

THE BENT TREE

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CCSU STUDENT NEWSPAPER



How Secure is Clayton Place?

By Redd Horrocks

It seems every semester we hear a new story about something awful happening at Clayton Place. Whether it is rumors of someone being beaten up by robbers, or cleaning crews leaving doors open so anyone can walk in, it is obvious that something is not quite right there. Shockingly, these events tend to get suppressed quickly, or people forget about them. This is something that must stop, so here I will tell the story of Sally (whose name has been changed for privacy) in Sally's own words. Sally was away for Thanksgiving break, as were the rest of her roommates. When she returned, she found that three of the four bedrooms in her Clayton Place apartment had been broken into, including hers.

"I came home on Sunday night and I opened up my bedroom door. It was perfectly fine, they had locked it back the way it was so I wouldn't even notice coming in. I went in my bedroom door and Jewelry boxes were open, there were CD's scattered about, and my laptop was gone. Of course, later on I realized that they had stolen other stuff."

I then asked Sally if there was any sign of how they got in, to which she responded "My bedroom door wasn't messed up, but the other two girls that were robbed, one of their doorframes was cracked and the other one was completely busted off, because they kicked in the doors. They came in through the window that is in our living room. The police found handprints, and the mesh screen that goes in front of the window was taken off. They came in through the window and went out our patio door. They stole my book bag, my CD player, drinks out of my refrigerator, all my soda except my root beer, my laptop, speakers, Web-cam and they stole a jar of change that I had. Clayton Place just said they were sorry it happened. One of my roommates wanted to move and break her lease because she didn't feel safe there, but they told her

she couldn't break her lease and that anywhere you live you have the risk of being robbed. From what I understand there was nobody there in the office on Thanksgiving, and I don't think even security was patrolling. I live in the front and if someone had driven down that street, they would have seen someone going in my window. It makes me mad that they are not really sympathetic about what happened and they haven't done anything except fix our doors."

In all, two laptops, three CD's players and several other items including a diamond earring and necklace set were stolen from Sally's apartment. She was faced with losing many of her valuable items as well as feeling unsafe in her own home. The thing she seemed most upset about was that security had not stopped the robbery while it was in progress.

At all times, Clayton State has a minimum of two police officers patrolling the grounds and Clayton Place. Judging by the size of the school, that would probably be fine for the main campus as you could have one on either side of the lake. The problem arises when it comes to Clayton Place. This is a large apartment complex with a lot of people, and it simply needs additional security. As Clayton Place is affiliated with, but not owned by the school itself, this is their responsibility, not the responsibility of the Campus Police. If an outside security company was hired to have people at Clayton Place at all times, surely the risk of theft would decline, and the safety of the students would increase. Even one more person keeping an eye on things could make a difference. If it could stop people like Sally from losing their valuable belongings and their sense of personal safety, isn't it worth a little extra cash? *Clayton Place were given five weeks to comment on the concerns with their security, but no response was received.*

This article is not endorsed by Clayton College and State University.

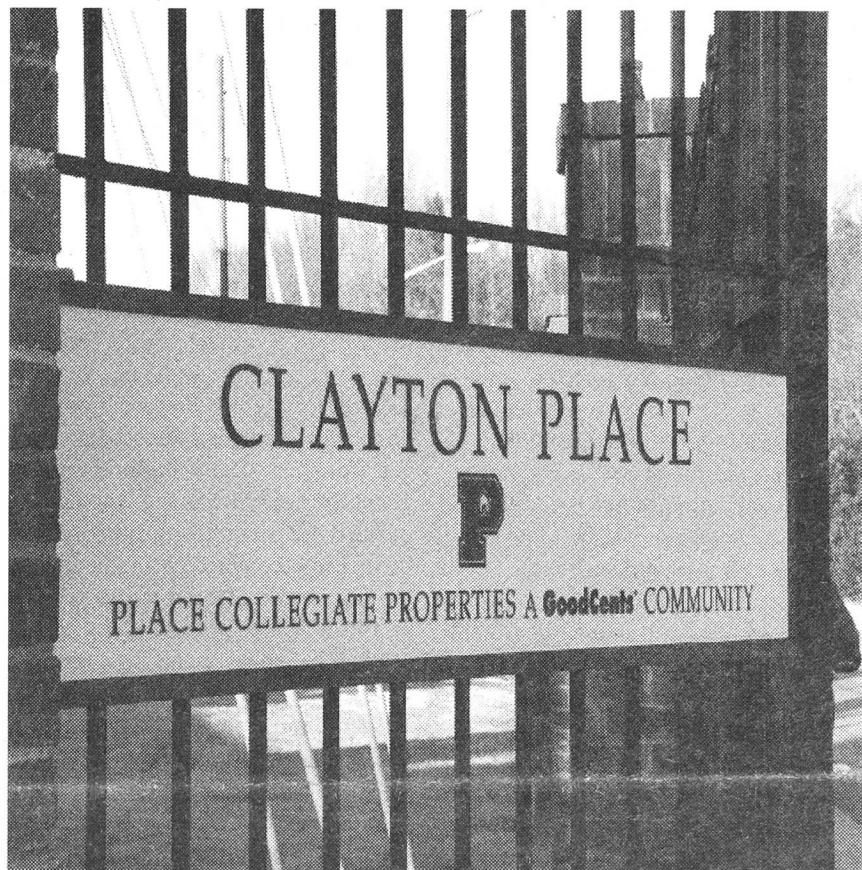


Photo courtesy of Michelle Palan

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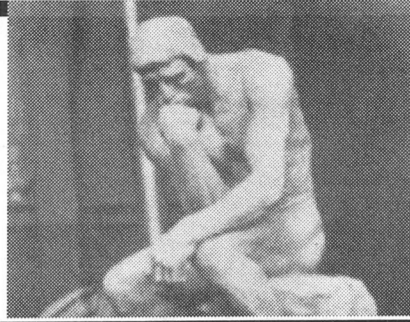
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Write for the *Bent Tree!*
Contact us @
Btree @mail.clayton.edu



Opinions

My New Year Honor List:

Order Of The Excited Ducks—Upper Class

By Bernard Asubonteng

The year 2003 is gone forever, and in its place comes 2004 with its uncertainties. Globally, the geopolitical morass in the past year witnessed widespread wars, earthquakes, floods, and terrorist activities. Also, job exportations disguised as outsourcing, unemployment or snail-paced job hiring opportunities, the AIDS menace, and a host of other global “hot potatoes” were the order of the day in the past year. In relative terms, however, one would say 2003 was not all that different from the preceding year. In any event, one hopes that the new year we’ve just been ushered in to will be a little different from the past year in terms of peace, prosperity, and the realization of our individual set goals. Having said that, let us change gears now and shift the discussion to our beloved school campus—CCSU. As said earlier, 2003 is history; however, we all know that history does not occur in a vacuum. In many instances, humans or people help to make history possible. Or, human beings humanize history, making it more meaningful than it would have been without humans’ inputs. It’s in recognition of this factor that I’ve come up with a modest *Award* to honor some people or a group of people on our great campus, whose contributions throughout the previous year(s), for better or for worse, helped in no small measure to bring our beloved school to this point. It must be pointed out, though, that this exercise, especially the grading part, is meant to be a joke—just creating some fun—no ill-feelings. Now the honorees for the year 2003 are:

CCSU President: On assuming office, one of the landmark decisions taken by Dr. T. Harden was to ditch the unfair practices whereby every

CCSU student was forced to rent out-modeled Laptop computers every semester. If I’m not mistaken, each student’s charge per semester for the laptop rental was over \$300. It’s true that schools and colleges across the nation have been entangled in the hi-tech web, which is not a bad development at all. In fact, computers have become indispensable tools in modern communities, including schools. It was not surprising that CCSU was one of the first schools in the nation to embrace computers or the Internet as a study tool. But in its bid to go hi-tech, CCSU was unfairly renting obsolete laptops to students at cutthroat fees. The disturbing thing about the system was that at the end of the day the computer did not belong to the poor renter (student). Then came Dr. Harden in the helm of affairs. Clearly, he quickly realized the mess in the computer rental system in the school and wisely dumped it. I think that decision was a matchless act of a sensitive and calculated college president. Many other students I talked to concerning that decision expressed their profound gratitude to the school leader. In the same token, a great deal of students hope and count on Dr. Harden to use his good offices as we enter the new year, to change the current practice whereby students’ Social Security Numbers (SSN) appear almost “everywhere” on campus. In other words, the SSN is used as an ID tag. For example, I paid a parking ticket in the Fall of 2003 and the cashier at the Public Safety Office wrote my SSN on the receipt issued to me. Why the number was needed on the receipt, I’ve no clue; and I didn’t ask to find out either. In light of this naked display of our SSN, is there a

way the school authorities can assign different numbers (IDs) as opposed to student’s SSN? Most students think that this measure will go a long way to reduce the incidence of identity fraud mushrooming across the nation. This president (Dr. Harden) had proved before that he is not afraid to make bold decisions. Certainly, the foregoing suggestion is not beyond the cure of the president’s capabilities. Mr. President, the ball is in your court, as usual. Also, the president’s Diversity Policy since assuming office is excellent. Keep it up! *Overall Ratings: A+.*

Fellow students: As we are cruising through the year 2004, let’s hope that most of us will learn the rudiments or some simple manners in talking on a cell phone in public places, such as the library. The school library has signs almost everywhere, telling students not to talk on their cell phones while in the library, yet most ignore this civilized warning and take the rules into their selfish hands. The irritating thing about this scenario is that in most cases these cell phone users appear to be “showing off” their cell phones by talking loud in a manner that seems to say: “I’ve a cell phone, see me talking?” Indeed, a cell phone is proving to be a necessary gadget each passing day; no one is saying one cannot use it. What this column is suggesting is that telephone or cell phone use has its etiquette, especially in the learning place like the library. If you want to talk all day on a cell phone, go out and do just that; the library or the classroom is the wrong place to rant loudly on the phone. Let’s resolve to do better this year than last year. *Ratings: C-*

Campus police: I think one of the safest college campuses is CCSU; and the credit goes to the school Public Safety Department. Clearly, the school police have done and continue to do a wonderful job in keeping the campus

safe—bravo! However, as the student population is growing with its attendant parking problems, it’s hoped the college police correspondingly will exercise some “reasonable” discretion vis-à-vis issuing parking tickets. For example, in the first day of each semester or during the first week when the school is so crowded, may our tireless police focus more on warning tickets than issuing actual tickets? This is my opinion. *Ratings: A*

The Hub: As usual, some of the Hub’s assistants have superb cordial rapport; whereas others’ customer service is suspect. *Ratings: B-*

The Faculty: I think CCSU has an impressive faculty. Most of the teaching staff have advanced degrees—PhDs, and other professional qualifications. Despite all these though, almost all students have their favorite instructors and/or professors. Don’t ask me why, it’s an open secret among most students. *Ratings: A*

The Library Photocopiers: The performance or the quality of the photocopy prints in the library leaves much to be desired. I guess it’s about time for major repairs to be done to the copiers or for them to be replaced with new ones. Those copiers are badly crying for help. *Ratings: C-*

School’s Basketball: Just curious; did the teams win any trophy or championship game(s) last year? What was the trend of the school sports teams in 2003? Did they bring home gold or wooden medals? I mean the men and women Lakers? *Ratings: C*

P/S: For all those who did not make the list this year, don’t panic for your day will definitely come. Welcome back folks, we’re blessed we’ve survived another New Year.

YOUNG DEMOCRATS OF GEORGIA

A new Organization for budding Politicos of the Democratic Persuasion is being started. Meet new people who share your Democratic Ideals, help elect Democrats in surrounding Counties and the State, and let’s get together and talk about what’s going on in America and how we can help steer this blasted Hummer. No dues to join. Free food from time to time. Email us at sgodfrey@ugaalum.uga.edu or call 770-383-9872 to register by phone. A meeting will be called as soon as 10 or more register. Then a student leader will petition for College Recognition. Page 2

UNIVERSITY RIDESHARE

Are you looking for an empty parking space?

Are you using too much gas?

Are you concerned for our environment?

Could you use your travel time more wisely?

You could help by registering for CCSU’s University RideShare Program with 1-87-RideFind and finding a carpool match. When you carpool you save time AND money. You are not obligated to carpool, and the program costs you nothing.

When you start carpooling at least one time a week, you might be eligible for monthly drawings. Contact Joan in Public Safety @ 770.961.3540 for more information or visit

<http://adminservices.clayton.edu/ps/ehsnewprogram.htm>.



1-87-RIDEFIND
Atlanta Regional Commission

Should Baseball allow Pete Rose back in the Game?

By Susan Kemmerer



Photo courtesy of google.com

Major League Baseball is a business that is in the business of hiring the best athletes to play the game for the purpose of filling stadiums to capacity for money. Anyone who loves the game of baseball can find reasons to tune in by radio, watch on TV, or drive to stadiums all over the country to be a part of an American tradition. "Mom, baseball, and apple pie," are the national icons of America. If a player is extraordinary in his abilities and accomplishments throughout his career it is his right to be eligible to be voted in as a lifetime member of the Hall of Fame. The decisions or improper actions taken by a player after his playing days are over should not erase any of his previous accomplishments. In the case of Pete Rose, however, Major League Baseball is holding a firm stand in disallowing his entry back into baseball in any capacity, including introduction into the Hall of Fame. Has baseball gone too far in this case? Does Pete Rose deserve his place in the Hall of Fame? Is gambling on baseball a crime so outrageous as to erase Pete's accomplishments from the major league record books? These are the questions that need answering.

The good, bad and ugly of baseball is that all the athletes that have reached super-star status have not been rosy-cheeked and squeaky clean. As we watch the commissioner of baseball pour over the information provided by Pete Rose's new book and dissect the many television interviews Pete has given lately, one has to ask, what does this have to do with Pete Rose as a statistical player? With his nickname of Charlie Hustle, Pete Rose set several major league records as a player for the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. He began his career in 1963 and was voted baseball's Rookie of the Year. He played in more winning games than any other player in major league baseball history. He had four

thousand two hundred and fifty-six hits during his career, which places him firmly in the all time number one spot in that category. He hit in forty-four consecutive games. (Today we are excited by a twenty-game hitting streak!) He received major league baseball's most valuable player awards twice during his career—once for his efforts during the 1975 World Series—and was in the top ten for MVP ten times. With these player accomplishments in mind, what is wrong with allowing Pete to be included on the Hall of Fame ballot? Surely, as a player, Pete earned the honor of inclusion into the Hall of Fame.

Does it happen that one is stripped of a college degree when one subsequently does something extraordinarily stupid? Does it happen that a United States President is stripped of his presidency because he acted in inappropriate ways? Does it happen that a CEO of a corporation is stripped of his previous merits when he subsequently strips his corporation of all assets and leaves multi-year employees with nothing? NO! It doesn't.

Therefore, how fair is it that Pete Rose should be stripped of his Hall-of-Fame opportunity because of his subsequent stupidity of gambling on baseball? Yes, he broke a rule. Yes, he finally admitted it. Does that mean that any of the records he set as a player changed? Did those records get gooey and then just disappear? No, they did not. Pete Rose should not be persecuted into oblivion by baseball for his lack of intelligence by gambling on sports, including baseball. His crime was one of stupidity, not moral turpitude. Kids today can look up to Pete Rose as a symbol of what it means to 'give your all' to the sport of baseball. Kids tomorrow should be able to view his accomplishments in the small town of Cooperstown, New York, justly displayed in the Hall of Fame.

Civil Rights:

Is everyone given the right to pursue happiness?

By Danielle Neundorfer

"Land of the free and home of the brave," since when was the term "free" so subjective anyway? I can see that a great portion of today's society is still very afraid of diversity.... However, I can not bring myself to understand why. We have come so far to not allow gay marriages; we have come so far for it to even be an issue. Equal rights, democracy, and justice — these were all the ideals I learned as a child about my country. I used to be so proud.... Do you not see the irony in our freedom? It takes so much just to do what the constitution says we were already doing back in 1787. Thanks to women's suffrage and the civil rights movement, the government admits more people than it used to into gates of equality; but not the homosexuals in love.

Ironically, society will agree that gay men and women should be treated equally; they just do not picture gays and lesbians as being able to get married. Ask yourselves, just who has the right to determine who marries whom? Perhaps you may not agree with homosexuality, but who are you to suppress their beliefs? There was a time when some people thought segregation was acceptable; there was a time when women didn't have a voice. There is a time, now, when homosexuals' having even a "partnership" is thought too liberal for our laws. Since when did the government start setting the criteria for love anyway?

America started a revolution once because of traditions and stereotypes.... It is 2004, two hundred and seventeen years after the constitution, and traditionalists still claim

only man and woman should marry. Homosexuals can not even claim common-law marriage! They are refused every day advantages such as insurance benefits and joint healthcare plans, routinely denied what many citizens would agree to be their civil rights. They are not even given the right to make medical decisions for their companions in emergency situations, like married heterosexuals can. If one was arrested, the other could be called to testify against their partner (the heterosexual married people can be exempt from this.) Is this fair? Do lesbians and gays not deserve the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness like the rest of us? Will stereotypes stop the American government from seeing that many committed homosexual couples long for the right that is so easily granted to heterosexual couples (just because they are heterosexual?).

We are brought up to respect other religions, other genders, other races, but not other sexualities. Do people not see that it should not be left up to us; if homosexuals want to commit to each other than it must be their prerogative. Just as in any other instance, it is prejudiced to make such a difference in the matter. I ask you not to let yourselves become a part of that ignorance and bigotry; that hatred just because some Americans do not yet understand that love is, in many ways, universal. You don't have to agree with or even like the idea of gay marriages, but do consider their inability to do so. Do ask yourselves if that is equality and while you are at it, try to justify why it is an issue in the first place.

Attention Aspiring Nurses!

The CCSU Department of Nursing is currently accepting applications for the SOS (Summer Opportunity for Success) program. The SOS program is a ten-week academic skills enhancement program. The goals of the program are to enable students interested in nursing to be better prepared for the nursing program and ultimately to become successful registered nurses. The program strives to meet these goals by helping students to enhance crucial academic skills in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. The program is offered free of charge and offers a stipend to those who qualify according to federal guidelines. Applications are being accepted now through March 1, 2004. Interested persons may obtain an application by visiting the web site at <http://healthsci.clayton.edu/> > <http://healthsci.clayton.edu> and clicking on the Nursing Workforce Diversity Program link or they may contact the Department of Nursing at 770-961-3484.

Features



The Georgia Society of CPAs Southside Chapter is pleased to congratulate the following Clayton State Accounting students as GSCPA Scholarship Winners for 2004

Felicia P. Clark East Point
Jamie M. Daniel McDonough
Lotus A. Gelibert McDonough
Brenda L. Glass Riverdale
Todd C. Trent Hampton

Spotlight On: Bent Tree Writers

Ashley Spillers
Editor-in-Chief

Interviewed by Redd
Horrocks



“The Bubbly One”

Ashley Spillers is a Communications and Media Studies Sophomore here at CCSU. Ashley took over the Editor in Chief position this semester.

Ashley has been writing for about 8-10 years. She won the third place prize at a writing contest in the 6th Grade and has been writing with a passion ever since. She loves to write about current events, relationships and fashion. Ashley says that the hardest thing she ever has to write are research works and narratives. For her, the most upsetting things to write about are anything that involves children being harmed.

Eventually Ashley wants to be an editor at a Women's magazine. She likes the magazines that mix fashion

and politics, though she stresses heavily that she is not planning on applying at Cosmopolitan.

Ashley enjoys reading informative articles about International events, as well as anything to do with clothes and celebrities. The Bent Tree article she most enjoyed reading was by Brian Gardner entitled “I Know Love, Thankfully”, in which Brian talked about how he was happy to be in love.

Ashley's quote is “Blondes can be smart too!”.

In the Bent Tree office, Ashley masters the art of making serious work fun. She's always happy to take on as much work as she delegates out. She is incredibly organized and a great maker of lists. She is an expert at layout, and a confident and talented writer.

A Long Road to a Hot Fire

By Pam Criswell

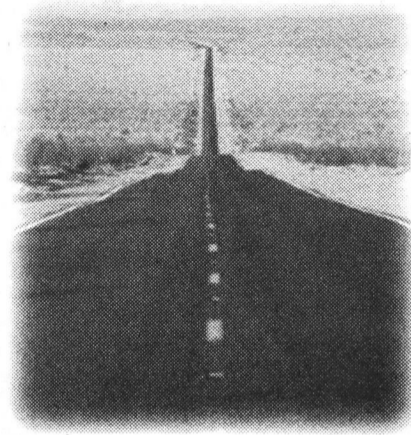


Photo courtesy of google.com

I remember my last day at Jonesboro High School as a student. It was May of 1977. The seniors had gathered in the hall and came to sing the Alma Matter one more time. There was an air of anticipation for what was to come in our futures. Some would go to college, some would marry, some would waste their lives, and some would continue working, as they had been doing, disappointed that they would not be in the college crowd.

I wasn't terribly hurt to not be getting along with my education because of my religious upbringing. I had always been taught that the world would come to an end in 1975, and I was still awaiting the apocalypse. As the years went by, my religious preference changed; I became a wife and a mother, and started longing for the days of schooling behind me. I love to learn. I have been that way since the early 1960's when I would pull my parents set of World Book Encyclopedias off the shelf and look at the pictures. After I learned to read, I would read the captions, and then the articles if the topic interested me.

In June of 2003 I was sitting with a friend of mine. I have known her since my husband and I married in 1981. Our spouses are both firefighters for Clayton County, and we go on motorcycle rides together. We were on a ride through the mountains that day, and had stopped at a Wendy's for lunch. I mentioned my desire to go to school, and Elaine (name changed to protect her identity) told me about the Hope Grant. Once home, I did some research at the CCSU website and enrolled. I am in my first semester now.

There were some hoops to jump through. I had to get my transcript from Clayton County. I had to go to my doctor to get blood work done showing that I did not need any

vaccinations. The problem was, I did not have both documents at the same time, and my transcript got lost. It was then found. There was a technical difficulty with my major, but it was corrected. Even up to the day of Orientation there were some quirks with my file, but everything was straightened out by the time I left campus that day. The State of Georgia graciously has paid my way into a new season of education. I am happy to be at CCSU.

When I was in high school I was very naive. As an adult I am learning the flow of college life fairly quickly. I like my teachers, have easy classes, (for now anyway), and am having an easy time making new acquaintances. Being middle-aged comes with rewards. I've lived long enough that I don't take much crud off of anybody, I know who I am and what I want, and what I believe and why. This will make my college experience different than it would have been had I attended when I was younger. It will be more productive, I will be more serious, and I won't accept excuses for failure from myself. I know I can keep my grades up, and continue on past my certificate diploma to an associate degree, and then on ahead as far as I can go. Why am I doing this? What is my career goal? I'm doing it out of a desire to get a college education, and to be able to support myself financially if I ever have to.

There is a t-shirt that a curriculum provider for home educators sells. The saying on it is, “Education is not the filling of a bucket. It is the lighting of a fire.” That fire in me has never gone out. For the past twenty-seven years the fire has been fed by music, crafts, cooking, home education, Bible studies, computers, the insurance industry, and by being a housewife and mother. I am grateful to be having that fire stoked in a classroom environment again. I hope the desire for education consumes you like a fire, too.

Have a successful Spring Semester.

In My Experience...

Miracles in Misfortune: Surviving an Accident

By Megan Lawrimore

I broke a collarbone and punctured a lung; I was lucky. Now, I have a new appreciation for everything about life – the people, the events, and all of the ways in which I am blessed. Almost two months ago, I was in a car accident. That morning, I had been cautioned to be careful; it was dark and rainy and the roads were slick. I heeded the warnings and briefly thought of the fact that I had never been a patient in a hospital before. Leaving my neighborhood, I noticed that I was running late, but refused to speed on the particularly curvy road that followed. As I rounded an especially sharp curve, my car skidded into the other lane, but when I attempted to correct, my car hydroplaned into a telephone pole. I couldn't breathe and immediately thought I was dreaming as white clouds of smoke erupted in front of me. At this point, adrenaline prevented me from feeling the acute pain in my chest and shoulder, and drove me to find a way out of the car; even now, I'm not exactly sure how I slipped from beneath the seat belt clamped tightly across my chest or how I managed to open the door. I do remember the panic that flooded through me as I realized I did not have a cell phone and became aware of how difficult it was to support myself on trembling knees. Fortunately, two women saw what happened and pulled over to help me. One of them helped me to her car to sit down while the other called 911. The woman offered her phone to me so I could call my family, but the ambulance arrived almost immediately, and I was taken to the hospital before they arrived at the scene. The paramedics tried to keep my mind off the pain by talking to me, but it was becoming increasingly more difficult to breathe, and now I was completely aware of the agony on my left side. Later, I found out that my sister and my mother had each arrived at the site during this time, where the police informed them of the details of the accident. The engine had intruded two feet, miraculously failing to break my legs, the floor of the car had buckled, the passenger door was immovable; the police informed my family that a passenger would not have survived, and that if my car had hit the telephone pole any other way, I probably would not have survived either. I was taken to the emergency room, where I was left alone for minutes that seemed like hours, and as I lied there with tears pooling around

my face, I realized how lucky I was. My parents came to the hospital and stayed with me for the next five hours I spent in emergency room, where I had several x-rays taken, an IV started, and nervously waited for the doctors to return with results. I was told that I had a broken clavicle and a 20% pneumothorax (collapsed lung) and that I would need to stay in the hospital for observation. The doctors discussed the prospect of a chest tube, which entails a needle the circumference of the average pinky finger inserted between the ribs to re-inflate the lung and equalize pressure in the chest cavity. I spent two sleepless days in the hospital, dreading the moment the decision would be made to proceed with the chest tube, but it never came. I was released, and during the weeks that followed, when I felt most helpless, I came to truly appreciate the wonderful people in my life - my parents, my siblings, my boyfriend, my friends, my professors, and even two strangers. These people helped me through every moment of fear, every minute of frustration, every recurring nightmare, providing everything I needed physically and emotionally to overcome that difficult period. I don't think I'll ever be able to fully express my gratitude to them, but I can share their kindness, along with everything else I've learned from this experience, with the world around me. Since my accident, I've heard of several other accidents similar to mine, but none with such a fortunate outcome. One such accident struck especially close to home: a young woman hydroplaned, hit a telephone pole, broke her clavicle, punctured both of her lungs, and broke both of her legs; however, too many of these accidents end fatally. The National Transportation Safety Board reports that about 13% of all fatal accidents and 25% of all accidents occur on wet pavements. Somehow, I escaped with only two substantial injuries (that healed on their own no less), bruised knees, a sore back, and airbag burns. On a follow up visit to the doctor, a genuinely sweet nurse checked my vitals before he came in and asked me what happened. After listening intently to my story, she smiled broadly, stared at me for a moment, and said, "You're special. You're meant to do great things, sweetheart." I like to think that this is true, but whether it is or not, I feel fortunate that I still have the chance to find out.

From the Editor's Desk

By Ashley Spillers

“Were you ever a cheerleader?”

This is a question that I am asked quite a bit. The answer is no. There is nothing wrong with being a cheerleader; they are very athletic and talented people. I am blonde, but I am not particularly athletic, so the question is most likely stereotypical. Not all blondes are cheerleaders, and not all cheerleaders are blonde. This is an important point because it proves (to an extent) that people are very comfortable with stereotypes. People often define others with labels. Why am I talking about this, you ask...?

Stereotypes and labels that are put upon people are dangerous. Many people are too afraid to see past their own biases and prejudices to see what another person is really like. There are so many interesting, beautiful people in the world, and if you cannot see past the obvious differences to see the sometimes beneath the surface

similarities, you may miss out on a wonderful friend.

The Bent Tree's Campus Question for this issue is “Do you think that gay marriage should be legal in the United States?” While I realize that not everyone has the same opinion about this, I hope that just in answering the question you may make a decision out of a real thought, not a decision made out of prejudice.

Prejudice in any shape or form and stereotypes made out of that prejudice are very dangerous considering the greatly diverse nation we are becoming. While I do not expect anyone to completely change their ideals, I would suggest a possible increase in tolerance and acceptance that we are all human beings, and we share this Earth.

What I have written is basically just a statement of my thoughts. If you want to respond to it, send me an e-mail: csu16121@mail.claytonstate.net.



“Shhhhhh!
Be vewhy quiet.
We're hunting
new writers for
the
Bent Tree.”

Bent Tree Staff:

Editor-in-Chief

Ashley Spillers

Associate Editor

Redd Horrocks

Business Manager

Thomas Spurlin

Staff Writers:

Bernard Asubonteng

Pam Criswell

Kimberly Fletcher

Linda Godin

Patrick Harbin

Jeff Hensley

Jamee Holland

Susan Kemmerer

Anna King

Megan Lawrimore

Christina Mapp

Jodee Nagle

Danielle Neundorfer

Micheal Smith

Layout By:

Ashley Spillers

Entertainment

Lords of the Cinema

By Thomas Spurlin

If J.R.R. Tolkien were alive to see the cinematic product of his Lord of the Rings trilogy, he would probably gasp in amazement. From December of 2001 to the present date, director Peter Jackson has enchanted us with a magnificent journey through the realm of Middle Earth. Every December for the past three years, a new edition to the saga has been unleashed. With each film, the story has enchanted a hugely diverse fan base. While the legend is coming to a close, each of the films will exist as glorious cinematic achievements for years and years to come.

Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring
**** ½ (4.5 / 5) 95 A

The first installment introduced the viewers to a lush tale that spans the history of a land called Middle Earth. This story involves an epic struggle between good and evil, between an alliance of men and elves against evil goblins and orcs, and a struggle for the most powerful item ever to be created – the Ring of Power. Within this ring is held the power of a dark lord named Sauron, the embodiment of evil. The ring was loosed after Sauron was defeated and it passed to the son of a king. After this king was murdered, the ring set on a course that traveled from being after being, until finally it came into the hands of a half-sized human called a hobbit, named Bilbo Baggins. This is where the Lord of the Rings story begins. The tale, littered with brilliant fantasy elements, will lure anyone into the power of its storyline. It is extremely difficult to acclaim the efforts of individual actors within these pieces of cinematic art because they are viewed as whole pieces. Every single actor within the series is at the top of his or her game. Frodo Baggins, the ring bearer (played by Elijah Wood) is destined to destroy the ring of power. Throughout the course of the Fellowship of the Ring, we see his slow descent into a world of darkness within his own mind, which is executed brilliantly. Ian McKellen as Gandalf, Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn, Orlando Bloom as the elven warrior Legolas, Liv Tyler and Hugo Weaving as the father / daughter duo of elves Arwen and Elrond, and the rest of the amazing cast that composes the "Fellowship" all light up the silver screen unbelievably. Every aspect of this

introductory film is outstanding, from the costumes to the special effects, all the way to the cinematography; they all enchant and astonish. The true prestige behind this film is the richness of the introduction to the world of the hobbits, as well as the Fellowship's trek through the "dark places of the world". Peter Jackson fabricates a visual image of the legendary story that is unforgettable. The Fellowship of the Ring serves towards character development of all the great characters and sets the basis for one wild ride of an epic.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
**** (4 / 5) 90 A-

The second installment to the Lord of the Rings Trilogy is one of terrific action and suspense. The storyline furthers as Frodo presses on towards the destruction of the ring. Sauron, the Dark Lord, peers deeper into Frodo as determination drives the young hobbit gallantly towards his destiny. Alongside fellow hobbit Samwise Gamgee (played by Sean Astin), the weight of the ring grows heavier upon Frodo as they encounter the second owner of the ring – Gollum, also known as Smeagol. After a dispute over the ring, Smeagol is forced to help the two hobbits towards their destination to Mount Doom where the ring must be destroyed. Sean Astin's character, Samwise, is brought into the light more in this film, which he executes with terrific precision. Also, the special computer-generated effects that illustrate the image of the slithering Smeagol are astounding. On the other side of Middle Earth, the rest of the Fellowship draw closer to a region called Rohan, in which most of the film is geared around. A fallen, righteous king named Theoden rises up to his throne once again in this area, invoking a sense of hope that the courage of mankind will prevail. The battle scenes during the war at Helm's Deep (the stronghold in which the city of Edoras in Rohan flees to) are of clarity and precision. Not to mention the extremely brilliant design of costumes, especially for the battle-raged Uruk-hai (Orcs). We also discover more of the traits that make Aragorn the truly heroic king that he will become. While slightly less potent than the first film, the Two Towers definitely carries itself as a strong, suspense-driven spectacle that invokes a bubbling deep emotion, which seems to approach eruption as the epic progresses.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King
**** ½ (4.5 / 5) 97 A

As the series comes to a conclusion, we see our main character Frodo suffering in immeasurable amounts from the power of the ring, Gollum's devious demeanor drawing Samwise's curiosity, and the



Photo courtesy of google.com

gallant end of the story breaching at its climax. The trio (Smeagol, Frodo, and Samwise) braves the lands of enemies far worse than they can imagine to arrive at the darkest place imaginable: Mount Doom. While still at the other end of Middle Earth, after the battle of Helm's Deep, Gandalf states that "the battle for Helm's Deep has concluded, yet the war for Middle Earth is about to begin." The Return of the King slams the viewer with a battering ram of conclusive events that sum up the trilogy into a powerfully moving tale. A brewing army of 10,000 soldiers fighting under the allegiance of Sauron gather in force and intensity as the final battle at Minas Tirith draws nearer and Aragorn raises to his place as the rightful heir to the throne his ancestors held. This film carries a wealth of emotion underneath its belt that is begging to be vanquished. The very existence of each and every member of the cast becomes threatened in this story, and the hearts of the viewers turn extraordinarily vulnerable with all the twists and turns that favored characters must suffer through. It is a true cinematic achievement, one of beauty, suspense and poignant intensity. The computer generated effects work their magic brilliantly once again through the presence of the skulking Smeagol slithering throughout the scenes with Frodo, as well as through a terrifying scene involving the attack upon Minas Tirith by a horde of evil warriors. Legolas consistently dazzles the audience throughout this film (as well as the other two) by destroying and

defeating an immeasurable amount of enemy forces. The truly powerful moment of all three of the films exists at the very end of this film, upon the slopes of Mount Doom when Frodo drives to destroy the ring. Be patient with the end, though. The movie ends roughly four or five times, so it seems, each with its own magnificence that is well worth watching.

The Lord of the Rings: Full Trilogy
***** (5 / 5) 98 A

The original cinematic experience is a total of roughly 560 minutes, close to nine and a half hours. However, each and every minute of it will extract and invoke interest into every part of the intricate storyline. While the story may seem difficult to comprehend, with all of the elves, hobbits, orcs, dragons and wizards that it centers around, the Lord of the Rings is a truly dazzling cinematic experience. The series almost cannot be viewed in parts, but as a whole epic. In its parts, flaws may be easily spotted, but as a complete legend, it is beautifully crafted beyond amazement. The facts are the facts: Every single to date (as will the newest one) film has been nominated at the Academy Awards and at the Golden Globes for Best Picture. Individual performances are difficult to decipher, for the entire story is the final product. This trilogy will go in the record books with Indiana Jones, Star Wars, and the Godfather as one of the greatest trilogies ever to be crafted, more than likely the greatest.

Cold Mountain

A review by
Sarah Morgan

It's about that time of year again when Hollywood's finest line up to receive their awards. So, it's time you went to see *Cold Mountain*, a movie that is sure to rack up the awards in the coming weeks. It has already nabbed the most Golden Globe nominations, including best picture, and is sure to receive some more when the Oscar nominations are announced. It stars Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, Renee Zellweger, and other stars that pop by for small parts. For you White Stripes fans, Jack White makes his first movie appearance in this film. But the acting is not the most important part, it's the way the story is told. It is set during the Civil War and Law and Kidman are two parted lovers

trying to get back to each other. Kidman (Ada) tries to save her fathers farm during the war with the help of Zellwegers character Ruby. All the while Law (Inman) is trying to stay alive long enough to return to his sweetheart. The story is very powerful and will have you wrapped up in it in no time. A key part of this movie is its music, which moves the audience right along with the story. There is nothing else to say but SEE THIS MOVIE!! You will be so glad that you did. I am having a hard time putting into words how good it is, and I'm sure you will as well when you leave the theater. It is a fabulous movie that deserves 5 out of 5 stars. Have you been looking for a great movie to see? You've found it!

SINGER/SONGWRITER STEVEN JACKSON RELEASES THIRD ALBUM

HUNTSVILLE NATIVE, STEVEN JACKSON, TAKES THE STAGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN SUPPORT OF NEW ALBUM

NASHVILLE (Jan. 17, 2004) – It has been said that Jackson sounds like a young Springsteen and writes like he has lived 100 years. Although 26 year-old Steven Jackson claims no early influence from "The Boss," he certainly has the background to support that kind of sound. The touring singer/songwriter based in Nashville has churned out three Americana albums that have met with critical acclaim, his most recent, *Home From the Fight*.

Paste Magazine says, "He gives form to your thoughts with words more beautiful, evocative and true than you could ever find yourself." With a powerful voice and a tendency to jump from ballads to high-energy rock and bluegrass-influenced songs, Jackson is often compared to Tom Waits, Steve Earle and Lyle Lovett.

Jackson calls his music "acoustic Americana." The songs are stories," he says. "They are stories about people and places. Some of them I know, some are inventions of things I know to be true. It's

about hometowns and leaving.

It's about religion and whatever the opposite of that is. It's American music. And it's inspired by the music of this country like blues, bluegrass, folk and rock."

For the last few years, Jackson has been on tour playing as many as 200 shows a year at Universities and listening rooms such as the prestigious Bluebird Café in Nashville and Atlanta's Eddie's Attic. His 2004 tour finds Steven Jackson performing solo – leaving behind his ironically named band, "The Leavers," in exchange for the intimacy of his live acoustic show. With just his voice and a "beat up guitar" to steer the momentum, each roller coaster of a show chugs along with the high-energy grit, nostalgic intimacy and off-the-cuff humor he has become known for.

For more information on Steven Jackson, including his new CD and tour schedule, visit www.stevenjackson.net.

Press release courtesy of Wally's
World of Entertainment

A Standing Ap-paws for Cats

By Thomas Spurlin

When you think of the theater, many productions flash in your mind. From the mystery of *Phantom of the Opera* to the poignant stage performances in *Death of a Salesman*, all the way to the modern day Shakespearean romance revamped in *Guys and Dolls*, the stage has a certain artistic aura that truly sends viewers reeling. Over Christmas, I had the distinct pleasure of seeing one of the not-so-traditional performances that has become synonymous with Broadway and the entire aura of the theater. The play *Cats* was in performance at the Fox Theater. As an engagement gift from my future parents in law, they sent us to this astonishing event.

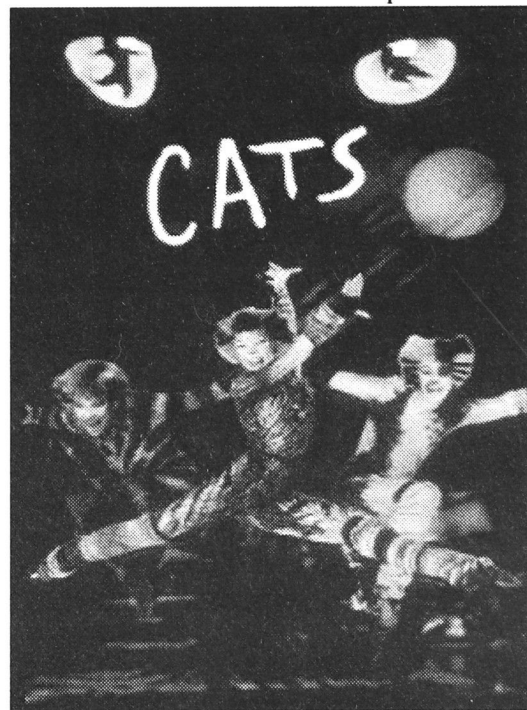
I hadn't a clue what to expect. The only thing that I knew prior to this was that the costumes were neat, that there's a cat named Mr. Mistoffolees, and that the song *Memory* is legendary because of this performance. None the less, I was very intrigued as to why this musical was so highly revered. The first thing that I remember was an announcer coming onto the loudspeaker to announce that the performers were going to be passing through the isles. My ears perked at this and my interest rose, even more than it already was. Directly after that, the announcer stated that there would be pyrotechnics and that those with heart problems should be cautious. Wow. *Cats* and pyrotechnics! How on earth is that supposed to work? I was confused, but none the less was getting extremely excited.

Then the stage lit up brightly from lights draped from the ceiling. A masterfully crafted set in the form of a huge junkyard began to glow in a pale shade of green as a host of performers throughout the isles "peered" at the audience with their glowing acid green eyes. We as the audience stepped into the world of the Jellicle cats, a special breed of the felines. The basis of the story is that one of these special breed of cat is chosen by the wisest of all the Jellicle cats, Old Deuteronomy, to be reborn. This decision occurs on the night of the Jellicle Ball, which just so happens to be the night that we viewed these cats gather. In order to choose,

each of the cats are to tell their life story for Old Deuteronomy in order to sway his decision.

We are introduced to a large host of cats, both good and bad. Such characters as Rum Tug Tugger, Grizabella and Gus implant lasting impressions upon the viewer. Evil cats, such as the burglars Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer and the infamous Macavity that scares Old Deuteronomy, add mysterious elements to the storyline. One of the longer tales of Gus, the acting cat, was extremely entertaining to watch. It contained a play within a play about pirate cats and a band of Siamese breed felines that rivaled him. However, three performances rival each other as the best of the show; the frightening spectacle performed by Macavity, the return of Old Deuteronomy due to the abilities of the Magical Mr. Mistoffolees, and the final appeal from Grizabella, the glamorous prostitute cat. Each scene was a superb and breathtaking production, especially Mr. Mistoffolees in which the pyrotechnics were executed.

All of the hype is well deserved for *Cats*. The set design was absolutely amazing. Colorful lighting and dramatic shadows adorned the stage, which created an almost dizzying array of beautiful sites to view. Also, the costumes were every ounce of amazing as they have been acclaimed. Each of the characters had intricate, special attributes that truly create a sense of appeal for each of the favorites. My favorite just so happened to be Macavity because of the precision of his flips (yes, flips) and the violent gestures that stirred emotions within the viewers. Let us not forget the singing and the dancing. It was all precise and absolutely astonishing. Grizabella's performance of *Memory* was especially poignant as she appealed to the Jellicles for their support towards her acceptance as the cat to be reborn. Anyone who has a certain disposition towards musicals should think twice before they dismiss *Cats*. It is an extremely unique storyline with a rich history of theatrical perfection under its belt, and anyone can find something to enjoy out of this masterful performance.



Health & Fitness

Exercise & The New Year- Keep that Exercise Resolution

By Linda Godin

The holidays are over; it's time to keep those resolutions we promised ourselves. We promised we would exercise, eat more veggies and get some sleep! The sleep might be a resolution that is easily kept, but the other two.... Well let's just say, some of us fall off the wagon before it even gets rolling!

The key to keeping those resolutions is to start small and be realistic. Don't say "I am going to lose 20 pounds by February 15th" - start by losing 2 pounds in two weeks. That's right, a pound a week is an easy resolution to keep, if you exercise and eat your veggies!

Here are a few tips to keep you on track:

Start with small goals - walk for 15 minutes, gradually increasing your time each day. (Park farther away from class to get that extra few minutes of walking)

Be flexible - work in exercise whenever possible-don't think of it as work-think of it as a workout! Lifting those books are great arm toners! (Wear the book bag properly and you are adding good weight to your walk)

Veggies/fruits - always have a fruit/veggie at every meal - whether it's carrots, salad, cucumber, (green pepper and onion -excellent in omelets!)

Gym - take advantage of CCSU's new and improved gym facility - plenty of free-weights, exercise balls, bicycles - if you have time between classes - head over for a quick weight-lifting session or bike ride.

Above all - don't make working out or eating right a big deal - it's just something you do - make it a part of your life. A healthy routine should be based on adding things to your life, not taking them away. It's about trying delicious new foods and moving your body and mind in ways that inspire you.

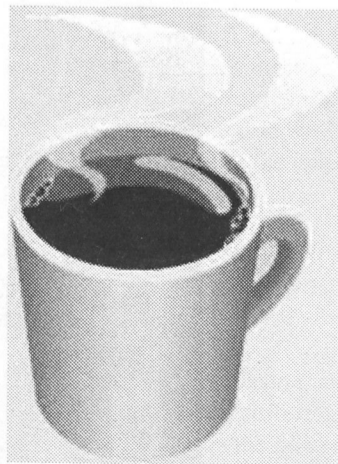


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The day is long, and you have survived through the first half. It is 2:30, yet you are starting to drift into a slump. The body's natural chemicals are not stimulating enough to keep the pace flowing through the end of your six o'clock class. It is then that the decision is made to delve into a can of briskly chilly Dr. Pepper, just for that extra jolt that serves as turbo-charged fuel in your bloodstream. Before you make this decision to indulge into a regular lushness of a seemingly "much-needed" soda, realize what exactly it is that you are accepting into your body.

Carbonated beverages contain three dangerous elements: carbonation, caffeine, and sugar.

The carbonation in these beverages is rich with phosphoric acid. This element has been discovered to deprive your body of calcium. See, carbonated beverages irritate the lining of your stomach, and the only possible way that the stomach knows to repair this damage is with calcium from the bloodstream. Therefore this calcium is extracted, thus depriving our bones of that very element that we strive so strenuously to get. Phosphoric acid depletes the bloodstream of this calcium, which creates a very low count of calcium within the body. An absence of calcium creates brittle, weak bones that are extremely susceptible to fracture and decay. Carbonated drinks have been known to peel away materials from corroded battery cables, dissolve nails within a few days time, and even strip away the flesh from a T-bone steak within a 48-hour period. The citric acid in soda can clean toilets, engines, and even blood from automobile accidents, which is known to be sitting in the trucks of police forces when accidents occur.



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Carbonated Calamity

by Thomas Spurlin

Caffeine has been labeled one of the most dangerous commonplace drugs in the United States. Yes, the caffeine in coffee and soft drinks is a drug. Why else do you think it stimulates the body after a few sips? One of the benefits of caffeine is that it provides that push that is sometimes needed in order to survive the day in a non-comatose way. However, caffeine has been seen to be the cause of heightened levels of blood pressure in the body. This raise in blood pressure can be the cause of heart disease in those with elevated levels already. Plus, caffeine can become VERY addictive. The body, once it has been jolted into place with a carbonated beverage, recognizes the signal that is distributed once the fluid is consumed. IF this is performed on a regular basis, the body may become dependent on that caffeine in order to awaken the body at ALL times that it is slumping, thus impairing our bodies.

The dangers of too much sugar do not need to be reiterated to any great extent, because we are constantly bombarded with the effects of sugar (more times than not around the midsection after holidays). The average sweetened soft drink contains roughly ten teaspoons of sugar. Most of these sodas have between one hundred and twenty five to one hundred and fifty calories per can. This fluid rushes straight to the bloodstream. To add onto the pains of calcium deprivation, this sugar requires insulin in order to process all of it. A large jolt of insulin deprives the body of testosterone, which is essential to numerous functions within the body. One, in particular, is the distribution of calcium to your body, which is obviously impaired from this absence of testosterone. People who consume the diet sodas, however, do not have to worry about the effects of sugar upon their body. Aspartame, the

artificial sweetener in most diet beverages, is safe to consume. Instead, those that consume these diet soft drinks only have to concern themselves with carbonation and caffeine. What is the answer to these problems? Water.

The human body absolutely needs water. Without the basic replenishment of water into your system, all of the intricate operations cannot fully take place. The most important of these functions is your metabolism. A mild case of dehydration can cause a slower metabolic rate of three percent. In order to process foods and other chemicals within the body, a fully functional metabolism is essential. Furthermore, with a regular consumption of five to eight glasses of water a day, the average person is less likely to have joint problems, back problems, it can even prevent bladder cancer. It promotes weight loss, keeps the body functioning properly, and flushes impurities out. While these things seem dangerous if consumed in extreme moderation, they will not be overly hazardous to our health. Always monitor the amount of these chemicals that you consume on a daily basis and drink plenty of water (between 8 to 10 glasses a day) to hydrate your body, or you may be on the way to a carbonated calamity.

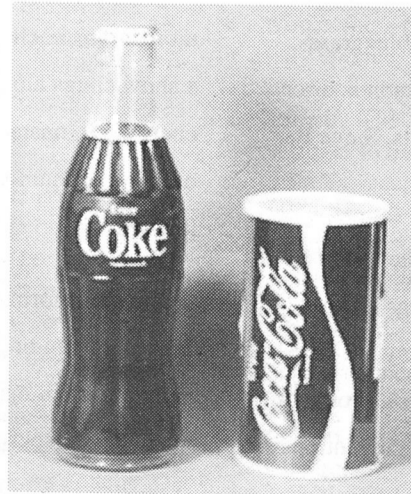
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Food

R'Eddibles Guide to Impressing People

Behold... the first of my two wonder-dips! When people want to munch on stuff, dip is the ultimate solution. Why go with a normal Salsa when you can try Tzatziki! Yes, this word may be both impossible to pronounce and impossible to spell, but it isn't impossible to make! Hailing from Greece, you can make this dip to be almost completely fat free!

Tzatziki (Sigh-zee-kee)

Ingredients:

Two medium cucumbers
Plain Yogurt
Two cloves of fresh garlic

Peel the cucumbers and grate with a cheese grater. Do this over a bowl as it will get really juicy. Drain as much of the juice off as you can, then squeeze it out with your (clean) hands. Next, peel the skins off the garlic cloves and then either use a garlic crusher if you have one, or chop them as fine as you possibly can. I wouldn't use a blender/processor for this little amount... it doesn't have to be teeny tiny bits, just as small as you can get with a knife. Throw the garlic into the cucumber and mix well with a spoon. Now add the yogurt about a tablespoon at a time. This is something you want to just gage with your eye. The cucumber needs to be covered, but you don't want masses of yogurt smothering it. Just keep going until it tastes good. Usually about six tablespoons or so. Be sure to keep this in the fridge. Dip bread and chips into this refreshing snack. Note that if you use fat-free yogurt, then this is very healthy. Play around with it. Some people like to add fresh mint but I like it as is. Enjoy! For troubleshooting on this recipe feel free to email me at csu14389

**Do you have some
yummy recipes that
you would want to
share with the campus?**

*If so, contact us at
Btree@mail.clayton.edu
to submit a recipe!*

Rachel's Recipes

Here is a dinner idea that is inexpensive and easy to make...

Inside-out Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients:

- One can cream of chicken soup
- One can of chicken broth
- One can of Veg-All
- One package of Tyson short cuts chicken pieces
- One can of Grands biscuits

Directions:

Total time: 15-20 minutes

Preheat the oven and follow the directions on the biscuit can for baking the biscuits. Put soup in a large sauce pan and begin warming through. Open and drain the can of Veg-All. Put it in the soup. Cut the chicken pieces into even smaller pieces and place them in the pan with the soup and Veg-All. Simmer on medium heat and make sure to stir often to keep the soup from sticking and burning. When the mixture is almost cooked completely pour some of the chicken broth in the pan. The broth helps to thin out the mixture some. Pour broth in until you reach the desired consistency. If you want it thicker don't pour as much but if you would like it thinner then pour a little more. Finish heating through.

To serve spoon the mixture over torn pieces of biscuit and enjoy.

Vegetarian alternative:

Ingredients:

- One can cream of celery soup
- One can of Veg-All
- One can of Grands Biscuits

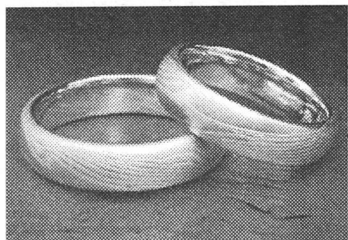
Directions:

Follow as above except do not drain the Veg-all; instead use the water in the can as a substitute for the chicken broth. You can drain the water in a separate cup so that you can add the desired amount for the desired consistency.

Pour over the biscuits and enjoy.

Rachel Van Ness

Campus Question



Do you think that gay marriage

I do believe that marriages involving homosexuals should be legal. I am not gay, nor do I interact with gay people on a regular basis, but I don't feel that a person can help how they feel about certain things, including their sexuality. They should not be condemned for those feelings. Now, had the question been should gay couples be able to raise children...that's another story.
Andrew Pippin

I personally think that there is no reason why they can't get married. If you love someone, whether they are the same sex or different sex as you, why should there be a barrier or an obstruction holding you back from that person. Their getting married will not affect anyone because whether they are married or not, they are going to be together and be committed to each other like man and wife, or however they refer to it. Many people have religious beliefs that this is wrong, however, people have different religions and beliefs and I can guarantee you that each person interprets their religion and/or their religious bible differently.
Erica Williams

It's very simple. This nation was created as "One nation under God," and God said no. We push God out of everything. Marriage belongs to God, not man. God made it very clear long ago that a husband shall have a wife. Who are we to interfere with God's plans??
Angie

I don't believe gay marriages should be allowed in the United States. Marriage was designed by God for woman and man. Society has created "counterfeits". So basically, when there's a marriage for anyone other than woman and man, society is stating "God made a mistake with my sex". However, I don't believe God makes mistakes. Only humans make mistakes. God is perfect. God is Alpha and Omega. Amen.
Lavonia Hayes

The question of gay marriage in America is simply another chance for the conservative right to force feed their opinions and beliefs down the throats of all Americans who do not share their beliefs, or live their lives in a way that the conservatives approve of. Gay men and women are hardworking, patriotic, tax paying Americans just like the rest of us, and they deserve the right to live their private with anyone, and in anyway that they see fit, with the same

benefits and negatives (higher taxes) as any other married couple. Call it marriage, or civil union, or whatever you like, the religious and moral question of it is for the churches to decide, not our government.
Sean Walker

I do not think that gay marriage should be made legal in the United States. I feel that homosexuality is wrong. Don't accuse me of being homophobic, because in the same right, I also believe that sex (for any sexual orientation) outside of the institution of marriage is wrong.
Sonya Knight

As someone who has been married to the same woman for over twenty years and a practicing Catholic, "Marriage" is a holy sacrament between a man and a woman blessed by God. Gays who choose to commit their lives to one another in a legal civil ceremony such as in Vermont need to use another term other than marriage.
Paul Sebold

Gay marriage should be legal in the United States. Canada rewrote all of its marriage laws this past summer so gay couples would enjoy the same benefits as a straight married couple. This is just another form of discrimination. At one point in time miscegenation was illegal in America. The church is not obligated to recognize gay marriages; however, the American government should. [Same sex couples] are being denied their right to the pursuit of happiness.
Josh Bartlett

I believe that gay marriage should not be legal in the United States. It is my belief that the implementation of gay marriages into our civilization would create a societal imbalance dangerous to our way of life. If this were to happen as some in this country would like it to, children would grow up thinking that it is perfectly acceptable to be attracted to those of the same sex. It is not. The Bible, God's word, one of the most ignored and most important pieces of wisdom available today, makes that very clear. Also, in a secular context, I believe that those who seek to achieve this in the United States are doing so mostly because of financial reasons, for example, homosexuals who call themselves a 'couple' do not enjoy the advantage of being married when filing their taxes. However, I do not believe any reason for wanting this could possibly supercede the issue of undermining the integrity of our ever-diminishing sense of morality in the this country,

making it appear acceptable to the United States that two people of the same sex pursue a romantic affiliation. That is simply not part of the principles upon which the United States was founded, and therefore, should not be introduced as legally acceptable according to the U.S. Constitution.
Brandon Tucker

If I were to let my Baptist religious feelings answer for me, I would answer that marriage is a union between MAN and WOMAN. Yet, I realize our founding fathers wanted our government based on the separation between church and state. Utilizing that ideal, I ultimately feel that gay marriage should be legalized. Law makers cannot let their religious beliefs cloud their judgment. I feel homosexuality is a choice and a freedom. When the government begins to dictate what those choices and freedoms will be, I think everything our founding fathers desired and worked so hard to achieve will wither and die in vain. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights might as well be burned to ashes!
Chloe Wynn

I feel that gay marriages should not be made legal. First of all I don't support people who are gay. It goes against the natural laws of life. Men and women were made to be together, not a man and another man, or a woman and another woman. When God created the world he created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve, and so making gay marriage legal would totally go against God's and it would incur His wrath on the world. The United States was founded on Christianity and if gay marriages are made legal, it would become one of the many ways in which the American society is drifting away from its original foundation.
Tola Adetayo

No, I do not believe that gay marriages should be allowed in the United States. Gay marriages should be totally banned in the United States. Just think about what kind of example we would be making to our children when we begin to allow gay marriages. Some people would say that gay marriage has no effect on children, but I believe that it does. I believe it can change children's minds bringing them up to believe that it is ok carry on a gay marriage. If everyone was gay we would not have reproduction. God made Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve.
Nikita Cobb

Lets just start simple. Why not? Really, if you think about it why shouldn't homosexual couples be allowed to marry? If you think they shouldn't be allowed to marry, you are telling them that they are less of a human being than you are and that is not fair. Why should anyone have to feel like less of a person because of who they are in love with? People will agree whether they are heterosexual or homosexual, that love has no blinders and that you cannot help whom you fall in love with. So why tell a homosexual they are not equal? What if I said I thought that you were not as good as me because you were a heterosexual or because you were black, white, yellow, or purple? You would probably laugh, but that is what you are doing when you deny a homosexual the right to marry someone that they are in love with.

One could also use the Bible as a reason. Lets do that briefly. The Bible says, "Thou shall not lie with a man as one lies with a women." Ok so that is said. I understand that and everyone should. It is very concise and to the point, but doesn't the Bible also say many other things? The Bible says what types of food should be eaten, it says that no more then one crop should be planted in a field, it tells how a Priest should dress and do their hair. The list goes on and on. If you go by the Bible then almost every farmer is committing sin when they grow their crops every year. The Bible also says all sins are equal. So if you lie or even disrespect your parents you have committed a sin of equal value as if a man sleeps with a man. So if someone wants to use the Bible as a reason for not allowing homosexuals to marry they should be looking at themselves and the Bible more carefully. To just go a little further, a city, in the Bible, was burned and many people tend to say that the city was burned because of homosexuality. While that is part of the reasoning, that is not the only reason. If you go back and read or ask your local church preacher, you will find that the city had turned against God in their actions and that the city was full of prostitution and sexual misconduct. So think about, I could drive to Nevada and get as much sexual misconduct, a.k.a. prostitution, as I want, but I couldn't marry a man if I wanted to. Doesn't that seem a little hypocritical?

One last thing about the Bible before I move on, The Oxford Companion to the Bible says, "Thus regardless of

Cont. on next page

*The ideas expressed in these responses
do not necessarily reflect the opinions
of the Bent Tree Staff.*

should be legal in the United States?

the sexual relationship of the participants (a man and his consenting partner or a man a raped child), all are equally defiled (See Philo, De spec leg. 3.7.37-42)." It also says that the penalty for homosexual acts is death, so should we go by what the Bible says and kill every boy that is molested by a man? So simply put, if someone is using the Bible to say that homosexual marriage should not be allowed, they may want to reconsider and go back and reread their Bible!

Now some people also say that homosexuals have Civil Unions, so why would they need marriage? Well that one is simple. There are over 1000 federal rights that are granted to married couples that homosexuals in a Civil Union are not given. This is entirely biased and once again you are telling homosexuals that they are not worthy of those more than a 1000 federal rights because they are Gay and you will not let them get married. Not to mention that Civil Unions are only allowed in a few of the States and if the couple leaves that state, they are no longer in a Union. Now lets say that a homosexual couple wanted to adopt a child. This process is incredibly hard for a heterosexual married couple, but try going into a adoption agency and telling them you and your homosexual partner, who you are not married to, want to adopt a child. Not to mention when they decline a gay couple and they have to go in and adopt as a single parent, what happens if the couple separates? The child has to go with the parent that is legally their parent. The parent that has the child can then keep the partner from seeing the child. That is not fair to the child or the other parent.

I am not asking you or anyone else to support Gay Rights or to come to a rally, but I am asking you to think about it. It just isn't fair to tell a homosexual that they are less of a person then you because of who they love/want to marry. It doesn't work to say that it is against the Bible because many things that happen today are against the Bible and are over looked. Not to mention, all sins are considered equal in the eyes of the lord. Like I said, it isn't a matter of supporting homosexuals, but it is a matter of honestly thinking and considering that homosexuals are people too and that they are just like everyone else. Homosexuals dream of getting married to that special someone on that special day and having a beautiful family with a white picket fence, but in their case, this is only a dream and when they wake up, they realize that reality is a nightmare.

Jacob Alan Elison

YES! Gay marriage should be legal. Gays, lesbians, and transgenders all have the right to love whoever they want to and should have all the privileges and benefits of any two people acting as one.

Anonymous

I think same-sex marriage should be legalized. Times have changed and with the acceptance of same-sex relationships, they should also have the opportunities of marriage. They have already succeeded in many opportunities including adoption, artificial insemination, and insurance coverage for their partners. This should be the logical next step. Especially for couples who are committed to each other.

Nina Garcia

No. When God created Adam and Eve he did not intend for men to marry men, women to marry women, or Republicans to marry Democrats. I'm sure this is in the Bible somewhere.

Just Dirk

Who are we to judge people who may have differing opinions than we do? I say if you are lucky enough to find a true love in this lifetime, then you should never let that person go! We should look to the future of America and open our arms and hearts to those who may love someone of the same sex.

Lauren N. Kosko

Gay marriage should be legal in the United States. People should be free to live their lives as they see fit. The definition of a crime is an act that brings or could lead to harm to another. Gay marriage is neither and thus should be legal. The fact that studies show the success rate in gay relationships is as high as heterosexual relationships further supports this assumption.

Jonathan Gillespie

No, I do not believe that gay marriage should be legal or otherwise acknowledged in the United States or on the state level. Marriage is the union of a woman and a man, not the union of two persons of the same sex.

Marilyn Taylor

I do not believe that gay marriages should be legal. God made marriage a sacred thing and I believe that according to God's word homosexuality is wrong (but not unforgivable)(I Corinthians 6:11). I think that a family needs a husband and a wife. Men and Women are different and

they both teach different things to their children. Children need a Mom and a Dad. I think that if this is ever passed it will produce even more corruptions to the family units.

Rachel Loclett

I think that gay marriage should be legal. The Gay community is just as stable and loving as the heterosexual community. They live together, pay bills together and raise children together. Why not afford them the opportunity of legalizing their relationship. With domestic partnership now available on most jobs, marriage is logically the next step!

Monique Blakley

It's all about the morals. People should be loving, not judgmental. This is a personal matter and Uncle Sam has cast judgment. Where is the unity? It's legal in Vegas and Margaritaville. I say, "let them eat cake".

John Felbinger

Dear Ignorant People of the United States,

Of course gay marriage should be legal. Is it even a question? Marriage is simply a bond of commitment and love between two people. Why are heterosexual people so special that we are the only ones who should be granted this right? As it stands we are legally allowed to share in this commitment, and yet we screw it up royally everyday. I propose that our divorce rate wouldn't be as high as it is if homosexuals were allowed to marry. The government already gives special privileges to heterosexual couples, that homosexual couples cannot receive- like insurance and tax benefits. So what does our noble president do? He proposes a \$1.5 BILLION campaign to promote marriage. Now that's a grand idea. Never mind the long list of problems our country could spend that money on, like healthcare, or education, or social security. This is just another way to get the churches in his pocket in an election year, and at the same time prevent gay couples from uniting in the eyes of the law. Forget love, trust, honor and commitment. You should get married because the government will give you money! Wow, what a reason! Let's think critically about this folks. (You remember that class, don't you?) Having 1 penis and 1 vagina are sufficient grounds for a relationship between two individuals, but they

are by far not necessary. If two people feel love for each other, no matter their gender, who are we to step in and tell them they can't be together? Say this with me now: "There is nothing wrong with homosexuality. It is not a disease. It is not a trend. I will not become gay just by associating with gay people. Homosexuals are normal, everyday, working, caring, intelligent people." Stop relying on something a preacher or your bible tells you, and start thinking for yourself.

If you want to respond to anything I have said, don't bother the Bent Tree. Email me directly at michellepalan@yahoo.com I am intelligent enough to respond to anything you field my way. And for the record... I love my lesbian friend. She is the sweetest, most intelligent person I have ever known. She gives of herself, wholeheartedly and I hope everyday to be more like her.

Michelle Palan

Absolutely not! It was never meant to be. Marriage is meant for cohabitation (amongst other important things) and if you are of the same sex, well that just isn't possible. Do you get my drift? I hope so.

Steven Gillespie

No, because gay marriages go against biblical principles.

Cynthia Rosser

I believe that gay marriages should not be legalized. The reason is that man and woman were not created to be separate. They were created to link together as man to woman and woman to man. I believe that most homosexuals who believe that being a homosexual is a life style and were born that way; have serious issues with their mental and emotional stability with themselves and their social environment. I do not think they are wrong because no one is really wrong. I do believe that they have hidden agendas that they are not willing to deal with. So instead of dealing with their issues they run and hide behind something else.

Lauren E. McAuliffe

Yes, I do believe that gay marriages should be legal in the United States. In this day and time it's time to accept the fact that it takes all kinds of people to make this world work. Gays pay taxes, they work, they own businesses, they go to church, they buy homes, they adopt children who might not ever have a home, so why can't they marry the ones they love? How does that hurt or affect you? From what I see, it doesn't affect you at all!

Toni Alfred

Music News

Piracy: The "New" Threat

Movie studios and record labels mobilize for a battle they have already fought before.

By Patrick Harbin

Without a doubt, the media is currently saturated with stories about the activities of digital pirates. According to the record companies and movie studios, thousands of college students and other young people scattered across the country are destroying the entertainment industry by downloading and sharing music and films online. In response to this perceived attack, advertisements featuring studio employees with uncertain futures are running in theaters across the country and the major record labels have even resorted to filing lawsuits against music fans all in an effort to curb piracy. With all this attention being paid to online copyright infringement, it is important not to overlook the past when making judgments about the future. While everyone agrees that individuals who make and share copied movies and songs are hurting several companies' profit margins, many people tend to forget that this kind of activity is in no way a new phenomenon. In fact, the same groups predicting that digital piracy will bankrupt the music and film industries also made similar claims about video and audio cassette technology over twenty years ago. Also, similar to the current legal victories of the RIAA and MPAA, advocate groups successfully lobbied for anti-piracy legislation during the seventies and eighties. The point of these comparisons is not to suggest that piracy is not a problem, but to put much of what is being said about it into perspective. Despite initial piracy fears surrounding new entertainment technologies, historically, most of the formats that were opposed when first introduced ended up becoming key components to the industry's profitability. One of the first major battles with music piracy has its beginnings as far back as the 1960's. In 1962, the Phillips electronics company in the Netherlands invented a device called the compact cassette. The compact

cassette was first marketed in the U.S. as a tool for simple voice recording but gradually drifted to the world of music. What helped precipitate this change was the unexpected consumer demand for blank tapes for personal music recording. Realizing the economic opportunity of such a shift, Phillips made deals with the major record labels to release their music on the new format. By 1968, Capitol Records led the other labels in compact cassette releases with a library of 25 albums available for roughly \$6.00 each. With commercial music now being released on the easily recordable compact cassette, record companies soon became aware of the potential for massive copyright infringement. Fearing that unofficial versions of their albums would flood the market, lobbyists for the record industry fought in the late sixties to amend the United States Copyright Law. On February 15, 1972, Titles 17 and 18 were successfully incorporated into the Copyright Law and clearly outlined the penalties for music piracy. According to Title 17, individuals caught distributing illegal copies of a copyrighted sound recording could face up to five years in prison as well as a \$250,000 fine. Also, if there is proof that the pirated material directly took profits away from the copyright holder, then the individual responsible could be fined up to \$100,000 per violation. Although these new, stricter copyright laws were now in place, from the late seventies to the early eighties the record companies were hit by an 11% drop in album sales. While any number of factors such as market saturation or unsuccessful promotional efforts could have contributed to this decline, the music industry instantly blamed pirates. They claimed that people were either recording songs off the radio or making copies of entire albums and trading them with one another.

However, as the eighties continued, sales of cassette albums began to climb and eventually started to outsell vinyl records. Compact cassettes remained the most popular form of music playback until the early nineties when they were replaced by the much more versatile compact disc. The next battle the entertainment industry fought against piracy centered on the introduction of home video technology in the 1970's. In 1970, Sony released the first video cassette recorder, or VCR, called the U-Matic. With a price tag of \$2,000, the U-Matic was never fully embraced by consumers, although it was popular in classrooms and television stations. Sony's next effort, the less-expensive Betamax home video system, was much more successful. With small, easy-to-handle tapes, the Betamax gave people the ability to record their favorite television shows and watch them whenever they wanted. It was not until a few years later that prerecorded motion pictures began to appear on video. Only one year after the release of the Betamax VCR, Sony found itself on the receiving end of a massive lawsuit. Universal City and Walt Disney Studios claimed that recording movies and television broadcasts off-the-air was copyright infringement and sought financial compensation from Sony as well as the immediate ban on the production of VCRs. While Sony won the original case, an appeals court later ruled in favor of the movie studios and essentially outlawed home video recording. Finally, in 1984 the Supreme Court ruled in a five to four decision against Universal and Disney. The Court stated that home recording did not result in lost profits for the broadcaster and, in turn, did not qualify as copyright infringement. However, any distribution of a recorded movie or television show was deemed against the law and carried penalties similar to those faced by music pirates.

The record companies' efforts to amend the U.S. Copyright Law and Universal and Disney's attempts to end the production of VCRs clearly demonstrate the short-sightedness of the entertainment industry in the face of new technologies. In both instances, the companies that were trying to protect themselves from these new formats eventually turned around and embraced them once the money started rolling in. Disney, for example, probably would not even exist today if it was not for the profits they make off the home video market. Also, the widespread use of automobile tape decks resulted in millions of dollars in revenue for the record companies throughout the 1980's. Although the threat of piracy always lingered in the background, the entertainment industry not only survived it, but also prospered despite it.

With digital technology currently facing strong opposition, it is apparent that most of those in charge of the entertainment business learned nothing over the past thirty years. Movie studios and record labels are scrambling to eliminate services that offer their products over the internet and punish those responsible for creating them. While these services are illegal, they only flourish because there are very few legitimate alternatives. Legal services such as Apple's iTunes online music store which allows users to pay for music downloads and Movielink which offers online movie rentals that customers watch on their computers are steps in the right direction. Instead of looking for ways to limit the usage of new technologies, motion picture and music companies should focus their attention on letting them reach their full potential. **Links to websites offering legal online movies and music**
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