to fix me up with her roommate; Janet already had a date.

I did get one dance with Janet that night, and I'll never forget it. She was wearing an Indian-print wrap around skirt, and when she smiled at me her eyes sparkled.



Knowing What Matters Most!

Dr. Linda Nash

"It's important to really know your lover in order to truly be romantic."

The day that I defended my doctoral dissertation, I was exhausted both emotionally and physically. Knowing that I was mentally drained, I wanted to just go home and spend time with my family (my husband and three young adult children) that evening. I came home that night and wanted to call a few of my family members, but it seemed that everyone I called was busy and the ones I did speak with were very short with me on the phone. Well, my husband had planned to take me out for dinner that night along with my children, and I was pleasantly surprised to see a Limo pull into our driveway to pick us up. That was just the first part to this wonderful evening. We got into the Limo, my husband and three sons (who were all dressed in suits... very unusual) and they presented me with a dozen long stem roses, gifts, but we didn't pull out of the driveway in the direction I was expecting. So, I started to pepper them with questions, but they kept diverting my attention with stories of my accomplishments and so I just sat back and enjoyed the time with my family. We had a pleasant ride, and after about an hour we pulled up to a beautiful southern mansion in Monroe, GA. You have to understand that I LOVE all things old and southern (one of my great loves in life). We were at the Blue Willow Inn and when my husband opened the limousine door I was mortified and embarrassed because he began to sprinkle rose petals along the walkway... I really wanted to stay hidden in the limo, but I thought, No, this big macho man was going through this effort. So, I swallowed my pride and stepped out of the Limo. The front porch of the mansion was just full of people applauding, but I thought, well I'll never see any of these people again. So, I went through all the motions, but when I got to the entrance I was surprised to see all my friends and all my family. My husband had gone through all the trouble to put together a surprise party to honor my academic accomplishment. I had my friends, my family, my children, my husband, gifts, flowers, and a beautiful setting... what more could a girl ask for!



I Know Love, Thankfully!

Brian Gardiner
Opinions Editor

Valentine's Day is very important to me. Not because of the gifts, or because of the amount of money I will inevitably spend, but because of the person that I spend it with. I can honestly say that I have experienced love and that I am experiencing love. For those of you who have never had someone to love and to hold, I'm sorry. I do not believe that all people are destined for love, or that each person has a soul mate that they will end up with no matter what they do. However, I do believe that if a person truly knows what they want from life, and truly knows what they believe in, then they can find another person who feels the same way. For me, my love seems to compliment my personality and bring me balance. She is sweet and caring and I am logical and honest. She is beautiful and quiet while I am loud and opinionated. She and I spend almost every day together, and I can honestly say that I never get tired of her. In fact, each time we are apart I look forward to being with her again. Many people criticize the amount of time we spend together and ask us if we feel smothered or held back in some way. I feel sorry for those people. It is quite evident to me that they have never had someone that they truly love. I never feel more free than when I am with her, she and I can be completely ourselves and do not have to fear criticism or shame. We can laugh or cry or we can say nothing at all because no matter what we do, say, or feel, we know that we will always have each other.

I am sure that some of you at this point may be rolling your eyes or thinking, I wonder how long that will last, but for the last three years we have been through a great deal and many things have changed, but we have remained the same. At one point, she and I were apart for nine months while she lived in California. Many people thought or hoped that we would not make it through the difficulties of having a long distance relationship, but we did. To me it was never a question of whether or not we would make it through difficult times, but rather, how we would make it through difficult times. I knew that regardless of the distance between us there was no other person on the planet that I would rather spend my life with. So what difference does a few months make? I knew that the pain and suffering I felt for a few months was an excellent investment toward a lifetime of happiness.

Already I have received a great deal of rewards from our relationship, because of her I have become more determined and responsible than I have ever been in my life. She has allowed me to envision my future, and to begin to forge a path to success. Without her, I don't know where I would be. So for this Valentine's Day I would simply like to say: Thank you, and Stephanie, I love you.

Intimate Insights

Dear Intimate Insights,

My boyfriend and I have been seeing each other for four months now. It feels like the relationship has become routine. We never seem to have any passion and I don't feel as excited to see him as I used to. How can I get back to the way things were?

I once asked a friend who had been married twenty-something years what her secret was to a happy marriage. She answered that the key to a marriage is dating. So if things are routine now... change the routine. Go to dinner, go to see a movie. If you can't afford anything fancy, just go to the Dollar Theatre and Waffle House. Spend time with each other away from something that you normally do. When relationships first start there is always that passion, the discovery of something bright and new. It's common for that little spark to fade. It doesn't mean your relationship is doomed, it just means that you have taken it in a different direction. Breaking the routine is the key. If there is no routine that needs breaking, then talk to him. Ask him if there is anything he wants to do that he hasn't mentioned. Try and coax him gently into telling you something you didn't know... but don't push him. You never know, he may surprise you. The routine can be nice and comforting though... don't take it for granted. You might miss it if it stops being there.

Dear Intimate Insights,

My girlfriend is hoping that she and I can have a nice and special Valentine's Day, but I just don't know what to do. How do I give her the perfect date she is looking for?

This is a tricky scenario because everyone's idea of a perfect date is different. There are two roads you can go down... the "I need to pay my rent because I'm a student" route", or the "I stole Dad's credit card" route".

The less expensive idea would be to invite your date to your apartment (or borrow someone else's) and cook for her. If you can't cook, don't worry... buy something in a packet, and follow directions. Pasta is the food of love, you can't go far wrong there. Just have a couple of candles burning on the table and the mood will be sweet enough. Rent a movie... something she's mentioned she wants to see. For gifts, give her a teddy bear. If you can stretch to it, greet her with a single red rose, for passion, or a single white rose for pure love. If you want her to really like you, all women love having their shoulders massaged.

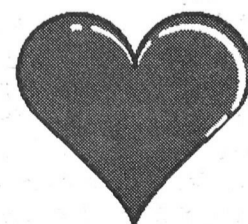
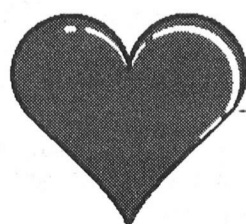
Now, if you stole your Dad's credit card, or just happen to have a large sum of money, you get the easy option. Greet her with a dozen red or white roses, take her to a movie (let her pick which one), take her to dinner in an Italian or Chinese restaurant. Italian is first choice, but if you or she doesn't like it, Chinese works just as well. For a gift, give her jewelry. Pay attention to what she wears... if she never changes her necklace or earrings, do not buy her new ones. A nice watch, bracelet or necklace is good. Stay away from a ring unless you are planning on proposing. Ring sizes are very hard to guess and it's no fun to get a present and have to give it back for resizing. So there are your two options... have a great date and don't forget to retrieve your end of the goodnight kiss!

VHAPROMANCE
 APYBVAL ENHW
 LACEKTINUOE
 ESRMNTDGRCN
 NSUIIESRAOO
 TESNPDAYCLI
 ISHEDDFROAT
 NSOMNYTVUTC
 EIH AABE EPEE
 BKWEDENTLSF
 TORHEARTEEF
 BEUSRROSESA

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| Love | Red and Pink |
| Roses | Romance |
| Chocolates | Couple |
| Teddy Bear | Crush |
| Heart | Valentine |
| Be Mine | Bow and Arrow |
| Hugs | Affection |
| Kisses | Us |
| Lace | |

Fill in the Blanks with the letters not circled, and see a special message!

The *Bent Tree* wishes you
 all a Happy Valentine's
 Day



Political Knowledge...Do You Have It?

By Brian Gardiner
Opinions Editor
csu10951@mail.claytonstate.net

Now that the midterm elections are over, I am painfully aware of how uninformed a great deal of our student body is when it comes to politics. Some people choose a political party because of their parents, and others choose a political party because they think the other party is racist. Even scarier than that is the fact that some people choose a political party because of what they heard on the news. So, being the kind, warmhearted, guy that I am, I have decided to give you all a brief, realistic, education in politics.

Republicans are thought to be the "conservative" political party but that is only partly true. While Republicans are typically more economically conservative, they are almost always the most socially liberal. Simply put: Republicans don't want to control your wallet, they want to control your soul. Republicans consistently vote to impose certain religious beliefs on the American people and consistently vote to increase the amount of laws that attempt to correct morality. Some prominent examples of this are the war on drugs, and bans on pornography. While I personally have no interest in either pornography or drugs it is not the place of government to tell you and I what we can and can't have in the privacy of my own home. By increasing the amount of laws legislating morality Republicans are **liberally** using government. Personally however, I much rather have a party in office that attempts to legislate morality (because it doesn't work anyway) than a party that takes my money and spends it on programs I don't want. Regardless, of whether or not I think that my own money should go to a particular charity or cause, it is not my right to point a gun at a fellow American and tell them "you better pay for my grandma's medicine, or your going to jail." Which is basically what social programs do.

Democrats successfully use race, and scare tactics to trick people into giving them their paycheck. Once the race card has been played to death (hopefully this election shows that it is at least at death's door) the Democratic Party is nothing more than a movement toward a socialized economy. The Democrats are the party that is often referred to as the liberals because of their nasty habit of increasing taxes and redistributing wealth. People within the Democratic Party want us to believe that it is O.K. to take the money of the rich and give it to the poor. The only problem with that is in most cases rich people are rich because of hard work and poor people are poor because of bad decisions. Ultimately, all this system does is punish people who work hard and positively reinforce those who have not. While Democrats are most definitely liberal in terms of the economy, they are more conservative morally than the Republicans. Simply put: Democrats want in your wallet and don't care about your soul. Democrats are more likely to propose reduced spending on the war on drugs and will most likely not attempt to push any sort of religious agenda, in this way Democrats are using the government **conservatively**. Personally, this group scares me more than the Republicans because they are more likely to steal my check in order to gain power.

Now that we have gotten the two "big ones" out of the way I would like to discuss to other alternatives when deciding your political stance. The Libertarian Party, and the Green Party. The first party I would like to discuss is the Green Party. The Green Party presents itself as the party who will ultimately clean up the environment and save us all from an environmental apocalypse. That sounds great but the problem is: it's all a lie. The Green Party was initially called The Socialist Party, and actually wants to create a governmental system that would take control of all aspects of our lives. This would range from setting salaries for employees of privately held companies, to the redistribution of income on a scale that has never been seen before. This would mean that those who do not work would be paid and those who do work would be paid less. The following is taken from the Green Party platform located on their website: *We must take aggressive steps to restore a FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME. We support tax incentives for businesses that apply fair employee wage distributions standards, and income tax policies that restrict the accumulation of excessive individual wealth.* Translation: no longer would your hard work and education decide how much money you make, the government would decide how much money you make. The last time this was tried on a large scale was in a little country you may have heard of, the Soviet Union.

Finally, now that I have gotten all of the **WRONG** parties out of the way, I can discuss a party that serves as a beacon of hope that one day our country will return to the ideals of our fore fathers. "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness — That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed (Preamble, Declaration of Independence)". Now I don't know about you, but that gives me the chills, and the Libertarian party is the only party that truly believes in freedom as our countries' founders envisioned it. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that was the intent of the founders of our nation and anything that interferes with those rights is unjust and Un-American. The Libertarian party believes that it is not the position of the government to tell us how to be happy, to tell us how to live, or to tell us how our money should be spent. The Libertarian party wants to remove income taxes, abolish the IRS, and repeal laws that legislate morality. Hopefully, one day this party will take control of our country and we can all be allowed to govern our own lives. Unfortunately, many of you want to decide the morals of others and want to redistribute wealth. I have a suggestion, LEAVE MY COUNTRY ALONE! If you honestly believe that wealth should be redistributed, and that the government should tell people how to be moral you should move to a country that was founded on those ideals because this country wasn't.



Michelle
Lawrimore
Editor-in-Chief

A Letter From the Editor: Write for the Bent Tree!

I have been working on the *Bent Tree* staff for two years now, but I remember how hesitant I was before I joined. I was afraid that it would take over my life and that I wouldn't have any free time, because I would always be writing articles. Not true. What I realized very quickly was that this is a club that allows you to be as involved or uninvolved as you want to be. You

can write ten articles per issue or none at all.

The best thing about being on the staff and writing is that my opinions are heard. Plus, it's a lot of fun to have the freedom to be creative and to challenge the limits of permissibility.

We have a dedicated, diverse staff that produces wonderfully diverse articles. Our meetings are always interesting and full of crazy ideas that are molded into great ideas. I worked my way up to be the new Editor-in-Chief this semester, and so far, my favorite part of the new job is interacting with the other staff members. My one complaint is that we still do not have enough writers. I would like to extend an invitation to every person on campus who has ever even heard of the *Bent Tree* to please consider writing with us. You don't even need

to join the staff, but of course, you are welcome to do so. We will accept articles and article ideas from anyone who takes the time to contact us. Also, feedback about the newspaper is greatly appreciated!
Btree@mail.clayton.edu

Michelle Lawrimore
Editor-in-Chief

Please e-mail all
comments to
Btree@mail.clayton.edu
---we love to hear from
you!

OUR STAFF

Editor-in-Chief
Michelle Lawrimore

Assistant Editor
Ashley Spillers

Photo Editor
Steven Straker

Entertainment Editor
Redd Horrocks

Opinions/Editorial
Editor
Brian Gardiner

Columnists
Jonathan Gillespie
Kevin Dixon

Staff Writers
Lauren Baker
Leigh Duncan
Matt Schilling
Gerald Heavens
Brian Densmore

Photographers
Toby Manolis
Sondra Landrum

If you would like to see your name here, please contact us about joining our team!

Btree@mail.clayton.edu

The *Bent Tree* wishes you all a Happy Valentine's Day