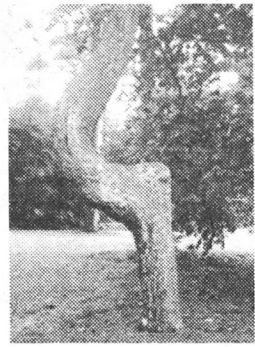


THE BENT TREE

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CCSU STUDENT NEWSPAPER



The Winds of Change

By Patrick Harbin

With the student population growing more and more each year, Clayton State administrators now face the difficult task of improving school facilities to match the increase in demand. Several of the proposed campus improvements described by President Harden at a recent student-faculty forum are aimed at enhancing the quality of student life at Clayton without damaging any of the campus' unique aspects.

Clayton State is currently experiencing a period of rapid growth. Estimates predict that there will be over 8,000 students enrolled at the university by the year 2007. While the new University Center will temporarily solve the school's overcrowding problem, President Harden asserts that the relief will last no more than two academic years at the most. In order to make sure the campus will be able to accommodate the expected influx of new students in the long run, the administration enlisted the aid of Jacobs Engineering Group's Master Planning division. After several months of collaboration with Jacobs, President Harden unveiled several of the proposed campus upgrades during an open forum held February 5th. In addition to addressing concerns associated with a growing student population, many of the proposals deal with other issues such as security and traffic flow around Clayton State. For example, there is a plan to put new, brighter bulbs in all the streetlights so students and teachers will feel safer on campus at night. Also, a new entrance to the school may be added to alleviate some of the constant congestion that builds up on Clayton State Boulevard. While these changes would greatly benefit the students and faculty, some of the more ambitious proposals revolve around the subject of student life. With the second phase of Clayton Place about to begin construction, Clayton State will soon change its designation from a commuter college to a residential college. To match this change, the president hopes to increase the amount of recreational activities available to students on campus.

One proposal President Harden is very enthusiastic about is the possibility of constructing a new, larger student theater to replace the existing one in the Arts and Sciences building. For sports fans, other initiatives under consideration are the creation of a 4,000 seat arena that would become the new home for the Lakers and a plan to add men's baseball and

women's softball to the school's athletic program. And, for students who enjoy the outdoors but do not play sports, a 400 seat amphitheater might be built between Swan Lake and the new University Center. If completed, the amphitheater would be used for holding classes outside, hosting guest speakers, or simply studying under the sun.

As exciting as all of these plans are, there is one problem on campus that almost everyone agrees should be taken care of: parking. While the 2,500 currently available parking spaces are enough to meet the demand at the moment, they will not be able to handle the projected increase in students over the next few years. To do that, administrators and Jacobs are relying on a combination of several different projects that will complement each other and hopefully reduce competition for spaces.

First, a second satellite campus may be built in Henry County. Combined with a renovation of the already existing Fayette County facility, this would reduce the number of students on the main campus by 4,000. Secondly, there are plans to possibly install one or more multi-deck parking garages around the school; although administrators are reluctant to do this on fears of damaging the university's aesthetic beauty. Finally, a commuter train station is being built near campus as part of the Gateway Village community surrounding the school. The station will give students living west of the campus in cities such as Lovejoy an alternative to driving to class everyday.

Most of the changes described by President Harden have not yet been officially finalized. There just is not enough money or space to implement each of them at this time. However, the administrators and Jacobs each have a few ideas for getting the resources they need. For instance, one way they are thinking about making more space for development is by altering some of the roads on campus and eliminating needless curves and loops. To raise the necessary amount of money, Clayton State is hoping to form several public and private partnerships throughout the community. Although seeing these changes take place would be a great victory for the administration, in the end, it is the students that would benefit the most from them.



Dr. Thomas Harden
Picture courtesy of John Shiffert

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Opinions

The Half Truth About Georgia's SATs

By Thomas Spurlin

Practically everyone in the state of Georgia has heard of the state's placement in the SAT rankings. For those who are not aware, Georgia ranks in last place among all other states in total SAT scores. This statement may lead some readers to believe that overall, Georgia is the least educated and less intelligent of the other states. While there is some significance behind the data, it should not be taken to such a dramatic extreme. Yes, on average, Georgia is in last place. However, a significant analysis of the credibility of the data should be conducted.

This last place figure is computed amongst the amount of SAT participants in each state. These percentages range from eighty five percent (85%) as the top figure in New Jersey and four percent (4%) in Mississippi, North and South Dakota. Georgia ranks high in SAT participation with a sixty-six percent (66%) rate. Here, however, is where the fallacy starts to plague these statistics. On average, North Dakota has the highest SAT score with one thousand, two hundred and fifteen (1215), while Georgia's last place score is nine hundred and eighty four (984). Therefore, North Dakota, the state with the lowest participation rate, also has the highest SAT score on average.

In order to illustrate this problem, assume that one hundred students who range in average grades from as low as a C- to a maximum score of an A take a generalized test, while another group of ten students that have an average grade of an A- take the same examination. The ten students, who all excelled in school, would have a higher average. In contrast, the one hundred students, which have a general average of

In essence, the statistical data that ranks SAT scores cannot fully measure the intellect and the level of education. From this data, it could be assumed that North Dakota's students are more intellectually superior than the students in such educationally advanced states, such as Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. All of these states have average SAT scores under one thousand, one hundred (1100). There

students from each of the states would be accounted in order to measure the high intelligence correctly. However, the scores for this second method might be difficult to register if there are unreasonable amounts of high scores in some states.

Does this prove that Georgia's flaws are just in the statistical data? No. There are thirteen (13) states with higher participant rates than Georgia, and none of which had an average score lower than one thousand (1000). There is need for improvement in Georgia's scholastic system in order to raise these scores, without a doubt. Great improvements are underway, while successes have already surfaced with a 4 point raise in the SAT score from last year. This is the third highest improved ratio in the United States. Georgia is on its way to raise the bar on its education, yet it is by no means proven to be the least intelligent state.

*Does this prove that
Georgia's flaws are
just in statistical data?
No.*

around a B, would score lower. In North Dakota, the low participation rate is due to the lowered interest in college, as well as the preference to the ACT testing over the SAT testing. Students in North Dakota who do take the SAT exam are normally stellar students that desire to go to school out of state. Georgia's participation is above the national average because of the overall interest that high school students have in college.

are two optimal ways in order to equalize this fallacy. One way, which would be relatively impossible, is to have each state's high school seniors take the SAT. This would achieve the most accurate overall measure of raw scores throughout the states. The other possibility is to take the lowest participant rate of all the states (which in this case would be 4%) and calculate that top percent of the SAT participants. This would even out the distribution so that the scholar

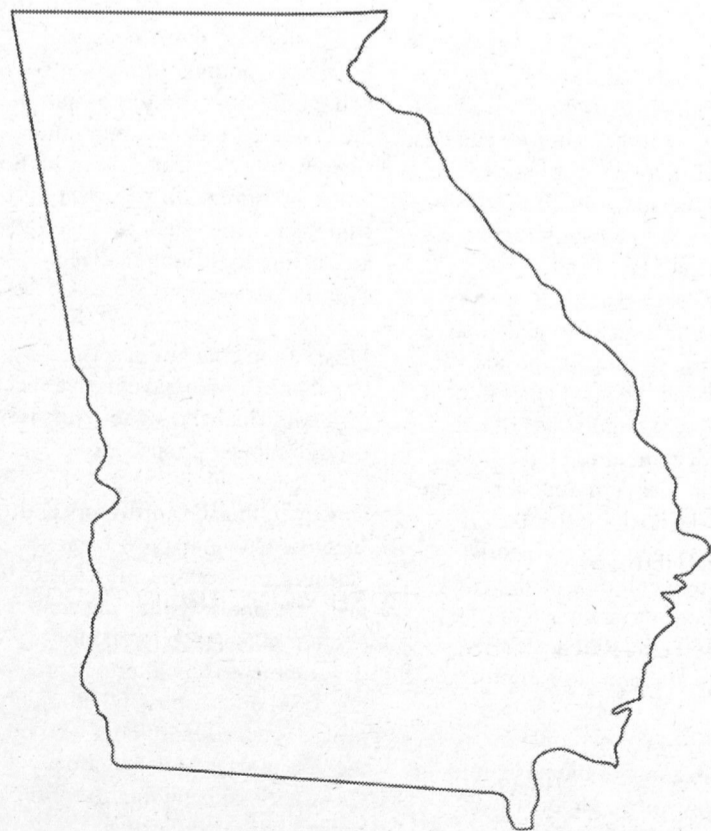
Sources:

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/0803/26satga.html>
<http://www.valdosta.edu/spec/20030911/front4.shtml>

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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.



Georgia
Picture courtesy of google.com

Cloning Advance: Theologians Will Have to Play Catch-Up

By Greg Hampikian



This article is a re-print of an article printed by the Hartford Courant's webpage, ctnow.com

Since 1992, I have begun my genetics lectures the same way: "Are there any clones in the class today?" There are usually titters and silly comments, until I ask if cloning runs in anyone's family. Then, inevitably, someone realizes that identical twins are clones. I then ask the twins, and relatives of twins, in the room to cover their ears, and I whisper, "They have half a soul." This is the obvious conclusion if, as many people believe, the soul enters at conception, because twinning is the post-conception splitting of embryos.

The notion of conception being the starting point of the soul is actually fairly modern. In fact, the concept of conception was not developed until the act was witnessed under a microscope. In what became a classic example of science informing religion, a series of papal decrees were issued during the golden age of microscopy in the 1800s proclaiming that life begins at conception. Until then, Augustine's teaching had held sway for nearly 1,500 years. He had concluded that the soul entered 40 days after copulation for males, and 90

days after for females. Augustine knew his Bible, but it unfortunately yielded no information about the soul's entry into the body.

In 1996, I had to modify my opening lecture to include the artificial cloning of Dolly the sheep. For the first time, it seemed possible that man-made clones might actually attend college in my lifetime, and so I made the distinction between artificial and natural clones. Now I will have to make yet another distinction: therapeutic cloning from a single individual.

The experiments announced last week are truly breathtaking: Scientists in

Science has done its part, and not it is time for theology to catch up.

South Korea reported that they have created the world's first mature, cloned human embryos. God has been creating twins for quite some time, but the production of stem cells from adult tissues is novel and groundbreaking. This technique promises to be a great source of medical relief for those who suffer from our imperfect genetics and for those who develop diabetes, Parkinson's and paralysis later in life.

Science has done its part, and it is now time for theology to catch up. There is no catchphrase to cover what was announced in South Korea: "Right to life," and "Life begins at conception" do not apply. The scientists took a cell from a woman's body, put it into one of her own eggs and induced the com-

bined cell to produce muscles, bone and nerve tissue.

Those who cling to bumper-sticker theology have no way to deal with this type of cellular medicine, since there was no conception in the Korean experiments. Religious groups reacting to the news are trying to fit the results into a neat category, but no suitable classification exists. It is time to create one - not through an appeal to old slogans, but through an honest examination of what God has allowed us to understand and have dominion over. Just as Augustine's model was discarded when science allowed for observation and manipulation of sperm and eggs, so now we must use our new abilities to modify our preconceived notions of life's beginning.

Permission granted for a re-print by Dr. Greg Hampikian

Nursing Department Information

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.

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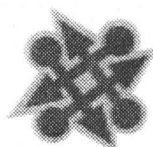
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Features

Adapting to a Changing Curriculum

By Thomas Spurlin



Ever since the beginning of time, ambiguity has been one of humanity's largest character flaws. An uncertainty about the nature of things obscures our thought processes and depletes any concrete assumptions that they might be able to make. Through countless hours of debate and banter on the subject, haziness has largely clouded the idea of "evolution". Kathy Cox has taken some initiative in this debate, yet it is in a direction that may have been unforeseen.

In an effort to remove this fog of confusion, Cox has labeled the word "evolution" as a "buzzword" that can distract the classroom from learning the core principles of Biology and development. She has established a new curriculum for Georgia's school systems that involves general teachings of the theories behind evolution, yet never includes the word "evolution". The concepts of adaptation and mutation are included in the curriculum, yet they are not coherently taught together under the topic of evolution.

Her idea behind this is that teachers will be more inclined to present their students with the principles of "Biological change over time" rather than the evolutionary process. Cox continues to describe her evolutionary

Cox has stated, however, that this issue is not a religion versus science type of discussion, but rather an "issue of how [to] ensure that our kids are getting a quality science education in every classroom across the state".

debate as one that is in conflict with certain people's viewpoints. Some teachers are pressured by surrounding parents and citizens of conservative communities to neglect the teachings of evolution from the classroom due to the conflict in belief structures. However, this proposed curriculum interfered with another generous amount of people's beliefs. Cox's new plan has enraged scientists, teachers and students, as well as legislators. In late January, a petition was signed by all of the aforementioned groups that combat this new curriculum. Many

Georgians feel that this removal of evolutionary terms will be "an embarrassment".

Widespread, evolution is understood to be the core ideal behind developmental sciences. A complete overhaul will be performed in order to adapt to this change in the state's curriculum. The CRCT, Georgia's curriculum exam, would have to be reworked and edited in order to eliminate the previous concepts that were taught about evolution. Basically, the entire school framework that has been constructed around the ideal

will need to be reassembled. However, new textbooks would not need to be bought and the word would not be barred from usage in the classroom.

Cox has stated, however, that this issue is not a religion versus science type of discussion, but rather an "issue of how [to] ensure that our kids are getting a quality science education in every classroom across the state". Cox has implemented the ideal that all students should be introduced to all possible theories of the scientific realm. Furthermore, scientists and educators alike have condemned this ideal, correlating this vagueness in the curriculum with steps back in the educational process. Legislators on the opposing side of this debate have also chimed in. "If you're teaching the concept without the word, what's the point?" said one legislator. "It's like teaching gravity without using the word gravity".

In short, the word "evolution" will be removed from the curriculum, yet it can still be taught and referred to. These changes, according to Kathy Cox, are done so that students can be exposed to the "best education possible". Ambiguity, however, has fogged this discussion for a long time, as it will for countless years to come.

Student Orientation Leader: The Greatest Job on Campus!

By Redd Horrocks

Every year, something special happens in Student Life and Orientation. Dozens apply yet few are selected. What I am talking about is one of the most coveted, demanding and rewarding positions on campus, the position of Student Orientation Leader.

The Student Orientation Leader Team is rebuilt every semester, and Student Life is currently accepting applications for the 2004-2005 team. I was lucky enough to serve on the 2003-2004 team and I have to say that it was one of the best things that I have ever done. Not only do you get to form a great team with a group of outstanding individuals, but you also get to help students who are just starting at the school feel comfortable. Most of the duties for a Student Orientation Leader involve running the Orientation sessions that the school holds for incoming students, as well as helping students to register for classes and providing them with valuable insights into college life.

It's a wonderful feeling to have helped someone get through their first encounter with college. I always love when I see someone who was in my tour group from an orientation session. It's good to know that you helped that person be happy and comfortable with the school. You also get to hang out with some fantastic people, as the team is built with people from different backgrounds, majors, ages and interests. You almost become a little family. Some of my favorite people on campus are people that I have met through being a Student Orientation Leader. I urge you to consider applying for one of the positions. Applications are being accepted until Friday, February 27th, and you can find the application at <http://admins-services.clayton.edu/studentlife/Orientation/Recruitment.html>

Leap Year: Where Does it Come From?

By Megan Lawrimore

Leap years have 366 days, one more than an ordinary year. Did you ever wonder where the extra day comes from every four years, or why it's sometimes referred to as Sadie Hawkins Day? The Romans originally had a 355-day calendar. To keep up with the seasons, and to make the calendar nearly the same as the solar year, an extra 22 or 23-day month was added approximately every two years; however, record keepers were not consistent with adding this month, and by Julius Caesar's time, the seasons did not occur during the same calendar periods they previously had. To correct this, Caesar eliminated the extra month and added one or two extra days to the end of various months, resulting in a 365-day calendar. He also added an extra calendar day at the end of Februarius every four years. However, after Caesar's death in 44 B.C., record keeping was once again flawed, as the calendars were written with an extra day every three years rather than every four, which was not corrected until 8 A.D. It wasn't until 1582 that Pope Gregory XIII recognized that Easter

would become gradually closer to Christmas; therefore, he reformed the calendar so that a leap day would occur in every year divisible by four but not by 100, except when the year is divisible by 400. This became known as the Gregorian calendar and is still used today; our year of 365.2425 days is only off from our solar year by .00031, which calculates into only one day's error after 4000 years. Aside from the mathematical history, there is another interesting fact about Leap Year. Leap Day is sometimes referred to as Sadie Hawkins Day, involving a tradition that originated long before the name. In the 5th century in Ireland, St. Bridget complained to St. Patrick that the sisters in her nunnery were in despair waiting for marriage proposals. Obviously, it was tradition for men to propose to women, and the reverse was not acceptable. However, St. Patrick agreed to let women propose to men once every four years — on Leap Day. Ironically, Bridget proposed to Patrick and was turned down. The name "Sadie Hawkins Day" came much later, in a comic strip in 1929. Sandra

Why "Sadie Hawkins Day"?

Crockett, a writer for the Baltimore Sun, described the comic by Al Capp, saying "a female character named 'Sadie Hawkins,' who lived in the fictional town Dogpatch, was having a tough time getting a man to propose to her. Her father, the mayor of said fictional town, declared one day, 'Sadie Hawkins' day. The unmarried women in Dogpatch ran — literally — after unmarried men to propose that day." Thus, we have our Leap Years with our Sadie Hawkins Day; enjoy your extra day this year.



**"Shhhhhh!
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We're hunting
new writers for
the
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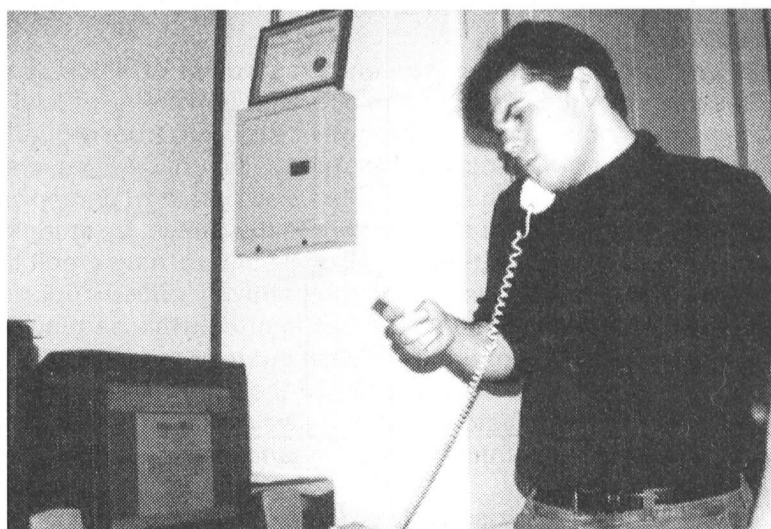
"The Humorous One"
Bent Tree Business Manger,
Thomas Spurlin
Interviewed by Shea Haley

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Thomas. Two semesters ago, he graced the Bent Tree's pages and since has helped with the advertising, financing and writing. He, along with Redd, bring you important announcements from the community. A Business Marketing major, Thomas has always loved to write: his favorite being short stories and poems. He says he likes taking his time to develop and analyze his characters, which makes sense. His favorite articles that you may have read in previous volumes of the paper are on Health and Entertainment.

When he isn't bogged down in the Bent Tree office, you can find him catching the latest movie (his recent favorite is "Lost in Translation"), or playing the guitar. After being side-tracked by his charming and hilarious personality, he told me that he wants to pursue a career in advertising, preferably in magazines. When asked what he would like most about it, he quickly responded that he loves interacting with others, and let's face it, you must have good communication skills in order to succeed. Be sure to look out for his informative articles and see what this talented writer has to offer.



Bent Tree Writers



Thomas Spurlin
Picture taken by Shea
Haley

Entertainment

First Ever Poetry Palooza A Success

By: Shea Haley

Poetry Palooza, a yearly event that has begun here at Clayton State finished its first year with success. Judged by Dr. David Ludley, who served as Director, Dr. Greg Hampikian, who served as Co-director and Dr. Jennifer Griffith, awarded the three winners with cash prizes, and gave five honorable mentions. The judges also arranged to have John Poch speak, whose poem will appear in late February on www.poems.com as "Poet of the Day", a respectable honor being the website gets over 80,000 hits a day. If that isn't enough, he is a published poet as well as an alumni here at Clayton State. He was more than happy to lend his talent in the Palooza, and to read a few of his poems. Afterwards, anyone that attended was invited to come up on stage and read any poem they wished in an open mic session. Much to my surprise, students took the opportunity and courageously got up there and read. "We plan to have many other poetry contests in the future and will continue to offer open mic opportunities," Dr. Ludley stated. The event took place once during the afternoon and again during the evening,

inviting students and faculty to attend.

As you may know Dr. Ludley is also serving as Senior Editor on the *Cygnets* (which is a baby swan as well as the new Campus Literary Magazine), and invited students to submit prose, poems, essays, pictures, etc. for possible publication. Scheduled to launch in April, the deadline to get your literature in was February 13. Dr. Ludley has brought together a team that will essentially "produce our 1st Literary/Arts magazine in several years," he told me. Dr. Griffith as well as Dr. Hampikian are serving as Creative Writing Editors, while Steve Spence edits the online web version. Additional outstanding staff members have also joined the team to lend their "creative juices." With all of these artistic opportunities that continue to greet us, who wouldn't get excited about writing? "I would hope this reborn interest in creativity and poetry will continue to grow," Dr. Ludley said. So, without any further ado, grab a pen and paper and start writing today! Next year's *Cygnets* and Poetry Palooza is waiting for you.



First place prizes were awarded to:

1st- Robin Plascencia

2nd- Will Rogers

3rd- John Dilworth II

Honorable Mentions:

Bernard Asubonteng

Abbie Bryon-Goslin

Shea Haley

James Lambeth

Hannah Terrence

(Pictured from left to right; Robin Plascencia, Will Rogers, Dr. Greg Hampikian, Dr. David Ludley, Poet John Poch, John Dilworth II, Dr. Jennifer Griffith, not pictured)

ADVERTISEMENT

Opportunities to Study Abroad Become Increasingly Appealing and More Accessible to College Students

College students are discovering that as America becomes more globally minded, the opportunities to earn credit towards a degree, while studying in another country, are becoming increasingly accessible and appealing.

In the past year the number of American students studying abroad for credit has increased 4.4%, according to a report by Open Doors, a division of the Institute of International Education. This increased interest in studying cross-culturally can be attributed to several factors. Voice of America acquired the insight of Allan Goodman, head of the Institute of International Education, who stated that, "What we've been seeing for the past several years is young Americans discovering the world, discovering that part of what it means to be an educated person is to have the experience in living and studying in another culture beyond your own."

The interest in studying overseas goes beyond just wanting to be immersed in another culture and adding international experience to one's resume. Students are becoming increasingly aware that the opportunity to become a part of international education is a realistic and affordable one. Universities and colleges across the nation have designated study abroad offices, and many hold fairs like the 'Study Abroad Extravaganza', hosted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Office of International Affairs on January 27th in an effort to promote the study abroad opportunities available to their students.

Third party study abroad providers also offer enticing programs for students, regardless of which academic institution they currently attend. These programs include such services and amenities as tuition to a foreign university, official academic transcripts, housing options, meal plans, onsite support, excursions and the opportunity to meet other students from around the country and the world.

Third party providers are quickly gaining momentum and the reputation that they, like universities, are committed to assisting college students in the pursuit of a global mind. Along the way, the myth is being dispelled that third party providers are simply in it for financial gain. For a comparable figure to what it costs to live as a college student here in the States, by studying abroad students can enjoy Italian architecture, the night life of Paris, or the irresistible beaches of Sydney, all while still earning credit toward their degree.

Cultural Experiences Abroad (CEA) is a study abroad provider that offers competitively priced opportunities for undergraduates to expand their horizons, explore the world around them, and experience all that life has to offer, while earning a quality education. In an effort to make studying abroad even more realistic for students, CEA continues to seek out means to financially assist program participants. For instance, just this month CEA announced that they have cut prices for many of their programs, in some cases by up to \$3000. CEA has also partnered with STA Travel, currently featured on NBC's *Fear Factor* for giving away vacations, in order to offer students discounted airfare to their study abroad destination of choice. Scholarships and other forms of financial aid, including federal assistance, also make studying overseas an increasingly affordable option.

As the interest and feasibility of studying abroad continues to rise and students continue to seek an international education outside of the American norm, study abroad offices and providers continue to do all that is possible to make the experience a reality for students and a meaningful one at that.

To learn more about studying abroad visit:

<http://www.GoWithCEA.com>

Rock Band Evanescence Wins Grammys With 50 Cent Trailing Behind

By: Shea Haley

Surely by now, we've all heard the spellbinding voice and lyrics of Evanescence. Straight out of Arkansas, this once Christian band made overnight success seem easy. With their debut album "Fallen", and their first single, "Bring me to life", it seemed nothing could stop them, until recently when guitarist and co-founder of the group Ben Moody decided he had had enough. With no warning, he left and has since hooked up with Avril Lavigne to help with her follow up album. But lead singer Amy Lee has stated that this will not hold them back from continuing to tour and starting on their own sophomore album. With a replacement guitarist taking over, Evanescence was nominated for

and won two Grammys for "Best New Artist", and "Best Hard Rock Performance." As the group took the stage, a fellow nominee in the same category, 50 Cent ran up on stage behind them. In a later interview, Amy stated that she wasn't upset; she was in a sense glad that he momentarily took the attention off her. "With all the talented artists that have made it onto the music scene, personally I can understand why 50 would have felt a little perturbed." With Evanescence's new single "My Immortal" (which you can view and hear on their website, www.evanescence.com along with other clips of songs off their album) they are setting themselves up for great expectations, and don't expect them to let us down.



Photo by: Paul Harries/Courtesy of www.evanescence.com

-INCLUDEPICTURE "http://www.evanescence.com/band/photos/images/promophoto/tn_newmain_oct-03.jpg" \ MERGEFORMATINET -

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AIDS Virus: A Cunning Invader

By Bernard Asubonteng

I observed an encouraging development at the school cafeteria the other day, and that prompted me to write about HIV/AIDS. On Thursday, February 12, 2004, a sorority group, Delta Sigma Theta (CCSU branch) embarked on a "Safe Sex or No Sex" campaign on the school campus. What resonated with me most was not the group's distribution of packages containing candies, pens, condoms, and leaflets warning of the dangers of unsafe sex and what have you, but the group's passionate effort in trying to bring some awareness and remind all of us on campus about the miseries of HIV. Indeed, all of us need that reminder—that AIDS is wreaking havoc on millions of people yearly around the globe. More often the human mind tends to forget quickly. This probably explains why most of us appear to forget that AIDS is a ruthless killer that has no respect for any race or a person's social status. Over the decades, AIDS has become one of the most dangerous and cunning diseases ever to inflict human race, and there are indications that its upward climb is assuming an alarming proportion every day. "No war on the face of the world is as destructive as the AIDS pandemic," according to Colin Powell, the U.S. Secretary of State. Also Dr. Stephen Lewis, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, echoes the concern of many vis-a-vis the AIDS situation worldwide, saying, "We're

dealing with a kind of contemporary apocalypse." These observations certainly reflect the gloomy dimensions of the AIDS disease since its discovery some decades ago. There are many people who are infected with HIV and do not know it. This scenario shows that newly infected people—both homosexual and heterosexual—are going around spreading the virus without knowing it. This is the scariest part of it. Although I am not an expert in microbiology, the little knowledge I have gained from two of my former biology instructors, Drs. Michelle Furlong and Stephen Burnett, put me in the position to offer some elementary insights into the cunning nature of HIV. When HIV manages to enter the host cell, it is able to employ a (human) cell's method of operations to achieve its own deadly "agenda." The virus "re-models" the DNA of the host cell to make many copies of the AIDS virus. To accomplish this deadly mission, however, HIV must first learn the "language" of its host cell. This means HIV's native language of RNA must be changed into DNA dialect so that the host cell can feel "comfortable" connecting with the cunning invader. Here, there is a "match-maker" (or an enzyme) called *reverse transcriptase* that helps to make sure that the transition from RNA to DNA occurs smoothly. Soon after producing countless copies of

HIV molecules, the infected host cell dies; but the newly born AIDS viruses infect other cells. At this point, the helper-T cells and/or the immune system's ability to fight starts crumbling from within, owing to HIV's relentless attacks from all fronts. Thus, other external forces can invade the body with impunity because the HIV has succeeded in shutting down the body's defense systems. The infected person has thus far advanced to full-blown AIDS. This is my elementary understanding of the workings of HIV when it gains entry into human body. It is worth noting that experts and other leading researchers do not know the exact trajectories of the HIV, and why it behaves the way it does when it invades the host cell(s). This is just a mind-boggling commentary from a frustrated member of the human race who wishes that sooner rather than later, the civilized world will find an effective antidote to this global menace. On that note, let me end by sharing with my readers a poem I composed in 1999 which has since been featured in a book entitled, "America at the Millennium," subtitled "The Best Poems and Poets of the 20th Century." (ISBN 1-58235-510-X).

Readers can access the poem at www.poetry.com a website maintained by the International Library of Poetry based in Owings Mills, Maryland.

The World Called Me AIDS

I am mortal destroyer; I'm peerless! A king in my own right; The mother of all diseases. My disrespect for all races is absolute; The world called me AIDS! I hide my faceless soul searching for converts; With impunity I knock the door of sexual-go-runners. Within blood matters, I'm super expert! The status of my victims is meaningless; Given the chance I strike with surgical precision. That's me, the world called me AIDS! I believe in extended family system: Unusual weight-loss being my first child, I'm inseparably wedded to bowel-withering. Inexplicable fatigue and thinness are beloved in-laws. Disfiguring my victims beyond recognition is my pastime. I dislike intrusion upon my privacy. My hatred for kings and science is solid For they pose deadly threat to my kingship, That's me, the world called me AIDS!

How to Gain 60 pounds (while in a coma)

By Pam Criswell

A 72-year-old cardiologist was walking to work with a dear friend beside him. Suddenly, the old gentleman slipped on the ice and fell to the ground, hitting his head with such great force that the blunt force trauma led to his death. At the time of his admittance to the hospital, he weighed 198 pounds, a decent weight for his 6-foot frame. About two weeks later, he was taken off of life support. His weight had ballooned to 258 pounds. At the time of his death his body was so swollen that his family almost could not recognize him. The man was Robert Atkins, M.D.

It was recently reported in the Wall Street Journal that Dr. Atkins, creator of the diet named after him, was obese at the time of his death. What a truck full of horse manure. If a person gains sixty pounds while in a coma, would the weight gain be a gain of fat or fluids? Have any of you seen a seriously ill or injured person in a coma? My friend Steve, who was in a horrific motorcycle crash, was swollen to twice his size when I went to sit with his wife at Grady. My father-in-law, after his hip-replacement surgery, was quite swollen also. I can certainly

understand why Dr. Atkins weighed so much when they took him off the machines. Over the two weeks leading up to his death, all of his organs were slowly turning off. How tragic it must have been for his wife.

But this same man had heart disease! It had to be caused by his diet, right? Wrong. Dr. Atkins suffered from cardiomyopathy, which was caused by a virus. This caused congestive heart failure, (which, by the way, makes you retain fluids,) and a subsequent heart attack. His diet had nothing to do with the condition of his heart.

How did the information about Dr. Atkins' weight end up in the news? A group of doctors, who are animal rights activists, hoping to discredit Dr. Atkins and his diet, illegally gained access to Dr. Atkins' medical file from his hospitalization. (The person who obtained the information did so under the guise of being one of Dr. Atkins' treating physicians. Last time I read the HIPPA laws, this was considered a felony.) The doctors took this information and twisted it for public consumption. They had no right to the records without the consent of Dr.

Atkins' widow, and they especially have no right to cherry-pick the information they desired to leak and leave the public with half-truths. Dr. Atkins' highest desire was to see people healthy and happy. Those who consider eating meat a crime were aiming at one of their number one enemies, this man who encouraged people to eat meat.

There is such a controversy about diet in this day and time. I am reminded of the song that said "do this, don't do that, can't you read the signs". Instead I hear "eat this, don't eat that". One day this will kill you, the next day, that. Eat breads and whole grains. Use meat as a condiment. Eat fish. Oh, never mind, we were wrong. There is too much mercury in fish. What *are* we supposed to eat, anyway?

I had a book at one time, by an author I can't remember. I threw the book away because it told me how I was supposed to eat, and after eating that way I had GAINED. The only kind of diet that I have been successful on is one similar to the Atkins diet, but a little less strict about the carbs. The

fats, however, were more restricted.

The Atkins approach to weight loss gets the biggest focus these days, but there are other very similar diets out there, and most of those diets have clinical findings that mirror those of Dr. Atkins.

The low-carb lifestyle takes as much dedication as the vegan. Both become a religion, taking much thought, time, energy and effort. I have to put 100% of me and my time into weight loss in order for it to be effective. If I added all of the pounds I have lost together, I would have lost more than my present body weight. I'm just glad to be able to say that I haven't gone skyrocketing over my previous high weight.

If you are seriously wondering about the best way to feed your body, read up on what is eaten by the people in the Mediterranean area. (Books about the Omega Diet.) They live the longest, healthiest lives of any group of people on earth. Bring on the goats, fruits, olives, and pitas. Learn it, live it, love it, and teach it to the next generation.