



See a new way the recreation center is powering its new scoreboards. Sports, page 10

TOP DVD SALES

- 1 Wall-E
 - 2 Tropic Thunder
 - 3 Kung Fu Panda
 - 4 Hellboy II: Golden Army
 - 5 Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2
 - 6 Iron Man
 - 7 Tinker Bell
 - 8 Kung Fu Panda / Secrets of the Furious Five
 - 9 Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull
 - 10 Star Wars: The Clone Wars
- Billboard



Our final reviews section for the semester includes a look at director Danny Boyle's latest, "Slumdog Millionaire", already considered by many critics to be an awards contender. Reviews, page 5

PECULIAR FACT

BUNA, Texas — The one that didn't get away held an unlikely surprise for a Texas man. The blue-stoned class ring of Joe Richardson, engraved with his name, turned up inside an 8-pound bass 21 years after he lost it while fishing on Lake Sam Rayburn.

— KDFM-TV

TODAY'S WEATHER

51 31
HIGH LOW
Partly Cloudy

Tomorrow: Mostly Sunny
60 / 36

Sunday: Sunny
60 / 43



Please remember to recycle this newspaper.



Find out about some of this semester's graduating seniors. Graduation Special Section, Inside



Read about how an increasing demand of social services is straining local churches' resources. News, page 4

Pond Street to close its doors next week

By Michael Carroll
Staff Reporter

Pond Street Grill will be closing after dinner on Wednesday a university official said Thursday.

Craig Allen, director of Residential Services, said the future of the building, located in the Worth Hills area of campus, is uncertain.

"We actually are hoping that maybe we can have it open for people to use it as a study space," Allen said.

The short-term transformation would only be in effect until the end of the se-

mester, but the possibility of it happening depends on whether the equipment and other materials in the building can be secured, Allen said.

Last semester, the closing of two campus dining locations, Edens and Deco Deli, caused a small number of Dining Services employees to be laid off. That will not be the case with employees this time around, said Legia Abato, district marketing manager for Dining Services.

"They are going to be absorbed into the rest of our operation," she said.

Allen said students can expect the building to be changed as soon as next

month.

"In January we'll have something new," Allen said. "It won't be open as it is now."

Whether dining will be the focus of the building once it changes next month is uncertain, Allen said.

"There just hasn't been a lot of interest in food down there," Allen said. "It's just not doing any business."

Abato said the closing of Pond St. was not unforeseen.

"It was something we went into knowing it was a possibility and we were hoping it wouldn't happen," Abato said. "We

tweaked the menu a bit in hopes of keeping some of it alive, but that location has traditionally been a difficult location to create something that would keep our customers down there happy."

The popularity of the location enjoyed in previous years fell off dramatically this semester because of Market Square, the new dining hall on campus, Abato said.

"That tends to happen when you have a brand new facility and you have another one that's a bit older," she said. "I know we're still working with the school to see what will be the next generation. I just don't know what it is."

A CLOSER LOOK



Freshman Hayley Beindorff shops around at the Brown Lupton University Union where Holidays at TCU offered Christmas shopping and present wrapping. LINH DANG / Staff Photographer

Economic downturn takes toll on investments

By Chance Welch
Staff Reporter

The university endowment lost about 17 percent of its market value this year soon after the financial crisis gained momentum in June, according to the chief investment officer.

James Hille, chief investment officer, said he told the Board of Trustees investment committee that from January to the end of October the endowment went from \$1.2 billion to about \$1 billion. Hille said the figure isn't exact, but said the loss is about \$200 million.

Hille pointed to the endowment troubles of institutions like Harvard University, which lost 22 percent of its market value, or \$8 billion, in the first four months of the fiscal year, according to a report by the Financial Times.

"We're not in certain capital markets like

SEE ENDOWMENT · PAGE 4

Move outs to make room for undergrads

By Melissa Hawkes
Staff Reporter

Residential Services is asking graduate students living in 15 townhouses on McCart Avenue to move out and allow undergraduate students to take their place, a university official said.

Craig Allen, director of Residential Services, said that 16 townhouses housing 32 people on Sandage Avenue were converted from graduate to undergraduate housing last year. Juniors and seniors occupy those townhouses now, he said.

"Our first and foremost priority is undergraduate student housing," Allen said.

The second phase is converting the McCart Avenue graduate housing to undergraduate housing, Allen said. In the fall of 2007, Residential Services first warned graduate students living in the McCart townhouses that they may have to move out in May 2009, he said.

Now, graduate students won't be required to move out until July 2010, and other resources have been offered to them, Allen said.

"In our ideal scenario we will move that back to graduate housing in a few years when we get through this construction and renovation period and we have enough housing from undergraduate students," Allen said.

According to the Residential Services Web site, the Brite Divinity School apartment complex Leibrock Village, the GrandMarc at Westberry Place and a leasing service have been recommended for graduate students.

Allen said Residential Services started giv-

SEE HOUSING · PAGE 4

Faculty Senate debates peer grading jobs

By Kimmy Daycock
Staff Reporter

The Faculty Senate is looking into whether undergraduate students grading other undergraduates' work is a concern at the university after an online survey generated mixed feelings from faculty members, a Faculty Senate official said.

Keith Whitworth, Faculty Senate secretary, said Robert Garnett Jr., associate professor in economics, sent him an e-mail expressing this concern. The concern was then brought to the Faculty Senate open forum at the October meeting, he said.

The open forum allowed for a five-minute discussion on the issue, Whitworth said.

According to the October minutes, Faculty Senate members ranked the issue as one of the top two most important out of the five issues discussed.

Whitworth said the survey consisted of open-ended and rating questions.

The results showed 57 percent of the faculty participants said they were not at all aware of the undergraduate grading practice, Whitworth said. Likewise, a total of 51 percent of the participants were either concerned or very concerned about the issue while 49 percent were either only

Study: Transfer students often fall through cracks

By Mischa Astroff
Staff Reporter

The university is providing transfer students with opportunities to get connected with the campus community, a campus official said, although a national survey shows transfers often fall through the cracks.

The National Survey of Student Engagement stated that transfer students reported less interaction with faculty, a less-supportive campus environment, less "active and collaborative learning," and fewer "enriching educational experiences."

But Rachael Taber, a senior nursing major and transfer student, said she was happy with her transfer experience.

"After having been tossed into the system to fend for myself at Baylor, transferring to TCU was very welcoming," Taber said.

Kay Higgins, associate dean for student development, said the university starts helping transfer students as soon as they're admitted.

"Once students are admitted, members of the transfer student advisory board call them, answer questions and encourage them to attend orientation and all beginning connection options," Higgins said.

Higgins said there are many ways for transfer students to start getting involved.

"We provide Orientation, Frog Camp and T-Connections classes in the first six weeks of class. There is also a weekly newsletter to transfer students for their first semester at TCU," Higgins said.

T-Connections is a class specifically for transfer students to help them get acquainted with the university.

According to the Connections Web site, students in the T-Connections class explore topics like campus resources, academic success, priority management, campus involvement and finding natural strengths.

Rachael Carranza, a senior advertising/public relations major and transfer programs student coordinator, said the transfer program has been successful in helping transfers begin their TCU career on a positive note.

This semester, 409 students transferred to the university, Carranza said.

Chris Cook, a senior secondary education life science major who transferred from Northlake College in Irving, said the transfer process was fairly smooth.

"The people I worked with were fantastic," Cook said. "The adviser I got, Kara Cox, was very helpful."

Higgins said the transfer program continues to grow to meet the needs of its students.

"If a transfer student identifies a need, we will respond to it," Higgins said.

SEE GRADING · PAGE 4

NEWS

Experts hope to improve county's justice system

By Lauren Rausch
Staff Reporter

Two experts on criminal justice from across the country will address how to improve the justice system in Tarrant County in a conference today at the Brown-Lupton University Union ballroom.

The two guest speakers will give advice on improving community issues by gathering community leaders to work together.

Julius Lang, director of technical assistance for the nonprofit Center for Court Innovation in New York, will speak on community justice. The nonprofit works with criminal justice agencies to implement problem-solving initiatives.

The other speaker is Bill Stewart, assistant district attorney for Clackamas County, Ore., and a member of the National District Attorney's Association.

The university is teaming up with Fort Worth's Safe City Commission and the North Central Texas Council of Governments to sponsor the conference.

Les Smith, adjunct faculty member and criminal justice coordinator for the Tarrant County Criminal Justice Office, said the program would help educate the community on a new option for the justice system that would help rehabilitate criminals rather than punish them and involve community leaders in the process.

"The program stems off of the overreliance on traditional approach to criminal justice,"

Conference
What: Conference addressing ways to improve the criminal justice system in Tarrant County
When: Today, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Where: Brown-Lupton University Union Ballroom

Smith said.

This overreliance is one of the things that is driving up crime, the number of criminals in custody and the number of criminals that return to the justice system in Tarrant County, Smith said.

A goal of the conference is to determine if people are willing to participate in a Community Justice Advisory Committee, according to the conference agenda. This committee, which is not yet developed, would be modeled after community-based problem-solving initiatives implemented in areas across the country.

The committee would also increase interaction between community representatives and law enforcement, prosecutors and court officials in order to better understand community issues.

After the experts speak, the conference sponsors will ask community leaders will be asked whether they want to form the committee and implement the methods addressed in the conference.

The event is open to the public and admission is free, but seating is limited.

ENDOWMENT

continued from page 1

private equity and commodities as much as they were, and those asset classes just fell off a cliff," Hille said. "Yes, we were impacted by it, but not nearly as much as some of these other endowments."

Hille said the effects will not be felt in next year's budget because the trustees agreed to spend as much of the endowment in the next fiscal year as they did in the last year, at or above 5 percent, to pay for annual operations. However, Hille said the long-term effects could be bad if there isn't an economic recovery.

The endowment has a stake of about 25 percent in the stock market, which Hille said is low compared to most institutions. Nevertheless, Hille said the area where the university lost the most is the stock market, and the trouble started in June with the failure of investment bank Lehman Brothers.

HOUSING

continued from page 1

ing notice of a possible move last fall through letters, e-mails and visits.

"We have been very upfront about this situation for quite some time," Allen said.

Ryan Rich, a physics doctorate student and McCart resident, said the first announcement explained TCU's commitment to becoming a "residential college," which he said is not applicable to graduate students. Rich said he has lived in graduate housing for two and a half years and found out in the spring that he would have to move.

Rich said students never got definite answers about the reasoning for losing their housing, and said the announcement stated students would simply be "reassigned."

"The residential staff has evidently established their priorities, and graduate students did not make that list," Rich said.

"We have the compensating overweight in hedge funds, which did half as bad as that and another compensating overweight in cash, which isn't gaining us anything but isn't losing anything either," Hille said.

The purpose of the endowment is divided up between paying for current operations and saving for future generations at the university, Hille said. He said that if the university loses any more, it could hurt those future generations.

Several things have to happen before the university sees any recovery in the endowment, Hille said. In addition to normal signs of a healthy economy like a low unemployment rate, Hille said the most important signs are the stabilization of real estate values and a more aggressive policy action by the Federal Reserve Board and other monetary officials.

In the meantime, Hille said he doesn't see a significant recovery in the endowment by next year, but said he hopes he's wrong.

Rich said many graduate students face the inconvenience of having to move spouses and children as well. He said he applauds the university's effort to increase student involvement by requiring more students to live on campus, adding, however, that this should not be accomplished by evicting current residents from their homes of several years.

"Living within walking distance of the physics lab is crucial to my research," Rich said. "Many experiments last many hours, and I am often walking to the lab late at night to turn off a machine or change a sample."

Allen said sophomores do not have the same independence a graduate student has, and those students need to be taken care of.

"Right now, Sherley Hall is closed — that's over 300 beds," Allen said. "Next year, Milton Daniel Hall will be closed. Until we finish those renovations, we are always going to be a little bit tight on space."

GRADING

continued from page 1

somewhat concerned or not concerned at all, he said.

The survey was released through an online program called SurveyMonkey, a survey tool that allows users to create their own surveys.

Arthur Busbey, Faculty Senate chair-elect, said the purpose of the survey was to find out whether faculty members thought that undergraduates grading undergraduates was a concern.

There were many different opinions from the faculty, Busbey said. It's obvious from the results that there needs to be further discussion on the matter, he said.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee will decide which Faculty Senate committee will research the issue and come up with a solution, Busbey said. The Executive Committee is considering charging this issue to either the Academic Excellence Committee or the Faculty Governance Committee, he said.

Whitworth said it will be up to the charged committee to research other institutions to see if they have any undergraduate grading other undergraduate grading policies. As far as he knows, TCU does not have a university-wide policy regarding this matter, he said.

Robert Doran, Department of Mathematics chair, said in his

department there is a standard for there to be multiple paper graders. Almost all classes have an upper-level undergraduate paper grader, he said.

Graders are essential to the department, Doran said, because professors wouldn't have the time to grade all the papers in a timely manner.

For a grader to be assigned to a specific professor, the prospective graders have to have high grades in the classes they want to be graders, Doran said. The prospective graders also have to be responsible to get papers graded on time, he said.

Each prospective grader has to go through an interview process, Doran said. Graders are chosen by Victor Belfi, associate professor of mathematics.

The results of the survey will be reported at the next Faculty Senate meeting next semester.

Ashley Larson, a graduate education student with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics, said she was a former paper grader for two years and said she doesn't think having undergraduate graders is a problem with the right supervision.

It's a problem if freshmen are grading other freshmen students' work, Larson said, but as long as juniors and seniors taking the class are grading and the professors have written out strict guidelines with objective grading, it's not a problem.


Friday's Solutions

7	8	4	2	5	3	1	9	6
9	5	1	8	6	7	2	3	4
2	3	6	9	1	4	5	8	7
1	9	5	7	3	2	4	6	8
6	4	3	5	8	9	7	1	2
8	2	7	6	4	1	9	5	3
5	1	2	3	7	6	8	4	9
3	7	8	4	9	5	6	2	1
4	6	9	1	2	8	3	7	5

Friday's Puzzle Solved


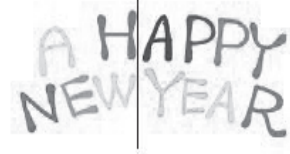




P	C	S	S	M	E	R	S	H	X	B	O	X
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N	A	I	V	E	S	P	A	C	E	J	A	M
O	C	T	O	P	U	S	S	H	O	A	C	E
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F	E	R	R	A	R	I	S	O	T	A	R	
O	Z	Z	Y	A	N	O	R	A	K	A	S	K
P	O	E	M	N	O	N	A	M	E	L	E	E
P	O	N	E	D	R	E	S	S	Y			

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JANUARY 2009

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	<p>5</p> <p>WELCOME BACK EVERYONE !!!</p>	<p>6</p> <p>New Release: Plum Spooky <i>By Janet Evanovich</i></p>	<p>7</p> <p>CASH FOR BOOKS—Bring us your textbooks and we'll give you CASH!</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Come Check out all the great new colors of Under Armour Clothing</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Gift Cards For Any Occasion Available HERE!</p>
<p>11</p> <p>Check out our specials on Jansport in the TCU Bookstore Clothing Department...</p>	<p>12</p> <p>WOO HOO—SCHOOL STARTS TODAY AT TCU</p>	<p>13</p> <p>New Release: 3 Willows: The Sisterhood Grows <i>By Ann Brashares</i></p>	<p>14</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Dorm It Up—Visit our Dorm Shop and give your room some LOVE this new year—Located on the 2nd floor</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Feelin' Froggy <i>Private Label Clothing</i> Only at the TCU Bookstore</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Don't forget that the 20th is the last day for textbook returns with receipt!</p>
<p>18</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Author Signing Juana Bordas <i>Will be signing her newest release: Salsa, Soul and Spirit</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p>TODAY IS THE LAST DAY FOR BOOK RETURNS WITH RECEIPT</p>	<p>21</p> <p>CLINIQUE BONUS Begins Today! Free Gift with Purchase! (\$21.50 or more)</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>New Release: Agincourt <i>By Bernard Cornwell</i></p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Author Signing Misa Ramirez <i>Will be signing her newest release: Living the Vida Lola</i></p>
<p>25</p> <p>For calendar updates, visit our website at: TCU.bkstore.com</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>New Release: A Darker Place <i>By Jack Higgins</i></p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>The Legend of BlueBonnet and other stories by Tomie de Paula Crafts and Fun For Kids! 10:00 in the Reading Room</p>	<p>30</p> 	<p>31</p>

OPINION

DAILY SKIFF Editorial Board

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The Skiff View

Cheers, jeers of fall semester

CHEERS to the university for adding new majors and minors and continuing to give students more choices. In the immortal words of “Schoolhouse Rock,” “Knowledge is power!”

JEERS to the new meal plan. The administration failed to listen to student concerns from the conception of the plan. Now the lack of flexibility of the plan has robbed previously popular Pond Street Grill of business and students of options.

CHEERS to the Board of Trustees for lowering the tuition increase rate from 8 percent to 5 percent. Thanks for being sensitive to students’ concerns in light of the financial crisis.

JEERS to those who responded to Obama’s election victory with hateful comments and irrational actions. Given our nation’s current struggles, partisanship will only make solving these problems more difficult.

CHEERS to all of the individual and university efforts to make campus a little more green — without sacrificing any of the purple.

JEERS to alcohol prohibition at student tailgates this year. Don’t force students to drink off campus and drive to games.

CHEERS to those who raised their voices with a vote in this year’s presidential, congressional and campus elections.

JEERS to fans of Horned Frogs athletics who didn’t show up to games, depriving athletes of the support they deserve.

The Skiff View represents the collective opinion of the editorial board.

YOUR VIEW opinion@dailyskiff.com

Bailout shouldn’t be automatic answer to automakers’ problems

When reading “Auto industry deserves bailout, too” the possibility of not having a bailout has to be considered. This week CEO’s from the Big 3 automakers march to Washington D.C. to make a case for why they should receive bailout money.

These CEO’s are really asking for hard-earned taxpayer money to subsidize their businesses. Why should taxpayers subsidize failure? In addition, the government recently gave financial institutions \$700 billion to ensure the financial system would not collapse. However, many people believe that the financial world would collapse without this “bailout.” Nothing could be further from the truth.

Yes, there would be a temporary crisis, but banks would file for bankruptcy and another company or individual would buy the banks that went bankrupt. Banks would consolidate, but banks would still exist. Taking this to the extreme, let’s say every single bank failed, it would induce personal lending. For example if people needed money to start a business, they might knock on the door of Bill Gates or Warren Buffett to get a loan. In return, Gates or Buffett could charge a rental fee for using that money or in other words, interest. To say the financial system needed a bailout is utter nonsense.

With regard to the auto industry, a bailout is also not needed. Foreign automakers such as Toyota, Honda and Nissan are not asking for a bailout. One problem with the domestic automakers such as Ford, General Motors and Chrysler are the unions. Unions are granted special permission by the government to get contracts that other companies are not allowed access to. In addition, unions ask for “fair wages” and sometimes go on strike if their demands are not met. Union labor workers at GM in 2008 earn around \$69 per hour. Compare this to workers at Toyota who earn \$48 per hour.

Of course the worker at GM is getting a better deal but the only problem is that GM has to pass along the costs to the consumer. In addition to getting higher wages employees also get generous health benefits. For GM, health care benefits add around \$1,500 to the price of every car that GM sells.

With all of these expenses, it is hard for any of the domestic automakers to turn a profit. To put it simply, automakers were spending more than they

were making. If these automakers could drastically reduce their costs and keep their costs below their revenue then they would turn a profit.

However, the more important question is why should taxpayers subsidize failure? Giving automakers money will not magically make them successful. What is very disturbing is that the government would even think of giving CEO’s money (especially when the CEO’s clearly don’t understand the basic concept of revenues and costs). Companies can do a number of things to raise money. For example, companies can issue stock to raise money or issue bonds to investors.

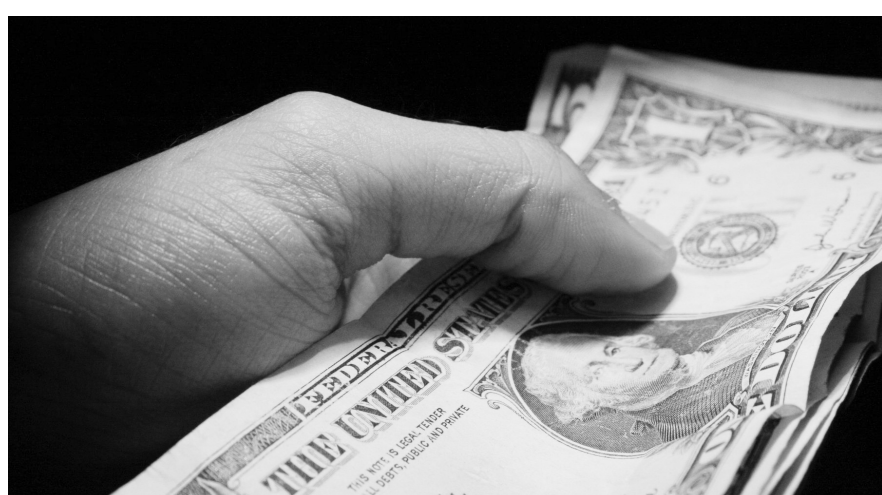
Giving automakers and other institutions bailout money creates risk for future problems. Since people now know they can be eligible for current and future bailouts, it will induce them to engage in risky behavior. This risk is known as moral hazard.

Why must the government intervene when the private market already has a solution? Some people argue it is un-American to let companies in the United States fail. Even if the automakers filed for bankruptcy it doesn’t mean they disappear. The companies restructure and usually some other entity buys out the company. Companies within the airline industry and steel industry have filed for bankruptcy and are still in business. However, people would still have options if GM, Chrysler and Ford disappeared. Toyota, Lexus and Honda are always ready to do business. Giving money to a failing business is analogous to giving a drug addict more drugs.

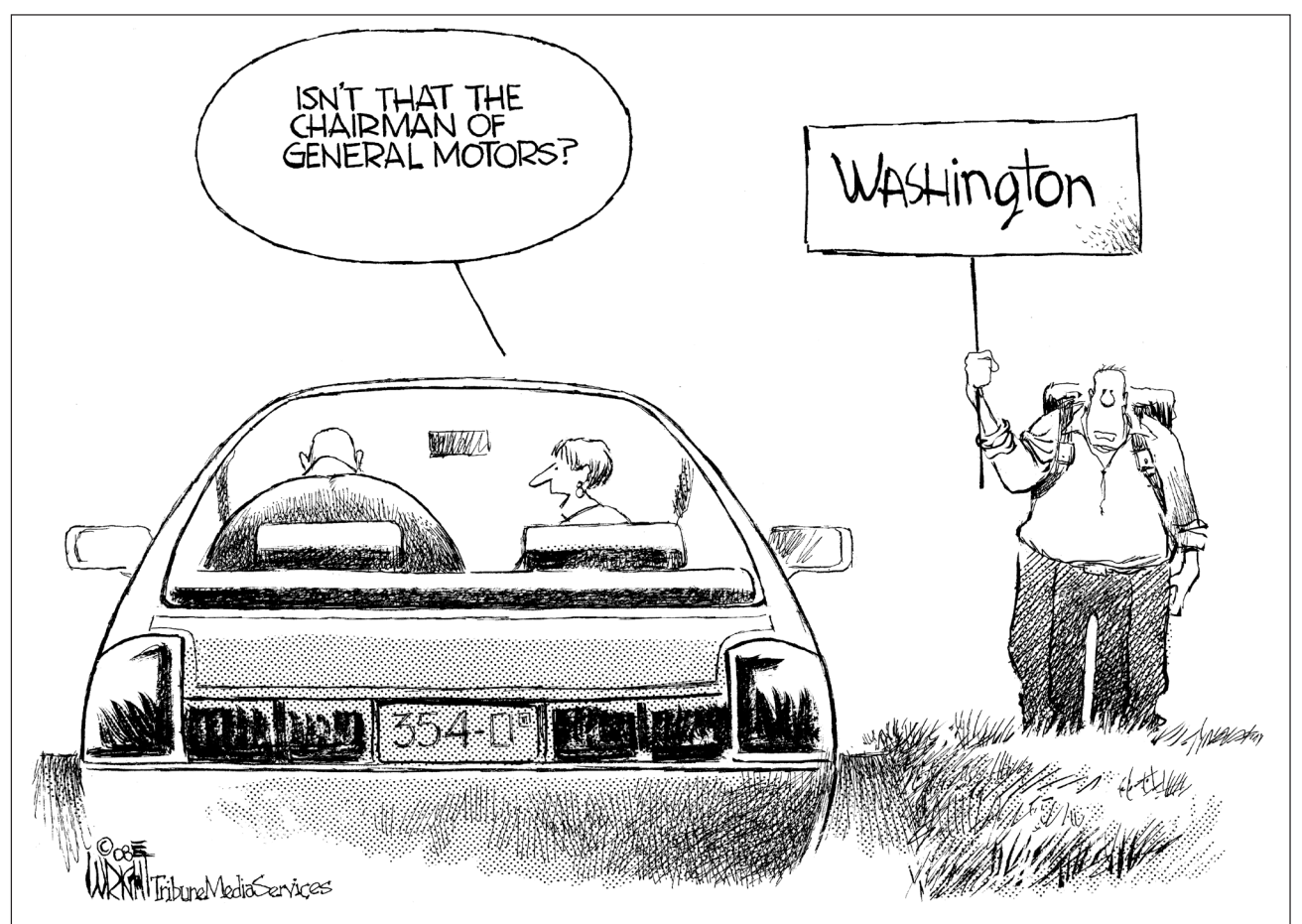
Just because the government gives a company money doesn’t mean that the company has to wisely spend that money. A perfect example of this is are the financial institutions that received money from the government via the bailout, but are reluctant to lend out money and in essence hoarding money. Also very few people have considered what happens when the government hands out money and prints more of it.

As the government prints more money inflation sets in and the currency is devalued since there is a large supply of money. As former President Ronald Reagan once put it “Government is not a solution to our problem; government is the problem.”

Peter Parlapiano is a senior finance major from Houston.

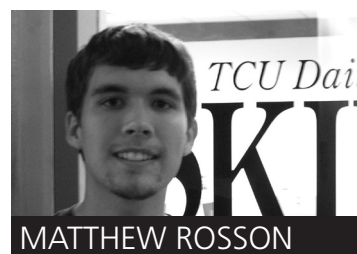


SXC.HU



Don Wright is a political cartoonist for The Palm Beach Post.

Christmas about more than gifts



MATTHEW ROSSON

Normally, the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is when retailers cheer. Stocking up on their goods like packrats, they prepare for the onslaught of shoppers.

In good economic times, retailers are easily able to sell their products and routinely even run out of that year’s popular “must-have” item.

This year, obviously, things are a little different. In an economy where people are forced to be more frugal, sales at Wal-Mart are going up, while sales at luxury retailers are declining sharply. This was one reason why Black Friday was just as popular as ever — so

popular, in fact, that a Wal-Mart employee in Staten Island, N.Y., was actually trampled to death trying to subdue the crowds.

But let’s not forget what the holidays are supposed to be about. Giving a gift is, of course, a sign of goodwill and thoughtfulness. But at what point did consumerism take over the holiday season? A long time ago, apparently — as the tradition seems to be firmly ingrained in American culture just as much as baseball and apple pie.

The latest economic crisis is a reminder of what happens when people buy things they think they need that they can’t afford. Americans need to rethink whether that must-have toy is really a necessity, especially when they are paying with plastic. Maybe it’s time for Christians to rethink what Christmas should really be about. It’s a celebration of Jesus’ birth and the lessons he teaches humanity about loving your neighbor. During a recession, donations to charities remain stagnant, as people realize that in hard

times, there are more people out there in the world who could really use a hand-out.

There is a great organization called Kiva that provides micro-loans to the poorest of the poor in developing nations who want to expand their farms, start small businesses and participate in the market economy, but are unable to get a normal bank loan. Kiva is a non-profit organization and does not make a profit on any of the loans it facilitates. Kiva offers gift certificates that you can give to a family member or friend for the holidays, and the recipient can select a beneficiary on the Web site. After three years, your donation is actually returned to you after the loan has been repaid, and you are then free to loan that money to someone else. Unique gift ideas like these could really make a difference in someone’s life, and it’s very easy to do.

Matthew Rosson is a sophomore prebusiness major from Lincoln, Neb.



SXC.HU

Automakers don’t deserve bailout



VALERIE HANNON

For probably the first time, and I hope not the last, I agree with Barack Obama about using taxpayer’s money.

According to a Nov. 24 Detroit Free Press article, the president-elect said in a press conference the same day that Congress was right in not giving in to the Big 3 automakers in Detroit because they did not have a definite plan for the \$25 billion in taxpayer money they were seeking.

“I think Congress did the right thing, which is to say you guys need to come up with a plan and come back before you’re getting any taxpayer money,” Obama said during the conference.

The automakers, who came to the bailout hearings on their private jets, were criticized by members of Congress for not coming up with a plan to fix their troubled companies sooner.

“I need to be convinced that if you get the \$25 billion that it will actually make a difference,” said Rep. Jeb Hensarling, of Texas, according to a Nov. 19 article in The New York Times.

Two months ago, I was assigned a five-page paper for a media ethics class that was due before Thanksgiving. Part of getting a passing grade for the paper required getting four interviews.

By last Friday, I only had one interview. If I didn’t step up and get the other three interviews taken care of, I would fail the paper and endanger my grade.

Not a good idea anytime, but especially not a good idea when my graduation is less than a month away.

As much trouble as I was in, I knew better than asking my teacher for more time or to allow fewer interviews.

I knew what he would say: “You’ve had two months to work on it.” Sure, I didn’t spend those two months grazing on cereal and watching reruns of “Bewitched” (OK, one night I did), but I knew well enough that getting good interviews would take time. If I received a failing grade because of not doing such, it would be solely my fault.

Sadly, America’s automakers aren’t indicating so far that they have learned their lesson. And as cold and heartless as it may sound, I’m inclined to agree with Congress.

I’m not very knowledgeable about how any business works, and most of what I know about the auto bailout is what I found on Web searches researching this article.

Whatever the blame may be — whether it’s unions, bad business strate-

gies or whatever — the main problem seems to be that the automakers weren’t wise enough to fix the problem before it broke.

What I do know is that this is all too indicative of an attitude in this country that everyone else owes us a living.

This situation is just one of a number of recent cases that you can pick to illustrate that all some Americans want is just to take and take some more. The only thing they seem not to want to take is responsibility when the time calls for it.

The United States of America was built by the hands of men and women who sacrificed their time, their resources and their lives to make this country what it is today. An attitude that the government is supposed to indulge our every whim flies straight in the face of this.

I pray that we haven’t forgotten the immortal words of one Democrat named John F. Kennedy: “And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.”

Until the Big 3 automakers, and all Americans stop asking from our country and our government, and start being responsible, my pessimism will not abate.

Valerie Hannon is a senior news-editorial journalism major from Allen.

NEWS

Churches struggle to meet demand of needy

By Julieta Chiquillo
News Editor

The yellowing trees on Hemphill Street are golden paint strokes against the gloomy sky on a chilly Tuesday morning, the leftover of a November thunderstorm the night before. Against this backdrop, several men, most of them wearing jackets, gather outside shabby auto-shops that have yet to open, looking — hoping — for a job.

Hope is the only currency to barter with in this run-down neighborhood, and many find themselves turning to the steeple in times of hardship. Two churches, First Presbyterian Church and Southside Church of Christ, stand guard on this one-third-of-a-mile stretch of Hemphill Street, nourishing not only the soul but the body as men, women and children flock outside the church's door to get groceries.

Inside the church, volunteers ask those in line for a picture ID, a proof of residency and verification of income. The church saves its limited resources for the needy in local communities. Once neighbors have presented documentation, they wait to be interviewed by church staff.

Southside provides food to more than 400 families every month through its Food Pantry program. Glynatta Richie, coordinator of the Food Pantry program for Southside, said each family or neighbor is allowed about 40 pounds of food once a month, including nonperishable goods and fresh produce when available.

Southside not only helps its neighbors through independent programs like Food Pantry, but it also pools resources with 10 other churches to help the needy in local communities. The church is part of a 20-year-old initiative called the South Central Alliance of Churches, which provides assistance to residents in ZIP codes 76104, 76109 and 76110.

The social services offered by

the alliance have experienced a surge in demand as communities under the strain of what pundits call the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression turn to local churches for relief.

The church's pantry room is a beehive, with about 10 volunteers diligently bagging groceries after an earlier visit by a Tarrant Area Food Bank bus delivering fresh produce. Richie said the church has seen a 25 percent increase in the number of people requesting food in the past six or seven weeks.

"We just keep our fingers crossed about the Food Bank being able to furnish our needs," Richie said, adding that food donations also contribute to the pantry.

"We just keep our fingers crossed about the Food Bank being able to furnish our needs."

Glynatta Richie
Food Pantry coordinator

Helping hand

Like other similar nonprofits, the South Central Alliance of Churches, housed by Southside, offers in-kind assistance, such as food, diapers, bus passes, prescription medication and clothing. But the alliance also offers much rarer financial aid to meet emergency or one-time needs of community members.

Neighbors may receive in-kind assistance once a month, whereas they may apply for financial aid only once a year.

Tiel Jenkins, director of the alliance and its only employee, said the program aims to help families or individuals — clients — who can usually meet their needs but are struggling with unexpected ex-

penses or going through a difficult time. The alliance may provide up to \$150 for utilities and \$300 for rent, which are paid directly to the renter or the utility company. The alliance does not pay clients' entire bill but what they are short on, Jenkins said.

When a potential client calls, Jenkins interviews the caller to find out whether the person's income would usually meet his or her needs and then asks the caller to come to her office with proof of income: a Social Security award letter, paycheck stub or employment verification letter. There are always more requests than money available, so Jenkins said she evaluates requests in depth to determine who needs the help the most.

Jenkins said the alliance helps an average of about 120 clients every month, including those who receive in-kind relief. She said she refers those who are ineligible to receive aid, such as people who are not residents of the program's service area, to other social service agencies in Fort Worth.

Beyond denominations

The alliance's total income in 2007 was about \$53,000, Jenkins said. Some member churches donate cash while others contribute in-kind items, she said.

Mike Cooley, president of the alliance board and member of First Presbyterian/Hemphill Fellowship, said the alliance's financial contributions have not been affected by the economic slowdown yet because churches have already made commitments for the year, but the alliance might see changes in January. Some churches' contributions fluctuate because they prefer to pursue similar programs for their own congregation, but those changes are offset by increased donations from other members, he said.

Vernon Lee, board representative for University Christian Church, said the alliance budgets together at the beginning of the

year, then adjusts as the year progresses. The board meets once a month, he said.

"We keep a small reserve to see us over bad times," Lee said.

The alliance is an ecumenical effort to better reach out to residents of low-income neighborhoods, Lee said. The member churches and the alliance have a synergistic relationship, cooperating with each other's programs so that a program may readily supply resources to another one if needed, he said.

"There are very few people in our neighborhood who need help," Lee said, noting that fewer aid requests come from the 76109 ZIP code than the other two ZIP codes in the alliance's service area.

Love thy neighbor

As the holidays approach, the alliance picks up the pace for its seasonal projects.

Carol Lee, board secretary and member of UCC with husband Vernon Lee, said about 408 families signed up this year for the annual turkey basket program. Neighbors pay a \$5 fee in exchange for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner — a 13-pound turkey and a sack of groceries that includes cranberry sauce, dressing, vegetables, fruit and dessert.

"If you've ever seen about 1,200 bags of food and 400 turkeys stacked in a room, it's quite a sight," Vernon Lee said.

For Christmas, churches in the alliance sponsor a certain number of children, and members in each church commit to getting a toy and clothing for each child, Carol Lee said.

But the Good Samaritan may have to deal with a reluctant stranger. Even though dozens line up outside Southside seeking help, many do so with a feeling of wounded pride.

"People don't understand how hard it is for someone to ask for help," Jenkins said. "And a lot of times people don't ask for help until it is too late."

Same-sex parenting turning into culture war

By Bonnie Miller Rubin
Chicago Tribune

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Anne Shelley and Dr. Robin Ross are unwinding following a jam-packed day of ferrying 4-year-old daughter Eva Mae from preschool to ice skating lessons to speech therapy. "It's pretty much your mundane American family," said Shelley, 46, over a dinner of barbecue at their comfortable home near the Ozarks.

But not everyone sees their domestic situation as a hefty slice of apple pie. Arkansas residents recently voted to ban people who are "cohabitating outside of a valid marriage," as Shelley and Ross do, from being foster parents or adopting children as these women did.

The measure was written to prohibit straight and gay couples who live together from adopting or becoming foster parents, but its real objective, child welfare experts say, is to bar same-sex couples like Shelley and Ross, 52, from raising children.

"We don't have enough quality homes as it is, and now we're going to place more restrictions?" asked Susan Hoffpauir, president of the Arkansas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

While the Nov. 4 vote to ban gay marriage in California grabbed the headlines, it is same-sex parenting that is heating up as the next skirmish in the nation's culture wars.

Nationwide, laws on the issue are a grab bag. Florida had been the only state that had a law specifically disallowing gay individuals from adoption, although they are allowed to be foster parents.

Still, many Americans are opposed to placing kids in gay households, and social conservatives hope the issue will rally voters in the same way that same-sex marriage brought them to the polls last month.

In Arkansas, some 3,700 chil-

dren are in state custody — taken from their homes because of abuse and neglect — of which, 960 kids (average age: 8.5 years) are immediately available for adoption, said Julie Munsell of the state Department of Human Services.

But beyond the state system, the ban set to take effect Jan. 1 will thwart private adoptions of children like Eva Mae, left at the door of a Vietnamese orphanage. Moreover, the new law could jeopardize a wide range of nontraditional living arrangements, such as co-habiting grandparents raising grandchildren, say opponents.

However, such scenarios are a "smokescreen," said John Thomas, vice president of the Arkansas Family Council, a conservative group that pushed to get the initiative on the ballot after it had failed several times in the legislature. The real issue, he said, is that the state has to set the bar higher when it comes to finding homes for children.

But finding potential homes for foster children is a continual challenge across the country — especially for children who are older and have special needs.

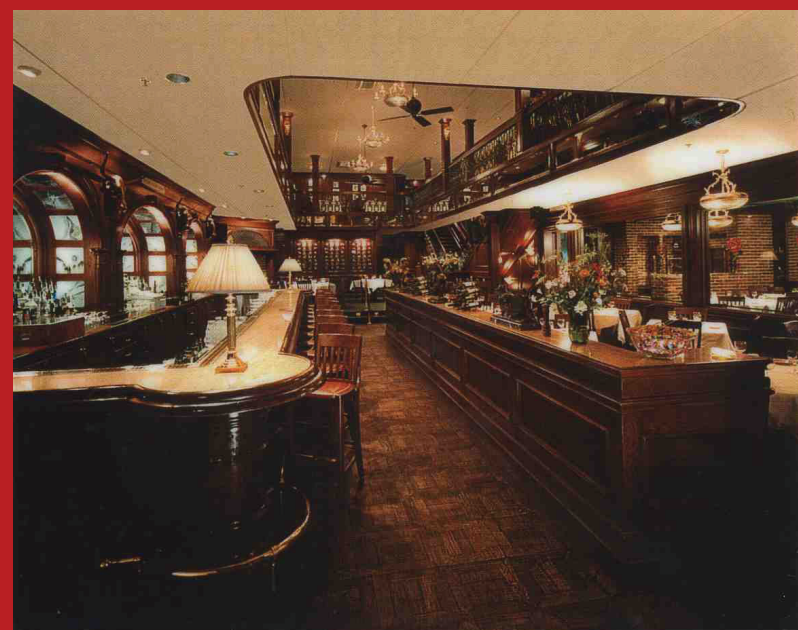
In a recent report, the nonpartisan group concluded that a national ban on gay adoptions could add \$87 million to \$130 million to foster care expenditures annually because these children would then be living in other types of institutional care, such as group homes.

Social conservatives say the state could alleviate the shortage of foster and adoptive parents by stepping up efforts to recruit better candidates. "We have the opportunity to create the very best families," Thomas said. "That's what we should be aiming for."

Still, a broad coalition of child-advocacy organizations — including the American Academy of Pediatrics — came out against the ban, as did Gov. Mike Beebe and former President Bill Clinton.

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REVIEWS

Meet Mary Coutts Burnett, Amon Carter and 21 other namesakes behind the buildings at TCU. Coming in January

'Role Models' tries for both the sweet and the salty

By **Chance Welch**
Staff Reporter

Energy drinks, live-action role playing games, boobs and the band KISS are some of the diverse topics covered in "Role Models," a new comedy directed by David Wain. If this sounds like fun to you, then you might want to bond with Paul Rudd and Seann William Scott for about an hour and a half.

Paul Rudd stars as Danny, a man who is convinced that his work pimping Minotaur energy drink to schoolchildren as a legal alternative to drugs has no meaning. Small wonder. Seann William Scott plays Wheeler, his co-worker who loves his job because the only responsibilities are showing up on time in the Minotaur costume. Wheeler considers Danny a friend even if the feeling isn't mutual.

After Danny's breakdown leaves the two in legal limbo, they are faced with either jail time or 150 hours of community service

for a Big Brother-like program run by a former crack addict played excellently by Jane Lynch. Maybe she could've used some Minotaur energy drink instead of blow.

Christopher Mintz-Plasse (McLovin from "Superbad") and Bobb'e J. Thompson give solid performances as the "littles" Wheeler and Danny take care of. Both Rudd and Scott play characters that you feel like you've seen them play before, but like Mintz-Plasse, who basically plays a variation of his "McLovin" character from "Superbad," can play that character very well.

Wain is mostly known for the TV sketch comedy cult hit "The State" and the comedy group Stella. Wain brings along "State" alumni Kerri Kenney-Silver, Joe Lo Truglio and Ken Marino, who helped Wain and Rudd write the screenplay.

If those faces look familiar, it's because they have all starred in previous films like "Reno 911: Miami" and Wain's previous ef-

forts "The Ten" and "Wet Hot American Summer." Wain finds some familiar territory in dealing with childhood traumas and growing up, even if that applies to men who are approaching midlife crises. While "Wet Hot American Summer" addressed childhood traumas and the pains of growing up in an off-beat variation on 1980s summer camp movies, "Role Models" is his most commercial effort to date but it pays off comedically. Although the movie feels formulaic in finding that even "grown-ups" can grow up, the numerous asides and one-liners keep your mind off the sometimes predictable events.

It might feel like a Kevin Smith or Judd Apatow film, which can be a compliment or a curse to some. Both filmmakers make comedies that are raunchy and profane, but at the center are sweet and almost sentimental to their characters. This movie is a hard R, but at its center is redeeming without being schmaltzy.



Seann William Scott and Paul Rudd star in the comedy "Role Models," which opened Nov. 7.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Boyle's 'Millionaire' an instant winner

By **Bibek Bhandari**
Staff Reporter

It's the final question for a chance to win 20 million rupees in the Hindi version of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

Ironically, 18-year old Jamal Malik (Dev Patel), the contestant of the TV show from the slums of Mumbai, never knew the answer to this question, taken from a well-known book which he once studied at school.

So, how did Jamal get the answer correct? Did he cheat or was it luck?

"Slumdog Millionaire" gives you the answer in bits and pieces.

The police arrest Jamal for interrogations because they don't believe a slum dweller and less-educated person like him would be talented enough to answer the entire list of questions in the show. But the winner sits down and unfolds the hints of how he got his answers.

Each of Jamal's life sequences is on his stairway to victory. The encounter with his favorite movie star to the escape from the slums due to a religious riot and his quest to find his lost love, Latika (Freida Pinto), are all clues to his chase for the grand amount.

"Slumdog Millionaire" takes the viewer to an exhilarating journey through India. Mostly shot in Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, viewers see a piece of the life of poverty-stricken people in the slums, home to more than 1 million of the city's 13 million souls of India's financial capital. The movie also gives viewers a sense of how a breed of criminals could rise from hunger, and it also makes them believe in love.

Adapted from Vikas Swarup's novel "Q&A," director Danny Boyle brings 'Slumdog' to life with rich visuals of poor India and realistic performances from the cast. Compared



Dev Patel and Freida Pinto star in director Danny Boyle's "Slumdog Millionaire," which was released Nov. 12.

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

to this British director's past projects such as horror flick "28 Days Later..." or "The Beach," starring Leonardo DiCaprio, this movie ascends above all.

Patel gives a first-class performance along with other cast members who are equally potent. A crowd of well-known Indian actors from Bollywood like Irfan Khan as the police inspector and Anil Kapoor as the game show host deliver their acting panache, marking their presence in the international film circuit.

A.R.Rahman, an eminent Indian musician, renders his tunes to the

movie, which adds flavor and essence. The movie ends on a truly Bollywood note with a happy union and a song and dance sequence. But expect no smooches or explicit display of affection as in most Western movies.

"Slumdog Millionaire" is a story that tells the tale of thousands of people in Mumbai who live in poverty, abused and strayed like a dog. It's a story of hope, survival and finding the real meaning on life — love.

If you want to know India inside and out, this 120-minute drama will take viewers across the cultural realms of the West. "Slumdog" will

certainly give the audience who wants to break free from "Twilight" and "Quantum of Solace" a new taste.

So, the final question: Is "Slumdog Millionaire" A) a well-executed movie; B) worth buying a ticket; C) a quality movie-watching experience; D) a contender for the Oscars.

I'd say: All of the above.

A winner all the way. "Slumdog Millionaire" runs for 120 minutes and is rated R for some violence, disturbing images and language. Currently, it is playing at the Magnolia in Dallas and Angelika in Plano.

Star's second album just as good as first

By **Michelle Anderson**
Staff Writer

It would be difficult to top Taylor Swift's first self-titled album, which was released last year, but her second album, "Fearless," released Nov. 11 three times multi platinum, might just do it.

At 18, Swift has already accomplished a lifetime worth of achievements. Her first album was certified three times multi platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America, with five top 40 hits. On Nov. 23, Swift was awarded Favorite Female Artist, Country Music at the American Music Awards.

"Fearless" is already on its way to surpassing her first

The teen sensation's music is full of emotion and fun, making every song on the album worth listening to over and over again.

album and for good reason. Swift's sophomore album has sold more copies than any other country album, according to her Web site, www.taylor-swift.com. The songs on the second album are filled with messages that girls and women of all ages can relate to and will want to sing along with. Her teenage ballads are perfect country songs with love, cheat-



BIG MACHINE RECORDS

ing and heartbreak all rolled into one.

The leading single on her second album, "Love Story," based off the story of Romeo and Juliet, has already reached No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 list.

Swift's voice has won the hearts of her fans, but her lyrics are what really make her songs stand out. The singer/songwriter/guitar player writes most of her own songs, making them that much more special. With lines like "It's a love story, baby just say yes," from her leading single "Love Story," teens and 20-somethings can relate to the hopeless love that Swift often sings about. Song No. 11 on the album of 13 songs, "Forever and Always," was written about her boyfriend at the time, Joe Jonas, of the Jonas Brothers.

The teen sensation's music is full of emotion and fun, making every song on the album worth listening to over and over again. There is a song for every mood from bliss in "The Best Day" to anger in "Hey Stephen."

If this artist keeps turning out albums like her first two, her music is sure to make history and will be around for years to come.

New Audi A4 has everything that drivers want and need

By **Greg Laver**
Staff Writer

The 2009 Audi A4; it may have the same name as its predecessor, but it is truly a different animal, and I had the privilege of driving one of the demo cars at DFW Audi just a day or so after they arrived.

If you are lazy and do not want to bother reading the rest of this review, read this: Go buy this car. Go to the dealership and look at it, then buy it on looks and styling alone. You could decide to go and drive it, but you would only want to buy the car even more. The new A4, in the words of James May of BBC's Top Gear, is "everything I approve of in a car."

Let's examine the new aggressive exterior and lines of the A4's new body. Aren't they pretty? Stunning in fact. I think so, and most of the automotive press

would agree with me on that. One look at the brochure will reveal page after page of pictures featuring this beauty. The only complaint about the new Audi's looks are the small LED running lights that come with the Xenon light package. Personally, I love them. I love it when a brand tries to create an identity or a particular look among its models. The lights are cues from the brand's supercar, the R8, and to me that's cool.

While the look is appealing, Audi has been at its best as of late on the inside. Open the door, slide in and look around you. Even at the lowest trim level the interior wipes the floor with almost all of its competition. Everything is ergonomically placed and driver-oriented. It is full of nice buttons and colors, and nothing is overdone; it is just brilliant. Audi also gives plenty of interior options which allow for individual styl-

ing. A beautiful fusion of modern design with classic styling? Done. Just get the car with Audi's quality wooden inlays and beige

If you are lazy and do not want to bother reading the rest of this review, read this: Go buy this car. Go to the dealership and look at it, then buy it on looks and styling alone.

or light gray leather. Fan of the sporty look? Just take the S-Line package which comes with more supportive and adjustable sport seats, a brilliant brushed alumi-

num inlay package and a racing-inspired three-spoke steering wheel. In all, the interior of the new A4 follows the trend — of Audi setting the trend.

So both the interior and exterior of the new longer and wider A4 are brilliant, but how does it drive? Fantastic. There is no ignoring the fact that the Audi is not a rear wheel drive car. So it will never be the best driver's car, but at the same time it does not feel like a standard front wheel drive sedan. The only new A4 I drove had the Quattro all wheel drive system which sends most of the power to the rear wheels, so much that it feels reminiscent of a rear wheel drive but still provides the all wheel drive confidence to tackle any corner aggressively without fear. However, even though this all wheel drive system is very good, I would not recommend it unless you live in a climate with frequent snowy or

icy conditions. Instead, buy the front wheel drive model. You will be rewarded with very good fuel economy and, based on my experience with Audi's and VW's latest models; the car will still handle brilliantly but is a little less tail-happy than a BMW.

In all, the new A4 is an excellent car. It features sophisticated styling and great engineering. With its longer and wider wheel base the car drives better than ever. The A4 is finally better than its competition, the BMW 328i, which is just not quite enough car to take full advantage of its rear wheel drive advantage. However, do not consider the A4 as a competitor to the more powerful, twin turbo-charged 335i. That car's more powerful engine puts it in a different class, both in performance and price point. That is what the upcoming Audi S4 will have to shoot at, and if the A4's taking down the 328i is

any indication. BMW could very much have something to worry about. After this drive, I will take an A4 right now; two-liter turbo engine, front wheel drive, misano red, with the S-line interior and performance packages. I don't think any other car purchase at this price point could be better.

Final Thoughts: The new A4 finally achieves what Audi has always wanted — to take down the entry level three series. The exterior is fantastic and the interior is even better. It even drives brilliantly with its new dimensions. However, the new A4 should not be confused for a 335i killer. It is just too weak to defeat that BMW performance monster. Instead, that job will have to be reserved for the soon arriving S4.

Fun: 4/5
Interior: 5/5
Exterior: 5/5
Value and Fuel Economy: 5/5

NEWS

Aging aircraft carry military's advanced electronic equipment

By Mike McGraw
McClatchy Newspapers

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. — Poor maintenance may be compromising the flight safety of reconnaissance aircraft carrying some of America's most advanced electronic equipment, according to current and former aircraft mechanics.

The RC-135 aircraft are maintained at Offutt Air Force Base and fly global intelligence-gathering missions. While they are among the oldest in the Air Force's aging fleet, the planes carry the latest equipment for detecting troop movements, enemy radio transmissions and nuclear emissions.

Top Air Force officials said the 29 planes — called such names as "Rivet Joint" and "Open Skies" for the types of missions they fly — are properly maintained.

But George Sarris, a senior civilian aircraft mechanic at Offutt with more than 30 years experience, told The Kansas City Star that he has been waging a years-long battle to bring maintenance concerns to light about the RC-135 fleet and became so frustrated that he decided to go public.

"I have found inspections that are 17 years past due, hydraulic and fuel hoses that should have been changed 15 years ago, and recently several emergency system hoses that were 30-plus years past time change," Sarris said, adding that he believes at least one landing gear assembly also was improperly installed.

Those concerns are backed by eight other current and former Offutt mechanics, and have sparked several congressional investigations into safety issues, plus an ongoing inquiry into whether Sarris was disciplined for speaking out.

Sarris and other aircraft experts told The Star that the maintenance issues are serious and could eventually lead to mechanical failures on the RC-135s, delaying critical missions or endangering crew

members' lives.

Air Force officials acknowledged that the age of the planes presents unique maintenance challenges, and that at least one recent in-flight incident caused a significant problem. But they said most of Sarris' concerns have been addressed, are unfounded or were determined to be unsubstantiated.

Offutt officials insisted that the planes are meticulously maintained by highly trained civilian and military mechanics — an assertion they say is backed by tens of thousands of safe flying hours.

The RC-135s have an "outstanding flying safety record," said Air Force Brig. Gen. James J. Jones, commander of the 55th Wing at Offutt. He said he has total confidence in maintenance workers at Offutt.

However, Jones said he could not comment on some of Sarris' concerns because those matters are "for official use only." As for landing gear assemblies, Jones said the questions "go into highly technical assertions and speculation."

"Without going into each specific question, I will tell you that in the cases you cite, we immediately corrected the problems after our maintenance experts identified them."

Sarris said, however, that the problems were only corrected after he complained to local congressmen or top Air Force brass and that, in the end, he was punished for speaking out.

While RC-135s do have a relatively safe flying record — only one has crashed in the last 27 years — documents obtained by The Star reflect troubling maintenance-related incidents.

For example, there was an engine malfunction during a training flight of one of the RC-135s this fall. The plane, an "Open Skies" aircraft, is used to help monitor an international arms treaty and often carries foreign military of-

icers during observation flights over other countries.

The reverse thrusters on one of the plane's engines malfunctioned and deployed in mid-flight, forcing the crew to take corrective action. The thrust reversers are only supposed to deploy during landings, to help slow the plane down. Sarris said he fears the problem resulted from rushed maintenance, and Air Force records show the thrust reverser was "incorrectly blocked out."

Jones said he could not discuss the thrust reverser incident because it is the subject of an Air Force safety investigation.

But Col. Terry Parsons, the Maintenance Group Commander at Offutt, acknowledged in an interview last week that "someone made a big mistake." Parsons insisted, however, that it was an isolated incident.

"Something special is going on here," Parsons said. "We are a model for the rest of the Air Force."

He and other top Offutt maintenance officials said workers have consistently received top Air Force ratings for having zero maintenance errors.

An Air Force employee survey in 2007 showed some military maintenance workers at Offutt who work with civilians such as Sarris have concerns. Nearly two-thirds of about 300 military maintenance workers who participated in the anonymous survey said low morale is a problem. They also said stress and a poor work environment are taking a toll.

Four of Sarris' civilian co-workers — all of whom asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals — backed up Sarris' claims.

Former aircraft mechanics Ed Printz and Rick Kaarstadt also told The Star that Sarris' concerns are legitimate. "George is an excellent mechanic. He's very sharp," Kaarstadt added.

Another former machinist, Michael Butler, said "I'm afraid we're going to put one of those things



Travis Hunsicker, an aircraft mechanic assigned to the 55th Maintenance Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Neb., works on the engine of a RC-135 Rivet Joint aircraft Nov. 25.

in the dirt" and cost lives.

And Timothy Newman, a former maintenance worker who left the air base four years ago, said, "They are trying to take shortcuts, but George is by the book."

Meanwhile, federal officials are investigating whether Sarris has been illegally punished by the Air Force for blowing the whistle on maintenance issues.

While the planes are well engineered and undergo constant upgrades, even top Air Force officials are concerned about the heavy toll that constant usage — including simultaneous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq — is taking on the aging fleet.

Former Air Force chief of staff

Gen. John Jumper noted in a 2005 interview with Inside the Air Force magazine that older planes are forcing maintenance workers to deal with "issues that we have never had to deal with before in corrosion, in skin replacement, in frayed electrical wiring, in unanticipated component failures."

In fact, Jumper said some Air Force tankers — another version of the RC-135s — are so old, you can walk up to the plane and "peel the skin and the layers apart and powder comes out the middle."

Maintenance documents on the RC-135s obtained by The Star were reviewed by two independent aircraft maintenance experts. Both said some of Sarris' concerns

appear to present legitimate flight safety problems.

What's more, several military maintenance workers said their equipment and technical manuals are outdated and that they felt they were poorly trained for the jobs they do. One said "it amazes me that these jets have been around for 40-plus years and we still have the wrong tools for the job."

Offutt officials declined to discuss details of the climate survey but said it was the one chance maintenance workers have to let off steam about their jobs. They said complaints in the survey should not be interpreted to mean there are serious maintenance issues at Offutt.

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Life gets worse for hungry children in Haiti

By Jacqueline Charles
McClatchy Newspapers

BAIE D'ORANGE, Haiti — The slow road to death runs high above the scenic coastline, past the crumbled bridges and buried rivers. It traverses a jagged trail passing green slopes and red fertile dirt before arriving here: an isolated mountain village where little Haitian girls dream of eating rice and the doctor is a three-hour walk away.

This is the place where children, suffering from stunted growth, look half their age, where struggling mothers cry that their half-starved babies with the brittle orange hair — evidence of malnutrition — neither crawl nor walk.

'He doesn't cry, 'Manman.' Or 'Papa,' says Christmene Normilus, holding her visibly malnourished 2-year-old son, Jean-Roselle Tata.

In the past month, international aid workers and doctors have airlifted 46 children on the brink of death from this southeastern village and neighboring communities to hospitals in Port-au-Prince, and elsewhere in the south. The emergency intervention came after it was reported that 26 children from the Baie d'Orange region had died from severe malnutrition in the wake of the four successive storms that devastated Haiti in less than a month this summer.

But long before the deaths and hospitalizations plunged this poverty-stricken nation into the global spotlight amid fears of storm-related famine, the people of this farming community were already battling hunger.

Proud, they reluctantly admit that it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to feed their children, many of whom already suffer from chronic malnutrition. Their story is repeated throughout the countryside, where a lack of roads, potable water and public health facilities, as well as deforestation, already had Haiti's rural poor living in life-threatening misery before the four back-to-back storms washed

out more roads, killed livestock and wiped out crops.

"We can't give our children what they need," says Jilesca Fulcal, 37, a mother of seven who recently sought medical care for her 2-year-old son, Jean-Samuel Jules. "There is no food. No work for the people. The children can't live like that. The children are suffering in their mothers' arms."

Fulcal's own cupboards are bare. By mid-afternoon on a recent Sunday, she and her husband, the pastor of a tiny roadside Protestant church, had yet to feed any of the children. The night before, the day's only meal consisted of rice with black beans — gifts from a friend, they say.

Recently, Fulcal's husband, Mecene Jules, terraced several rows of carrots and sweet peas in the family's front yard. Showing off the humble plot, he says there is no guarantee of a harvest. Everything can be lost with too much sun or too much rain.

Behind him, more vegetable plots dot the rocky hillside where even the few grazing cows are skinny. Decades of cutting down trees for charcoal have denuded the mountain, stripping away the topsoil, which washes down during heavy rainfalls. Now, instead of fertile soil, there are only patches of red dirt between the rocks.

"Before, people didn't have a lot of money, but they lived because the soil used to produce a lot of food," says Jules, 50. "There were potatoes, pigeon peas, all in large quantities. Now, with all of these hurricanes, what's left of the soil has washed away. Crops don't grow. There is no cabbage, no vegetables."

A one-time cane cutter in the neighboring Dominican Republic before he moved back here, Jules says the suffering in Baie d'Orange has been decades in the making, and no one is immune. The people are living on faith, he says, remarking that the Sunday offering earlier that morning amounted to eight cents.

"Sometimes you go to buy food on credit from someone, and you



Nine-year-old Judith Saintilus holds a broken down knife she was using to search the mountainside for beans in Baie d' Orange, Haiti, on Nov. 21. (PATRICK FARRELL / Miami Herald via MCT)

are buying without the hope of being able to pay them back," Jules says. "We just don't have the means, and as a result, the children are crying at your knees."

His wife adds: "The children are eating, but only God knows how they are living."

In recent weeks, the United Nations World Food Program has delivered food to the region, taking care to treat the children who are severely malnourished. But with many parts of the hilly hinterland accessible only by foot and horseback, residents say some people still have no access to the food.

Unlike Port-au-Prince, where Haiti's crushing poverty is visible in the crowded slums and on the

streets, the misery here is through what visitors don't see: the eight-to-10-hour walk for water because there are no rivers; able-bodied young men toiling in the fields; the daily struggle to find food — including three hours to walk 12 miles on a rugged road to see the doctor.

"What's happening in Baie d'Orange is the result of poor political decision-making that has happened over several years," said Fanel Zidor, the government delegate for the southeast, who has gone on the radio to bring attention to the community's plight. "No one paid any attention to it."

Zidor says the hurricanes simply aggravated an already worsening situation. As a result of the storms, he

says, the community was completely isolated and people could not get down the mountain because roads were cut off.

The 15,000 or so residents ate the few crops that were not wiped out. But soon, starvation began to set in and the chronic malnutrition became acute in some cases.

"Parents didn't want other people to know they had their child who was dying of hunger, so people would not criticize them," he says. "One child dies, a second dies, and they bury them quickly so people wouldn't find out."

Zidor has been trying to get seeds, farming experts and a public-health clinic for the area. He says all are needed, along with a change in

the way farmers harvest. Because of the cooler temperatures at high altitude, farmers grow once a year, and there isn't much variety in their crops.

But despite the environmental degradation, Zidor believes that what is happening in Baie d'Orange "is not a question of the mountain itself. It's a question of having the means to cultivate the soil. That is what we are searching for: to get some technical assistance and seeds into the area so that residents can restart their lives and put it on the path to normalcy."

Jean-Claude Pierre, 36, who splits his time between here and Port-au-Prince, says he would like to see things change for the better. For the first time, he says, he had to choose which two of his four school-age children would get to attend school this year. After deciding on the two oldest, he then had to decide which one would have to make the daily two-hour walk to the cheaper, government-operated school.

"That hurt," says Pierre, who like many men from here supplements his income by hustling on the streets of Port-au-Prince. In his case, he shines shoes.

Like most children from the area, Judith Saintilus, 9, says she and her siblings regularly go to sleep with empty stomachs. When they do eat, it's mostly beans, she says. Asked if she could have anything, what would it be?

"I want to eat rice," she says with a child's smile.

"It's a very precarious situation," says Jean-Maurice Buteau, a Haitian mango exporter who is familiar with the region and its challenges. "Every time there is rain, the roads get cut off."

Buteau says the area needs a quick government intervention coupled with an extensive reforestation program. Without either, he warns, "you will see the whole population moving away because they have nothing to hold on to."

Haiti's new health minister, Dr. Alex Larsen, says his ministry will continue to treat the children with meals of high-calorie peanut butter until they are healthy.

But saving the children of Baie d'Orange will take more than a high-calorie diet.

"This problem requires a global response: medicine, nutrition, agriculture," Larsen told The Miami Herald. "We are working rapidly to find a solution, a solution that will last long term."

How did Tiffany Cox get her first job?

page 8

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FOUR CHRISTMASSES [PG-13]: 10:30a
1:15p 4:15p 7:45p 10:45p
MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA [PG]: 12:15p 4:30p 7:15p 9:45p
PUNISHER: WAR ZONE [R]: 12:30p 4:00p 7:00p 10:30p

QUANTUM OF SOLACE [PG-13]: 1:00p 3:50p 8:00p 10:30p
ROLE MODELS [R]: 11:45a 3:45p 7:15p 10:15p
TRANSPORTER 3 [PG-13]: 11:15a 2:00p 4:45p 7:50p 10:50p 9:45p
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SPORTS

SPORTS

continued from page 10

houn was named the MWC freshman of the year and named a finalist for the Soccer News Net Player of the Year Award.

TCU Athletics Fall Best Coach: Dan Abdalla, Soccer

While football coach Gary Patterson might be getting the most publicity, Abdalla led the Lady Frogs to a 14-4-2 record, best in school history. The team finished third in the MWC during the regular season and won its first round game in the conference tournament. The team was also on the bubble to get into the NCAA Tournament but fell just short of qualifying. The team will be losing just two seniors and will have plenty to build on for years to come.

TCU Athletics Fall Best Team: Football

The football team finished the regular season 10-2 and have now won 40 games over the last four seasons, tying a school record. The team is also two missed field goals

While football coach Gary Patterson might be getting the most publicity, Abdalla led the Lady Frogs to a 14-4-2 record, best in school history. The team finished third in the MWC during the regular season and won its first round game in the conference tournament. The team was also on the bubble to get into the NCAA Tournament but fell just short of qualifying. The team will be losing just two seniors and will have plenty to build on for years to come.

away from a BCS berth and one of 18 teams remaining in the hunt for one of those coveted bowls. While the Frogs are likely to be going to the Poinsettia Bowl in San Diego, this was still a successful season and because of that, the team's recruiting class will be the best in school history and next year's team could be a favorite to win the MWC and get to that BCS bowl.

Overall, this has been a great semester in TCU athletics. Thanks to all of you players, coaches and administrators for making it possible.

Billy Wessels is a senior news-editorial major from Waxahachie.

FANTASY FOOTBALL

NFL fantasy playoffs are here

By Erick Moen
Staff Writer

The stretch run and fantasy playoffs are upon us, which, coincidentally and unfortunately, means this is my last column of the season.

Your roster should be almost completely set at this point. You know who you can count on and who you can't from week to week, but it's the fringe players who will end up making the difference. Watch the injury reports and churn the bottom of your roster looking for matchups.

The key thing to watch for will be which team your player is on. Look for those wildcard teams fighting for their lives; they will be the ones putting up big numbers down the stretch. Guys like Tony Romo, Michael Turner and Roddy White are the ones you're putting your hopes in.

But before we get into this week's stuff, here are my thoughts for the week:

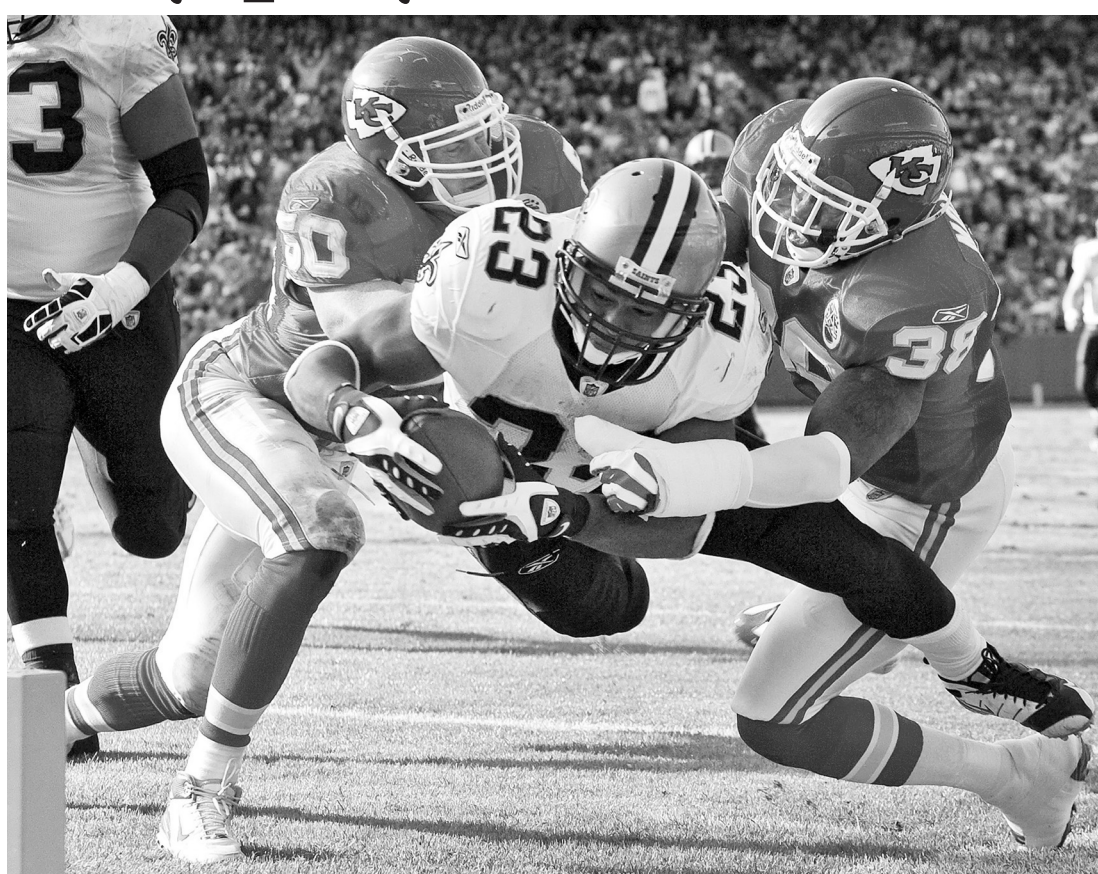
1. I know Sean Avery is an egotistical pest in the worst way. The Dallas Stars as a whole might even want him gone, but there is no way he deserves an indefinite suspension for calling an ex "sloppy seconds." When did hockey go from being a "balls-to-the-wall" true man's man sport to being scared of a little trash talk?

2. Plaxico Burress is a selfish idiot who is just as, if not more, deserving to be thrown out of the NFL as Adam "Pacman" Jones. That being said, I don't have a problem with him carrying a gun for protection after what has happened to athletes lately. However, that doesn't excuse him from the stupidity of not registering it. But then again he never was exactly an intelligent guy.

And now the main event, this week's top three waiver wire adds and the matchups to keep an eye on.

Waiver Wire Adds:

Amani Toomer (WR - NYG): He is now the undisputed lead



JOHN SLEEZER / Kansas City Star via MCT

New Orleans Saints running back Pierre Thomas (23) is pushed out of bounds at the one-yard line by Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Rocky Boiman (50) and safety DaJuan Morgan (38) on Nov. 16 at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Mo.

wideout on this Giant squad and will continue to get plenty of looks from Eli Manning. If he's not available in your league take heart, Burress' replacement, Domenik Hixon, did very well last week and could become a fantasy hero down the stretch for you.

Davone Bess (WR - Mia): Greg Camarillo's replacement is filling in nicely so far with 13 catches and 171 yards in his last two games. He will trade off big games with Ted Ginn Jr., but they are both good options depending on their matchups.

Pierre Thomas (RB - NO): He's been quietly over-achieving for a couple weeks now but he is back in a big way this week thanks to Deuce McAllister's "steroid-fueled" suspension. With Reggie Bush still working his way back into the game, Thomas is primed to turn out a couple big games

down the stretch.

Week 14 Matchups:

Atlanta Falcons at New Orleans Saints: This is a tale of two teams. Atlanta is enjoying a turnaround season only comparable to the one the Saints had circa 2006, while New Orleans continues its regression from that same season and just lost half their team to suspension. Roddy White, Michael Turner and Matt Ryan are having career years and should continue that trend against a weak Saints' defense. New Orleans' offense, though, isn't nearly as inept as its counterpart. Drew Brees is playing well. Thomas will be the dominant back until Bush gets back up to speed and even Jeremy Shockey has been start-able as of late.

Dallas Cowboys at Pittsburgh Steelers: To say this is a huge game for Dallas is an obvious understatement.

Expect the Cowboys to perform accordingly. Tony Romo has the mobility to escape the Steelers' rush and find his plethora of targets downfield. The Barbarian isn't sure of a play as usual due to his injury, but all signs point to him playing Sunday. Big Ben on the other hand suffered another injury on Wednesday, this time "tweaking" his right knee. Willie Parker is still ailing but expects to play Sunday as well. Watch all these players up to game time and get your contingencies ready just in case.

Houston Texans at Green Bay Packers: Green Bay's defense is coming up way short of the expectations it set last year, and you know Steve Slaton must be licking his chops over it. The rookie continues to impress and should yield great dividends for his owners in these final weeks. Andre Johnson and Owen Daniels are solid bets here, but Ryan Grant, not so much. Brandon Jackson looks poised to receive a greater share of the carries. Aaron Rodgers will have a big game, not that it usually matters in the win loss column, and all the Green Bay wideouts are solid plays.

SCOREBOARD

continued from page 10

power, Whitworth said he hopes that his students' ideas will prompt the university to consider using solar power on a larger scale.

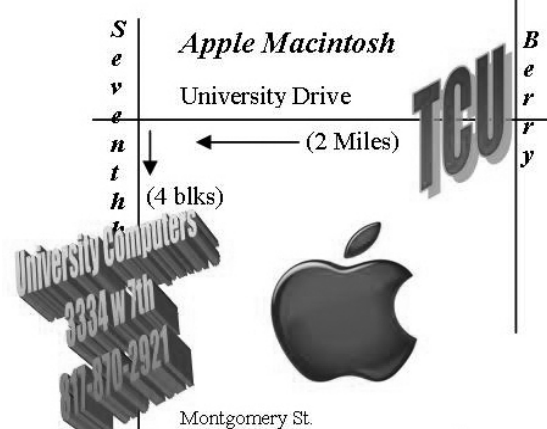
Whitworth said larger solar panels can be used in a variety of ways, from powering outdoor lighting systems to providing power for buildings on campus. Whitworth also said the Physical Plant is looking

into installing solar arrays on top of the Rickel building.

Whitworth said "going green" makes financial sense in a slowing economy.

"I think going green or being sustainable is very wise," Whitworth said. "It demonstrates fiscal responsibility. It demonstrates we can be creative and innovative and find ways to reduce our resources. Becoming more green, sometimes in the short run and always in the long run, produces profit."

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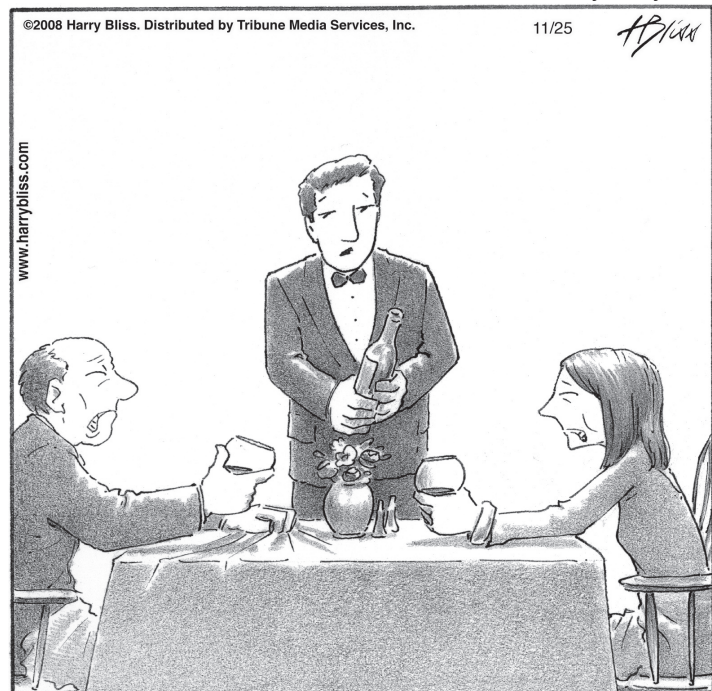
ETC.



Today in History
On this day in 1945, five U.S. Navy Avenger torpedo-bombers comprising Flight 19 take off from the Ft. Lauderdale Naval Air Station in Florida on a routine three-hour training mission over the Bermuda Triangle. They never returned.
— History Channel

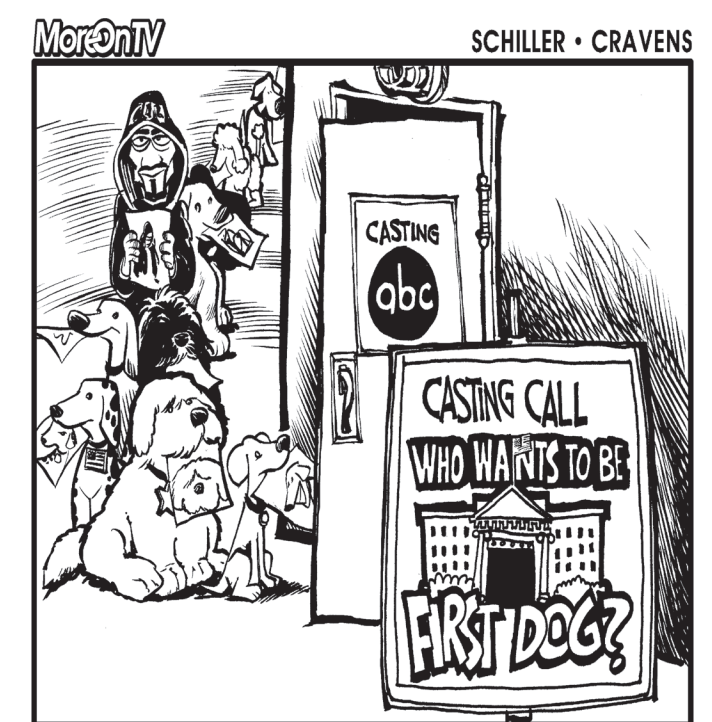
Joke of the Day
Q: Why did the man think that the moon was poor?
A: It was down to its last quarter.

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		8			6	
4						5

Directions
Fill in the grid so that every 3x3 box, row and column contains the digits 1 through 9 without repeating numbers.

See page 2 for sudoku and crossword solutions.

Thursday's Solutions

7	8	4	2	5	3	1	9	6
9	5	1	8	6	7	2	3	4
2	3	6	9	1	4	5	8	7
1	9	5	7	3	2	4	6	8
6	4	3	5	8	9	7	1	2
8	2	7	6	4	1	9	5	3
5	1	2	3	7	6	8	4	9
3	7	8	4	9	5	6	2	1
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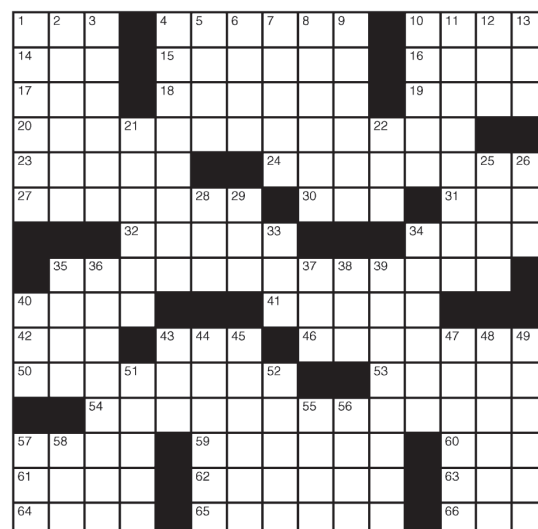
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14 Grown acorn
15 Kiribati's capital
16 Top choice, slangily
17 Break down
18 Movie category
19 Footnote wd.
20 Hit by singer who died 12/6/88
23 Gullible
24 Jordan/Bunny film
27 Entree that serves eight?
30 HBO rival
31 Top pilot
32 Peter and a Wolfe
34 Nabokov novel
35 See 20A
40 Refine, as a skill
41 Ballteam skipper Joe
42 Hobbit ally
43 Gibson or Brooks
46 Twisted wool
50 Enzo's automobiles
53 Hokkaido port
54 See 20A
57 Osbourne of rock
59 Arctic attire
60 Pose questions
61 Wordsworth work
62 Notably the '72 Dolphin defense
63 Peggy or Pinky
64 Cornmeal bread
65 Stylish
66 Byrnes or Hall



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

12/5/08

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

S	T	I	R	A	D	A	P	T	S	C	A	R
L	A	N	E	T	Y	C	O	O	N	O	L	E
I	T	S	N	E	V	E	R	T	O	O	M	T
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A	S	H		O	A	T		T	E	N	S	E
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T	E	A		R	E	S	I	N	S		T	O
E	D	T		A	R	E	C	A	S		O	N

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- 4 Big house
5 Austrian physicist Ernst
6 Art Deco artist
7 Train tracks
8 Dives like an eagle
9 " — and Her Sisters"
10 Case for Scully and Mulder
11 Bette's title character of '62
12 Egg. pref.
13 Signed, kind of
21 Ms. de Carlo
22 Author Umberto
25 Part of DNA
26 Game pieces
28 Swiss canton
29 Male heir
33 E. Bilko's rank
34 Magic word
35 Actor's part
36 Thawed out
37 Boar's mate
38 —Magnon
39 Cursor relocater
40 Playboy's founder, fondly
43 Traveler's guide
44 Thing to do
45 Certain claim holder
47 Hacienda hot meal
48 Wiped out
49 Immersed
51 Poetic match
52 Boulder
55 Refrain syllables
56 Sweet tubers
57 Antithesis, briefly
58 Menagerie

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SPORTS



Check www.tcdailyskiff.com for sports coverage over Winter Break.

BILLY KNOWS BEST

Time to celebrate fall sports



BILLY WESSELS

The semester is almost over, meaning fall sports are pretty much done and now is the time to congratulate some people for having great seasons.

TCU Athletics Fall MVP: Junior defensive end Jerry Hughes

Hughes has already been

named the Mountain West Conference defensive player of the year after finishing the regular season with a nation-leading, MWC-record 14 sacks. Hughes also recorded six forced fumbles, 18.5 tackles for loss, three fumble recoveries, two interceptions and one pick returned for a touchdown. You could basically write a song to replace "The 12 Days of Christmas" based on Hughes' season.

Because of these stellar numbers, Hughes is now ranked No. 13 on Scouts Inc.'s Top 32 NFL prospects on ESPN's NFL Draft page. We have to wait and see if he will seize the opportunity

he has to go to the draft now or play another season for the Frogs.

TCU Athletics Fall Best Newcomer: Freshman forward Jordan Calhoun

Calhoun set a new school record for goals scored in a season with 15. She also had two assists in her freshman campaign. Those 17 points put her on top of the MWC in points, points per game, goals, goals per game and game-winning goals. Of Calhoun's 15 goals, six of them were game-winners and three were game-tiers. Cal-

SEE SPORTS · PAGE 8

ATHLETICS

HIGH TECH



Courtesy of SCOTT KRETZER

The campus recreation center's new scoreboard was on display during the annual men's lacrosse alumni game Oct. 26. Professor Keith Whitworth's sustainability class is using solar panels to power the scoreboard.

Class using sun to tell the score

By Brian Smith
Staff Reporter

The campus initiative to go green has expanded to the intramural fields.

A scoreboard, purchased by the University Recreation Center, was powered by a solar panel for the first time Oct. 26, when the TCU Lacrosse team scrimmaged against its alumni.

Students in Keith Whitworth's social justice and environmental sustainability course

were charged with putting nine new solar panels to use during the fall semester.

Whitworth said the purpose of the project is to get the students to educate the campus community about renewable energy and to think of a practical application for solar panels.

Whitworth and Bill Diong, an associate professor in the engineering department, requested an instructional development grant from the university to obtain money to

purchase the panels.

"The aim is to fund faculty members with good ideas to improve education of a student," Diong said of the grant.

Diong said the solar panels can achieve a maximum power level of about 48 watts. However, Diong said the panels were used to power 65-watt laptops during the TCU-Stanford football game Sept. 13.

Although the panels only provide a small amount of

SEE SCOREBOARD · PAGE 8

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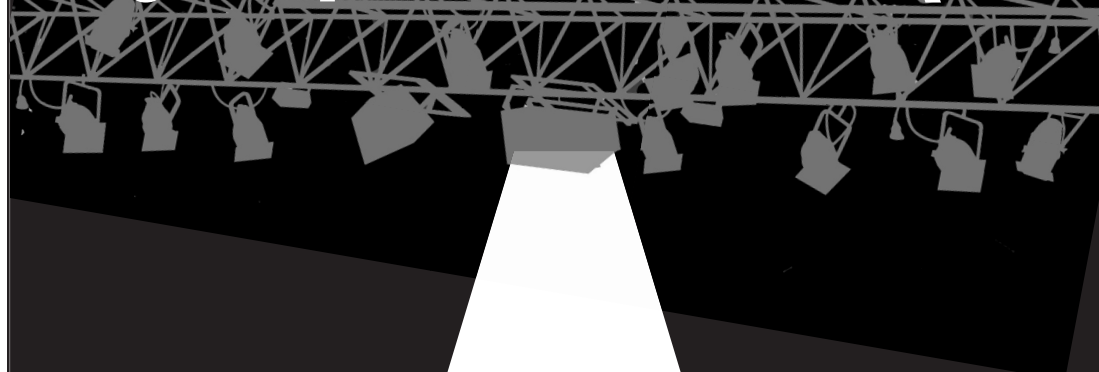


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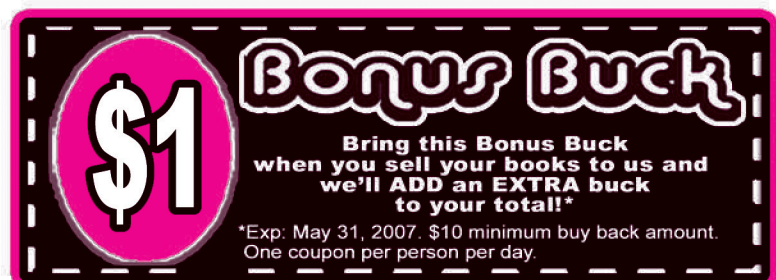
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