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The Alestle⁵⁰

Alton - East St. Louis - Edwardsville



Holiday enlightenment
See A&E

Thursday, December 6, 2007

www.alestlelive.com

Vol. 60, No. 32

Two arrested for counterfeit in Evergreen

by **Katie Gregowicz**
Alestle Reporter

Two people were arrested on Dec. 1 at Evergreen Hall for suspected counterfeiting of U.S. currency.

According to the SIUE Police Web site, the police department located the individuals and after questioning, they were both taken into custody.

Edwardsville Police warned local businesses to be wary of fake \$100 bills. It is not known at this time if the individuals

arrested at Evergreen are connected with the fake bills in Edwardsville.

Lt. Kevin Schmoll of the SIUE Police Department said the case has been turned over to the Secret Service. Chris Williams of the Southern Illinois branch of the Secret Service did not immediately return phone calls on Wednesday.

Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students Jim Klenke said he is not permitted by law to discuss this issue right now.

"They are protected under the Family

Education (Rights) and Privacy Act," he said.

Edwardsville Police Chief James Bedell said in an interview with the Belleville News-Democrat that the counterfeit bills are actually \$5 bills that have been bleached to remove their ink and then reprinted with a computer.

The special pens that are used to mark on large bills to ensure they are real do not detect that these \$100 bills are fake since they are actual bills. However, when the bill is held up to light, a hologram of

President Lincoln, who is on \$5 bills, is visible.

Chris Schaefer, store director at the Edwardsville Dierbergs, said the Edwardsville Police Department told him that some of the counterfeit bills have been at the store. Schaefer said the bills from his store have not been located yet.

This case is being reviewed for felony charges.

Katie Gregowicz can be reached at kgregowicz@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

Springboard groups to stay overnight

by **Kenneth Long**
Alestle Correspondent

Springboard to Success, an orientation program that introduces incoming freshmen to SIUE, will see changes in 2008.

The Springboard to Success program is designed to help freshmen with registration at SIUE in different departments, including housing, classes, financial aid and other aspects of student life.

Emily York, the assistant director of admissions for new student programs, said the number of students per Springboard session will increase from 90 students to 200. She also said that most of the sessions will be held in June. This way the program will not conflict with high school activities.

One of the major changes will expand the session to two days and one night; students will be assigned a roommate when they approach the desk the day of registration. Parents will not be allowed to stay on campus.

"Many other universities are already doing this for their incoming freshmen," York said. "It gives more opportunities to interact with other freshmen."

SPRINGBOARD/pg.2

School of Engineering to offer doctoral degree with SIUC cooperative

by **Allan Lewis**
Alestle Reporter

SIUE students hoping to receive a doctoral degree in engineering from SIU no longer need to travel to the Carbondale campus, as a new cooperative program has been put in place to allow students to receive their Ph.D. in Edwardsville.

More than 100 faculty members from the university system are working together to give students in Edwardsville the opportunity to obtain a doctoral degree in engineering.

According to Oktav Alkin, associate dean for research and development for the SIUE School of Engineering, the program is lucrative to students because it makes graduates more attractive to professionals working in the St. Louis area.

"Obtaining a degree in Edwardsville makes it attractive to professionals in the industry," Alkin said. "If you are working in the area you can't possibly move to Carbondale, so now you can get a Ph.D. from Carbondale

ENGINEERING/pg.5



Steve Berry/Alestle

Students make fleece blankets for children Tuesday in the Cougar Village Commons Building.

A warmer winter

Students make blankets for hospitalized kids

by **Kenneth Long**
Alestle Correspondent

Instead of studying for finals or going Christmas shopping, students from Cougar Village gathered to help children in a unique way: making blankets.

The volunteers worked with Project Linus on Tuesday night for a volunteer project. They made blankets that will go to children that are ill, traumatized or just in need of a homemade blanket. The service project was a part of the staff volunteer program.

Project Linus is a non-profit organization with chapters in all 50 states. Every chapter donates an average of 350 blankets each month.

Kristin May, a sophomore English and speech education major,

worked with Project Linus last year and was pleased with the impact.

"It really makes a huge impact on the kids," May said.

The blankets, which are homemade by volunteers, are brought to the closest Project Linus office. They are then distributed to children of all ages.

"We thought of making bigger blankets," May said. "Most of the older kids aren't normally given gifts like this."

Justin Aydt, a senior business management/CMIS major, said making the blankets themselves shows that the volunteers are genuinely concerned.

"It shows that you put in some time and effort," Aydt said.

Senior psychology major Lauren Wheeler said that blankets

make a moderate impact in the lives of children.

Wheeler liked working with the project because it really shows concern through actual effort.

"If you're going to do something, you should put work into it," Wheeler said.

Project Linus was inspired by an article written about a child going through chemotherapy who was able to deal with the treatments because of her security blanket. Karen Loucks, moved by the article, made the first donation of security blankets to a children's cancer center.

For more information on Project Linus or how to donate, visit www.projectlinus.org.

Kenneth Long can be reached at klong@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

"It really makes a huge impact on the kids."

-Kristin May, sophomore

Police Reports

11-29

Christopher N. Godwin posted bond on a Macoupin County warrant and was released on his own recognizance on a warrant for SIUE charges.

Police responded to Governors' Parkway and Esic Drive for a two-vehicle accident involving an Edwardsville Police Department squad car. There were no injuries.

Police canceled a warrant for traffic violations on Andrew J. Kennedy.

Police issued Lia M. Sova a citation for speeding on North University Drive.

Police issued Christopher D. Riedy a citation for speeding on South University Drive.

Police issued Anna Komperda a citation for speeding on South University Drive.

Police issued Rachel E. Breuer a citation for speeding on South University Drive.

Police met with a vehicle owner for a report of burglary to a motor vehicle. The owner stated that her backpack, books and laptop were taken.

Police issued Rebecca N. Bickel a citation for speeding

on University Drive.

11-30

Police issued Aaron S. Howard a citation for speeding on North University Drive.

12-1

Police issued Crysyl G. Swartz a citation for speeding on South University Drive.

Police took a call from a person reporting that she left her vehicle over night in Lot 10 and when she returned to the vehicle, the rear tire had been removed and left it propped up on a piece of wood.

Two subjects were taken into custody from Evergreen Hall after police received information about individuals counterfeiting U.S. currency. Both subjects were taken to Madison County Jail and placed on a felony hold. The case will be reviewed for possible felony charges.

Police issued Brian J. Miller citations for the operation of an uninsured motor vehicle and no valid drivers license after a motorist reported a two car accident in Lot B.

12-2

Police observed a fight

breaking out among a group of 15 to 20 males in Lot B. Backup arrived and the individuals were separated. The case is still under investigation.

Police responded to a two vehicle accident in Lot 5H. Police issued Talia Reed a citation for improper backing.

Police responded to Cougar Village 404 after a female caller reported she and her boyfriend had gotten into an argument. She said he hit her, broke her phone and then left the area on foot. The case is pending.

Police responded to Cougar Village 523 after a resident reported that she got into an argument with her boyfriend and that he physically assaulted her. The suspect had already left the area in his vehicle. The case is pending.

12-3

Police took in a walk in report of a traffic accident.

Clarence Johnson Jr. came to the SIUE Police Department in connection with an altercation he had with his girlfriend the night before. Police arrested Johnson for domestic battery, criminal damage to state property and intimidation/

interfering with a 911 call. He was taken to Madison County Jail.

Police responded to Lot 4D for a hit and run accident report.

Frederick Hatchett Jr. turned himself in on an outstanding warrant from the Madison Police Department for failure to appear. He posted bond and was released with a court date.

Frederick Hatchett Jr. was charged with unlawful possession of cannabis and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia. He was issued a notice to appear on both charges.

Police took a report from a subject who said she had left her purse in the library at the East St. Louis Higher Education Center. When she returned, the purse had been turned in, but her debit card had been taken. There are no suspects in the case.

A motorist hit a deer on North University Drive. No injury or road blockage was reported. The deer was killed on impact.

A maintenance worker reported the rug at the entrance of Building B at the East St. Louis Higher Education Center had been stolen. There are no suspects.

SPRINGBOARD

from pg. 1

Cody Kauh, a freshman majoring in music education and theory composition, said he likes the idea of an extended period for activities, but disagrees with staying overnight.

"Staying the night would be good for students living on campus," Kauh said, "but it's worthless for students like me living at home."

Nathan Hovatter, a freshman majoring in economics and finance, said his Springboard experience was boring.

"They should incorporate more activities that actually apply to incoming freshmen," Hovatter said. "It seemed like most of the activities were fillers while people were waiting for counselors."

Overall, Hovatter thought staying overnight would be better than a one-day program.

"It's a better idea," Hovatter said. "You meet more people and get a better idea of what campus life is like."

Registration for Springboard to Success will begin in February 2008. The cost is \$125 per student and \$20 for each guest. All fees are due before May 15.

Springboard to Success sessions will begin May 29 and end July 2.

To schedule an appointment for Springboard, call 618-650-3701.

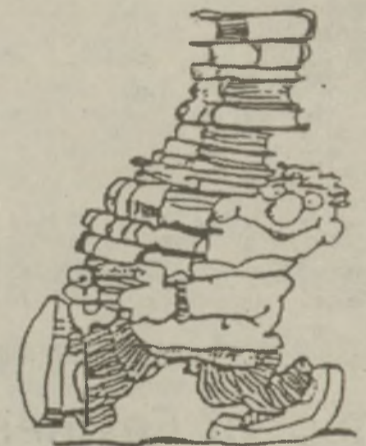
Kenneth Long can be reached at klong@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

Textbook Service

650-3020

www.siue.edu/MUC/textbooks.html

Reminds you that the **last day** to return Fall 2007 Textbooks, ***without penalty*** is **Tuesday, December 18, 2007**



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Dec. 10 – 13	Monday - Thursday	8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Dec. 14	Friday	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Dec. 15	Saturday	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Dec. 16	Sunday	Noon – 5 p.m.
Dec. 17	Monday	8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	Tuesday	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Students will be charged the replacement cost of the Books not returned by the above due date.

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Battle of the bartenders

Area tavern raises funds for Uhl family

by **Matthew Schroyer**
Alestle Reporter

With bells dinging and a crowd of 30 howling, it was easy to tell that something special was happening Tuesday night at the Whistle Stop bar in Swansea.

Two bartenders riled up the crowd and duelled for the most tips, but it was all in the name of charity. From 7 to 9 p.m., all gratuities went to the family of Jessica and Kelli Uhl. Jessica, 18, and Kelli, 13, died in a car accident on I-64 on Nov. 23, after a police car lost control and drove into oncoming traffic.

"We want to keep the bell ringing all night," Whistle Stop bartender and Makeupfamouz.com photographer Pat Allsup said.

For every tip of \$10 or more, a bartender feverishly rang the bell above the bar, and the crowd immediately cheered.

While many patrons did what they could by tipping the bartenders or depositing a tip in a pitcher at the door, some also made \$100, \$200 and \$500 donations. One of the donators was a parent who had lost two children. Ray Kelly, the Whistle Stop's owner, also donated \$500 for the cause.

"We're just trying to help," Kelly said. Officially known as "The Battle for

Jessica," the contest pitted two Ruby Tuesday bartenders against each other for the sake of charity. The rivals were Mandy Jenin and Chris Reynolds, who both worked at the Collinsville Ruby Tuesday, where Jessica Uhl worked.

The contest was also known as "the Beauty" versus "the Beast."

Allsup created the contest after she learned the connection between the bartenders and Uhl.

The Collinsville Ruby Tuesday also held its own fundraising efforts over the weekend, collecting \$3,500 from tips and wages donated by servers and kitchen staff.

With the help of donators and Whistle Stop patrons, another \$3,500 was raised in a matter of three hours. And perhaps in a fitting tribute to Jessica and Kelli, "the Beauty" emerged the victor.

One of the regular patrons who goes by the name "Baby J" said they didn't know the Uhl's personally, but was happy to be a part of the fundraiser.

"It was a sad thing," the patron said. "But I think this is amazing, and I'm proud to be a part of this."

Matthew Schroyer can be reached at mschroyer@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

Old Cougar Cards to be deactivated Jan. 2

Alestle Staff Report

All students, faculty and staff need to have the new vertical University ID, or Cougar Card, by Jan. 2 or they will not be able to access much on campus.

The old horizontal Cougar Cards will be deactivated on Jan. 2 and will not be valid for use anywhere on campus.

Switching from the old card to the new card costs nothing to members of the university community. The only stipulation is that the old card needs to be turned over to the Service Center for proper disposal before a new one can be obtained.

The new cards do not have Social Security information imbedded into them like the old cards. The new security feature helps protect members of the university community from identity theft.

The new cards can be used as a debit card at off-campus sites through a Bank of Edwardsville checking account.

Students, faculty and staff may take new ID photos. New Cougar Cards can be picked up in the Service Center on the first floor of Rendleman Hall.

Alestle Staff can be reached at hmeyer@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

Senate set to meet Friday

Alestle Staff Report

At its final meeting of the semester before winter break, Student Government will take care of a few last orders of business including single-semester allocations, program requests and budget requests.

The Senate will review three program requests. Nine organizations will be revoked due to inactivity over two consecutive semesters.

Student Government will discuss a constitution request for Women's Club Softball for the second time. The first request was waived until Friday's meeting, as the club did not have a representative present.

The meeting will be at 2 p.m. Friday in the Morris University Center's International Room.

Alestle Staff can be reached at alewis@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

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In addition to legal consultation, the program provides referrals to other attorneys and to governmental agencies where appropriate. You are encouraged to contact the Student Legal Services Program attorney to determine whether your specific problem is within the realm of the Program.

Program Limitations

It is **not** within the authority of the Student Legal Services Program attorney to provide assistance to students in the following matters:

- Suits against the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, the Student Government of SIUE, or any of their parts or officials when functioning in their official capacity.
- Matters prohibited by the Code of Professional Responsibility.
- Drafting of wills or estates in excess of \$50,000.
- Tax matters and estate planning.
- Incorporation of groups for private profit.
- Criminal matters.
- Cases involving excessive time and resource commitment.
- Matters involving student academic, student affairs, or faculty grievance cases.
- Matters involving one eligible student against another.

Appointments

Appointments are required; however, if you need immediate consultation, you will be assisted as promptly as possible. No legal advice can be given over the telephone. To make an appointment, contact:

Dennis Orsey, Attorney
3388 Maryville Road, Suite A
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BEOGWOLF (PG-13) DAILY 6:45
FRI/SAT LATE SHOW 9:30; SAT/SUN MAT. 2:15
AMERICAN GANGSTER (R) DAILY 6:30
SAT/SUN MAT. 2:00

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ENCHANTED (PG) DAILY (4:45) 7:30
FRI/SAT LATE SHOW 10:00; SAT/SUN MAT. 2:00
STEPHEN KING'S THE MIST (R) DAILY (4:15) 7:00
FRI/SAT LATE SHOW 9:50; SAT/SUN MAT. 1:30
MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM (G)
DAILY (4:30) 7:15; FRI/SAT LATE SHOW 9:40;
SAT/SUN MAT. 1:45
FRED CLAUS (PG) DAILY (4:00) 6:45;
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7:00 7:30 9:20 9:45 10:20
AWAKE (R) 2:10 4:40 7:15 9:40
STEPHEN KING'S THE MIST (R)
12:45 3:40 6:40 9:30
AUGUST RUSH (PG) 1:10 4:20 7:20 10:00
ENCHANTED (PG) 1:40 4:50 7:40 10:15
HITMAN (R) 12:50 3:50 6:50 9:50
NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN (R)
1:50 5:10 8:00
THIS CHRISTMAS (PG-13)
1:15 4:10 7:10 10:10
MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM (G)
2:00 5:00 7:50 10:30
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SPRING 2008 EXTENDED ISSUE HOURS

January 7 & 10	Mon. & Thur.	8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
January 8, 9, 11, 12	Tu, Wed, Fr & Sat	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
January 13	Sunday	Noon - 5 p.m.
January 14	Monday	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
January 15-17	Tuesday - Thurs	8 a.m. - 7 p.m.
January 18	Friday	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Textbook Service will be **CLOSED**

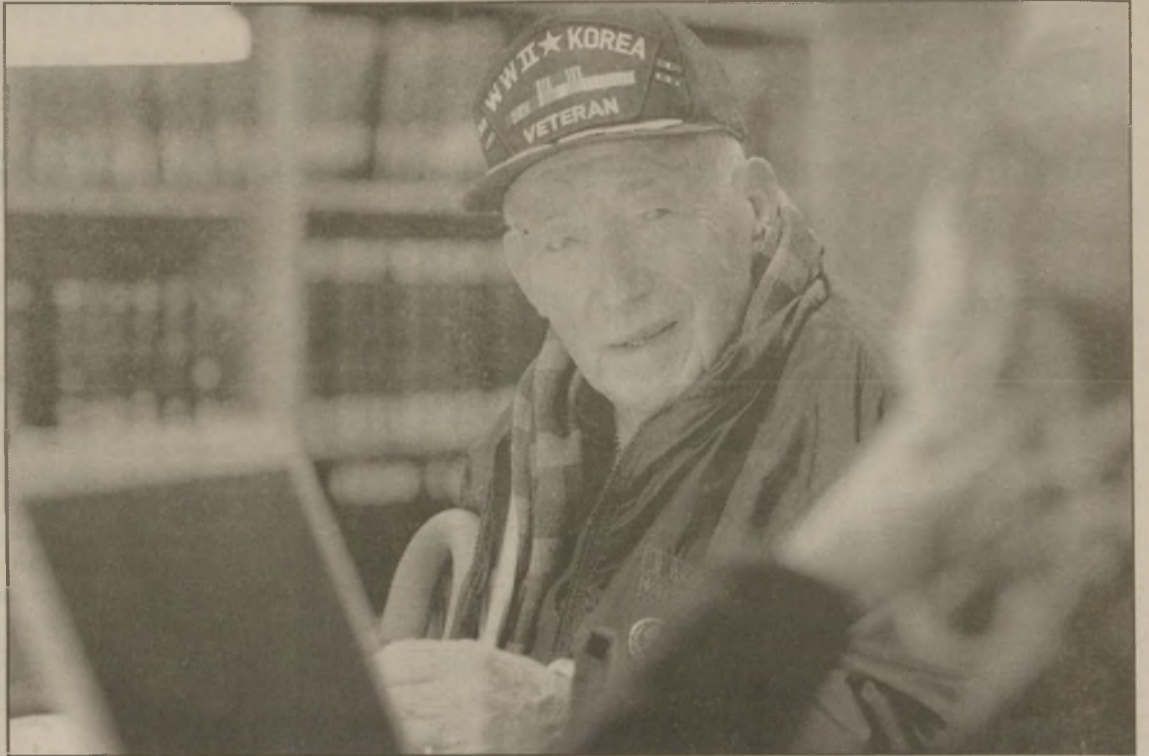
Monday, January 21, 2007

for the Martin Luther King Observance.

SIUE Cougar ID card is required to rent textbooks!

Regular Semester hours:

Monday	8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday - Friday	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



Chris Pedota/The Record/MCT

Harold Dinzes, 91, is the oldest student at Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey.

91-year-old student majors in history he helped make

by Kenneth Long
 Alestle Correspondent

HACKENSACK, N.J. — Harold Dinzes may be the oldest college kid in New Jersey and is surely one of the most gung-ho.

At 91, Dinzes is a history major at Montclair State University at a time when the percentage of college students age 65 and older has plummeted in New Jersey.

Four days a week, the Passaic, N.J., man is on campus wearing jeans and a backpack like any other student, drawn by the lure of academics and a conviction that he has discovered a place where he finally belongs. He has even asked the administration if he can be buried at the school.

As he makes his way across campus, Dinzes is greeted by professors, secretaries and classmates who wave and holler, "Hi Harold!" At the academic advising office, the counselors welcome him with hugs and pecks on the cheek. At the library, mature librarians and young interns whisper with him about gems in the stacks. At the student cafe, pals from class plop down beside him to discuss assignments.

"These kids," he says, referring to everyone on campus under 80, "make me feel like a million bucks."

Around him, the coeds who aren't smooching are typing on laptops, listening to iPods or chatting on cellphones — all contraptions that seem to Dinzes like futuristic wizardry. Dinzes doesn't even have a typewriter. His teachers allow him to write his assignments by hand, which he does in three drafts: one in chicken scratch to get his ideas down, a second to pull it together and a third to perfect his penmanship.

There are, of course, other reminders of his age. On his first day at school, he scoped out every bathroom on campus because the water pill he takes for his heart requires a quick response.

"I was so naive when I started here," he says. "I asked a kid sitting next to me if I had to raise my hand when I had to go to the bathroom. No, the kid said, you can just go. I thought, Wow, it wasn't like that when I went to high school."

Even before Dinzes graduated from Passaic High in the 1930s, he dreamed of going to college but his family needed him to work. His parents could afford to send only one child to school and Dinzes' sister was the brainier one. Their mother hocked all her jewelry to pay the tab.

In 1942, Dinzes was drafted, spending four years with the Army in the South Pacific. He yearned for books but the only book at the base — besides Army manuals, and he even read those — was a worn copy of Plato. He read it until it came apart in the jungle humidity.

When the war ended, Dinzes signed up as a reservist. But in 1950, with tensions rising in Korea, he was tapped again. His wife was four months' pregnant with their first child. Dinzes served until 1953.

After his return, Dinzes worked with his father in a plumbing supply shop, which Dinzes eventually took over. His sons worked with him until he closed shop at age 84, trounced by the Home Depot down the street.

Unsure of what to do next, he applied for a job at the Barnes & Noble in Clifton, N.J. Five times he was turned down, but he pestered them until they relented. When he's not in class,

he still works there.

At 88, he applied to Montclair State, where his granddaughter is in graduate school. His 83-year-old wife, Doreen, says he checked the mail every day to see if he had been accepted. When the letter finally arrived, he framed it.

He has taken 21 classes — mostly in history, anthropology, archeology and political science — about half the amount needed for graduation.

His wife says sometimes it's wearing to live with a college boy.

"I have to be quiet in the morning when he's sleeping or studying, and we don't have any social life because he always says, 'I have to go home and study,'" she says. "I thought when he retired he'd finally be around more, but he's always busy with school. I had to take up canasta and mah-jongg to find something to do."

Last Monday at the lecture hall for his general humanities course, Dinzes headed straight to the front row, the better to hear the professor. He put his cane and veterans hat on the table and laid out his textbook, his binder, his hearing aids, his pencils and highlighter and his three sets of eyeglasses — one for watching the teacher, one for checking his notes and one if the light gets too bright. He swiveled around and offered Life Savers to the two cute coeds sitting behind him, both of whom politely accepted.

Class that day was about how art in the late Roman Empire reflected divisions in society. Though Professor Senta German was animated, some students chatted and some dozed. Not Dinzes. He took notes, chuckled at her jokes and was the only student out of nearly 100 to answer when she asked a

STUDENT/pg.5

ENGINEERING
from pg. 1

in Edwardsville.”

Alkin points out that a doctorate in engineering goes a long way in the field.

“If you want to go into academia it is essential, and research labs require doctorate degrees,” Alkin said.

Along with the option of taking classes at the doctoral level, the two faculties are also cooperating in the delivery of classes. To teach lessons in the program, SIUE faculty as well as professors at SIUC collaborate through a satellite feed to the campus.

“There are some classes that Carbondale offers that we do not, and some classes that we offer that Carbondale does not,” Alkin said. “We have agreed to share those courses and make them available through videoconferencing.”

Working with Carbondale gives faculty members an opportunity to give students a cooperative learning experience.

“It’s a good opportunity for collaboration between the two campuses,” Civil Engineering Chair Susan Morgan said.

The new cooperative doctoral program in engineering is not the first at SIUE, as the school of education had a similar program employed in past years.

“The School of Education offered a Ph.D. program in educational leadership,” Bette Bergeron, dean of the School of Education said. “The course was taught in Belleville and the responsibility of teaching was shared between the two

faculties.”

Currently, that partnership is on hiatus as Carbondale is revising their curriculum.

“It worked out very well,” Bergeron said. “We look forward to doing something similar in the future.”

Alkin hopes the combined intellectual strength of the two faculties will be beneficial to the students in this program.

“This is a full two-way interaction being offered in this program,” Alkin said. “Students will be able to interact with both faculties as if they are both in the classroom and it should be a valuable asset to students.”

Computer engineering major Patrick Solt is the only student currently enrolled in the program for next semester. The university is setting him up with an academic adviser to chair on his dissertation committee that will feature faculty from both schools.

“Our hope is to have about 20 students in the program within the next three years,” Alkin said. “Right now we have one student actively involved in the program, one in the admissions process and 12 inquiries.”

Coursework in the program is made up of a minimum of 26 credit hours, including 15 in concentration courses. A 3.25 GPA is required and a dissertation must be completed within five years of admission.

Allan Lewis can be reached at alewis@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

“Our hope is to have about 20 students in the program within the next three years.”

-Oktav Alkin

STUDENT
from pg. 4

question.

When class ended, he repacked his things, making sure to refill his coat pockets with Life Savers so he didn’t have to fumble when he wanted to hand them out.

Most days, he gets to school hours early so he can nab the parking spot he wants. Then he heads to the library to read 20th century military history and figure out where he fits in. Or he pops in to see the academic advisors to bring them bagels and cream cheese and ask about their children. In turn, they tease him

about how he’s in line, after Brad Pitt, as a potential boyfriend.

Back home, his wife says he talks incessantly about the professors he loves, the books he’s reading, the knowledge he’s absorbing.

Does she look forward to the day he graduates?

“Are you kidding? He says he’s going to be in college until 2099, and I won’t be here then.”

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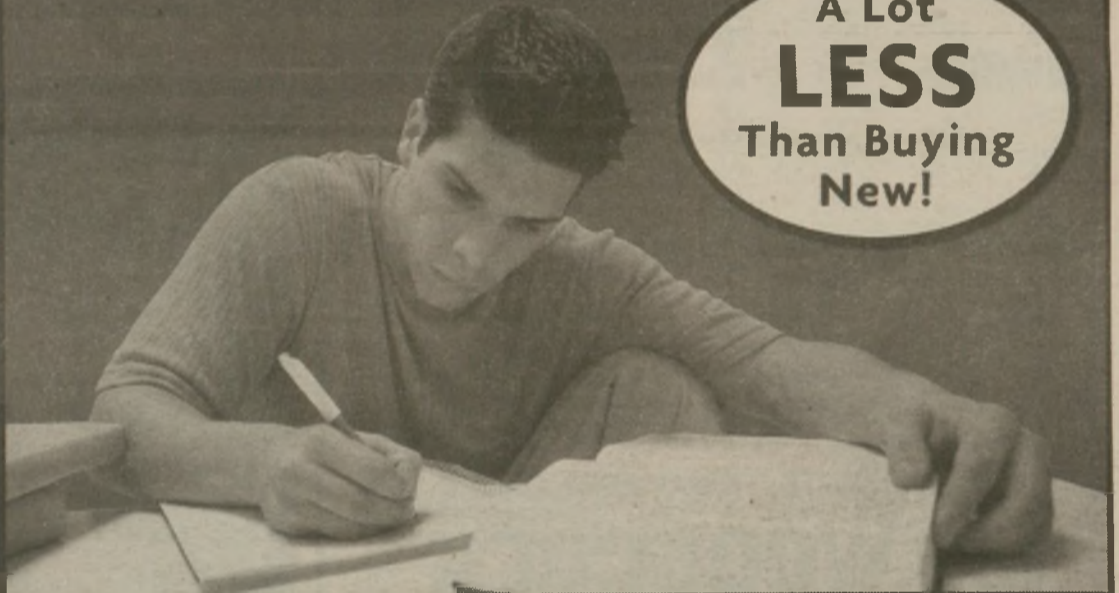


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All hard copy letters should be typed and double-spaced. Letters should be no longer than 500 words.

Please include phone number, signature, class rank and major.

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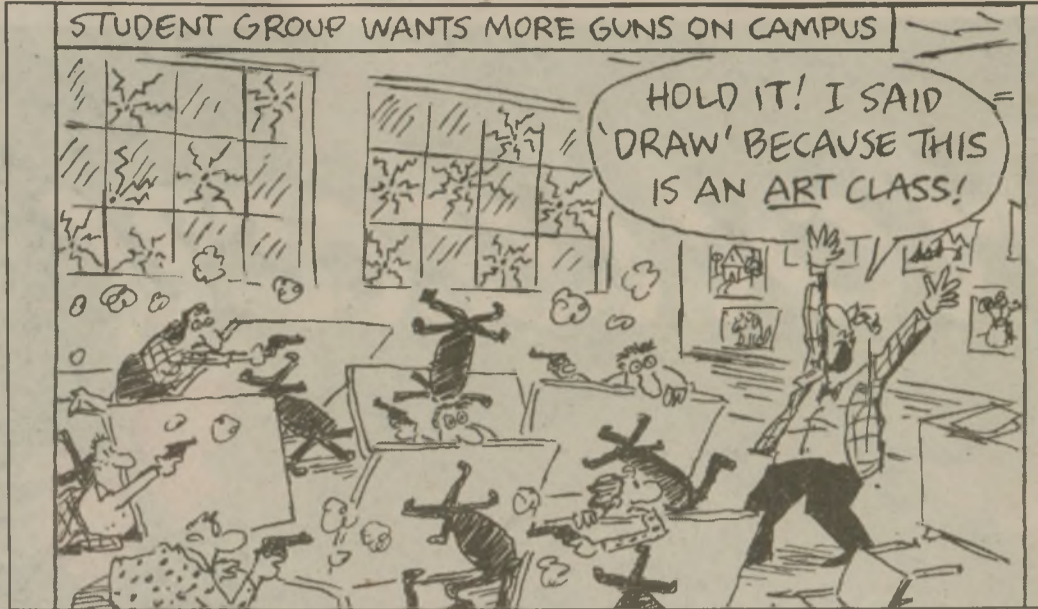
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Have a strong opinion about one of today's columns and want your viewpoint heard? Send a letter to Op/Ed Editor Justin Gibson. Provide your name, major and year in school.

Greek system more than just a party

I am tired of people thinking that all sororities and fraternities do is go out and get drunk.

The belief that Greek life is just about going out and partying is nothing more than a common stereotype. It astonishes me that only 2 percent of the United States population is Greek — yet, somehow, such a large percentage seem to “know” exactly what sororities and fraternities are doing. With such a small amount of Greek



Molly Balkenbush

individuals in our country, many of the great things these chapters have to offer go unnoticed.

I have been part of campus Greek life since Oct. 20, when I was first initiated into the Alpha Phi Chapter. Being an Alpha Phi has not turned me into a party animal, a victim of hazing or any of the other ridiculous and outdated stereotypes. It is time for individuals to stop letting movies such as “Old School” and “Van Wilder” define what Greek life is really all about. The time has come to put these stereotypes to rest.

Like many sorority chapters, Alpha Phi is full of smart, intelligent ladies. This past Saturday was the Alpha Phi

second annual Red Dress Dinner. Friends and families came and witnessed dozens of girls who were awarded certificates in honor of their 4.0 GPAs and dozens of others for the completion of their goal GPA that they set last spring. I have never met such a smart group of women. People who say Greeks are not smart only sound ignorant. Besides, many chapters require a 2.5 GPA or higher to be active anyway, proving that members' academics are top priority.

Sororities offer much more to their members than they did in the past — things more important than partying. Girls are given a family away from home, an

immense amount of community service opportunities, academic support and scholarship opportunities and, best of all, a chance to meet some of the smartest girls on campus.

Students don't go Greek to party, college life within itself offers that. Students go Greek because of the opportunities, memories and most importantly, the special people that it brings into the lives of their members.

Molly Balkenbush can be reached at mbalkenbush@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

Finals demonstrate freshmen strengths

I remember talking to a classmate recently about his first semester as a college student. One of the areas he said was a problem was procrastination, especially when he had several journal entries due at the end of the semester that he did not even start until after Thanksgiving break.



Zach Groves

While he seems like a cool guy, it still stinks to be him.

Final exams are like Charles Darwin's theories of survival. Only the academically stronger freshmen will survive on the exams and return next semester.

Academically stronger — as in those who either steered clear of the party scene or students who partied a lot and still dragged themselves to class. And to be

able to come in to class hung over says a lot about your character and work ethic, but even then you may have to be a gifted student to pull off at least a “C.”

From personal observation, a wing in a residence hall usually turns into a carousel of new residents after finals. At the beginning of spring semester I likely re-introduced myself more than asked the simple, “How was your break?” Not a good sign.

It is sad because I have watched the students at Springboard to Success with joyful looks and excitement for the college life. Now, there is a chance a good percentage of them will not return in January.

However, partying is not entirely the reason for dropping out. Love is mysterious and powerful and, for some, a reason to quit school. I recall one girl on my wing first semester who decided to transfer to a community college to be closer

to her boyfriend.

There are also students who are brilliant but just too lazy to go to class. Many come from high school with super-high honors and are so full of themselves they think they can coast through class by not going. Little do they know that college physics, for example, is far different than high school physics.

One can also say that adjustment is needed for with every class.

According to an Alestle September issue, the 2006 overall retention rate from freshman to sophomore year was 75 percent, which is encouraging news. Still, one has to wonder what happened to the remaining 25 percent.

The 2007 statistics will not be released until later this month, according to the report. It remains to be seen whether the new numbers support or

contradict my dropout prediction.

Like I said in my finals column, they are the last chance for the freshmen who are gasping for air, so to speak. According to a story from “Careers and Colleges,” one student said it best: “I remember feeling like the grasshopper that played all summer; now it was my turn to pay.”

Final exams will determine if a number of freshmen did the same thing and let winter bite them. Hard work pays off, but assignments must be done at a timely pace.

Should this friend return next semester, I hope he fully understands how critical time management is, and finals should not poorly reflect on such.

Zach Groves can be reached at zgroves@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

The Alestle is currently seeking guest columnists to contribute on a routine basis. If interested, contact Op/Ed editor Justin Gibson at jgibson@alestlelive.com.

Holiday Ent

Christmas December 25

United Campus Ministry's campus minister, the Rev. Paul Burden, said Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

"It's not so much pinpointing Jesus' exact birthday, but celebrating the birth of Christ and what that means for Christians throughout the world," Burden said.

Christians believe Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah prophesized about in the Old Testament, and Christmas celebrates the time when Christ came to earth to eventually die to save the world from sin.

"From my perspective as a Christian, the theological and spiritual message of Christmas is that God is with us," Burden said. "That's what the scripture tells us, and I think that's a message of hope for people, that God has not forgotten us or abandoned us, but God is the midst of our lives and the midst of our world."

Christmas is traditionally celebrated by giving gifts to family members and friends. Burden said while exchanging gifts is certainly a positive way to celebrate the holiday, alternative gift giving is also a good idea.

"I would encourage folks to ... find ways to make someone's life better this holiday season," Burden said.

Hanukkah December 8-15

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the time when a group of Jewish rebels defeated the oppressive Greek forces and rededicated the holy temple in Jerusalem. The rebels used a small amount of holy oil to last eight days. The miracle of the oil, but not enough to last eight days. Revital Yona, an Israeli Federation of Southern Illinois, SIUE.

"This container was supposed to last only one day because it was so small," Yona said. "The miracle was that it lasted eight days."

For eight nights in December, Jews celebrate the miracle by lighting the eight candles on the menorah. Each night the oil lasted.

Gifts are also exchanged and traditional games like Dreidel and playing with latkes, potato pancakes.

Yona said Hanukkah is about more than just gifts and games beyond materialistic culture.

"Hanukkah tries to bring attention to this spiritual dimension of life. God is everywhere, in everything."

"Miracles happen every day."

a time for celebration

Christmas

12/6

Way of Lights
5 to 10 p.m. Now to Jan. 6,
Our Lady of the Snows
Shrine, Belleville
Free, donations accepted

Trans-Siberian Orchestra
Christmas Concert
3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Scottrade Center, St. Louis
\$37 and \$47

12/9

Wild Lights
5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Now to
Dec. 30
St. Louis Zoo
Adults: \$5, children under 2:
free

12/9

Hanukkah

12/8

Chabad on Campus: Israeli
Hanukkah Party
7 to 9 p.m.
Rohr Center for Jewish Life,
Washington University
Free

Young Israel Hanukkah
8:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Young Israel

Entertainment

by Catherine Klene
Alestle A&E Editor
Photo illustration by Steve Berry
Alestle Photo Editor

Hanukkah December 4 to 12

Known as the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah is a holiday celebrating the victory of Jewish fighters over the Greeks and reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed, they needed enough time to rebuild it. They found a small container of oil that lasted for eight days.

At SIUE, an emissary to the Jewish community, teaches Hebrew lessons at the center.

It is said to last for only one day, but in fact it lasted for eight days.

Each night, Hanukkah celebrates this holiday by lighting candles on a menorah, one for each night, and people play with dreidels and eat traditional foods like latkes.

It is a reminder to look for the good in everyone.

It makes us remember the fact that we are all here and in this world together.

Yona said. "We can make a difference."

Kwanzaa

December 23 to January 1

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African-American cultural heritage, created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. Seven principles — unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith — are represented by seven symbols.

SIUE English professor emeritus Eugene Redmond said the key message of Kwanzaa is unity.

"The essential message behind Kwanzaa is family and community," Redmond said.

The candles used in Kwanzaa are used to remind African-Americans of struggle, hope and unity as a people. Each night, another candle is lit and another of the seven principles is focused on.

On the final night of Kwanzaa, gifts are exchanged. Gifts are generally homemade and reflect an individual's accomplishments over the past year.

Redmond said the principles of Kwanzaa should be exercised all time.

"We try to suggest that people live them year round," Redmond said. "It's not just a December 26 through January 1 phenomenon."

12/9

Hanukkah Party
7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
Carmel, Delmar
Free

12/9

Shalom Neighbor Hanukkah
Candle Lighting and
Celebration
4:30 to 6 p.m.
Fox Building, Chesterfield
Free

Kwanzaa

12/8

Kwanzaa Holiday Expo
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
West End Community Center,
St. Louis
Free

12/18

"Kwanzaa: (Continuing) a
40th Anniversary
(Community) Celebration"
6 p.m., Dec. 18
SIUE/East St. Louis Higher
Education Center

12/26

Kwanzaa: A Cultural
Celebration
7 p.m.
St. Louis Art Museum
Free



Students helping kids, or kids helping students grow?

One of the greatest things about college athletes is the simple fact that they have yet to be brainwashed by the mainstream media. To these athletes, it's a matter of playing the game and performing to the best of their level. That's where it ends. Or is it?

In an article earlier this week, reporter Jacob Boone covered an event being held tomorrow in the Vadalabene Center. This event gives a chance for local area children to come to the university and participate in sports with the student athletes.

This event, "Kids Night Out," gives these student athletes the opportunity to see how much impact they have on the children that come and participate. This event is one of the many chances that the student athlete can give back to the community.

How much do the athletes give back to the community? Just a few examples: The softball team gives up their Sundays to volunteer at St. Louis Rams games. The Club Football team has done enough charitable work to take up half of this column. It's simple; these are athletes at their prime.

While kids may listen to their parents when they are getting taught various "life lessons," it is the information that they hear from their peers that they take to the heart.

Something I have noticed was when I was younger and I would talk to an older kid, I'd listen.

So does America. Peer pressure? It can work in both ways.

No lights, no cameras, no ESPN interviews. This is when the athletes that are true, pure and sincere are shown. This is where leaders are created. This is where those who stand out from the pack are celebrated for their accomplishments on and off the court or field.

I know that everyone has seen the NCAA commercials in

which the athletes become someone other than an athlete after graduation. Well, the number of athletes that graduate throughout universities across the country can prove this.

The overall Graduation Success Rate for colleges across the nation is 62 percent. Out of the student-athletes, the GSR is 76 percent, well above the national average.

Why is this? One reason could be that they are required to have weekly, sometimes twice weekly, meetings designated specifically for studying. Student athletes are required to maintain a grade point average of 2.0 or higher, which is something more than just "getting by."

Student athletes are doing so much more than just going to school, practicing and playing in the games. These are the students who volunteer their time as tutors. These are the students who volunteer their time to support their fellow student athletes. These are the students who make sure they give back as much to the university as they take from it.

As far as the Kids Night Out event that is happening this weekend, SIUE senior wrestler Dan Midgett puts it best, "That's not something kids get to do any day of the week so it's great to give them that chance."

It's the times like these, in which ordinary students - ordinary young adults - become extraordinary by putting that little bit of extra effort into it. These are your friends, your roommates, your classmates and most of all your peers.

Kids Night Out is just one of the many opportunities in which students reach out to the community. It's times like these in which, again, the students become the teachers.

Tony Patrico can be reached at apatrico@alestlelive.com or 650-3524.

Playing the game on a whole new level



Photo Courtesy of Chicago Fire

SIUE alum and current Chicago Fire midfielder Mike Banner moves the ball upfield during a game this past Major League Soccer season. Banner was drafted by the Fire last year, becoming one of the many previous Cougar soccer players to reach the professional level.

by Zach Groves
Alestle Reporter

Mike Banner is living a dream that may be rivaled by aspiring soccer legends worldwide.

The former SIUE soccer standout gets his cleats dirty for a living with Major League Soccer's Chicago Fire, works with players who have World Cup and Olympic experience and if all goes well, he could soon go toe-to-toe with the likes of David Beckham on a seasonal basis.

Banner saw limited action this season, mainly due to a hamstring injury, with three games and one shot recorded, when the Fire fell to the New England Revolution in the Eastern Conference Championship in early November. However, Banner said a typical day for him as a pro is anything but limited.

"I have breakfast at the stadium and watch TV, just relax and mentally prepare for practice," Banner said. "Life as a professional soccer player is splendid. I can't complain, really, because I'm doing something I love."

Chicago Assistant Coach Denis Hamlett said he first saw Banner when he played for Georgetown University's soccer team in 2002,

before he transferred to SIUE. The transfer, according to Hamlett, garnered Banner less attention until his senior season.

So far, as a developmental player, Hamlett said Banner has the tools, mainly as an attacker, to be a full-time professional.

"He's shown some promise this year," Hamlett said. "That's something that you'd like to see in a player that likes to go at people (one on one). (He's) a left-sided player ... crafty (and could) come in and help us not this year but down the road, years to come."

Banner finished his SIUE career with 18 goals on 92 shots and 15 assists from 2004-06. A first-team All-American in 2005, Banner helped lead the Cougars to the NCAA Division II tournament three straight years.

According to SIUE men's soccer Head Coach Ed Huneke, Banner was one of only two Division II soccer players to be drafted by MLS. Banner was the No. 34 overall pick.

"There's a vast majority of Division I programs that don't get selected," Huneke said. "We were really proud we were in the elite group."

BANNER/pg.12

It's time for the Cougars to hit the ice

Six freshmen and 11 sophomores make up the majority of the SIUE Varsity Club Hockey program

by **Jacob Boone**
Alestle Reporter

The SIUE Varsity Club Hockey Team is halfway through the season with a record of 8-6 and looking to continue its success throughout the rest of the season.

Head Coach Larry Thatcher said the team had three goals entering the season and still wants to achieve those goals.

"Our goals are to, first of all, win the MACHA (Mid American Collegiate Hockey Association) tournament and, second of all, go to regionals and, third, make it to nationals," Thatcher said.

The Varsity Cougars are young, with six freshmen and 11 sophomores on the roster, but Thatcher said the experience a young team gains by competing at the varsity level is "invaluable."

Thatcher said the team is trying to come together and they want to continue to get solid production out of all the players.

According to Thatcher, other teams seem to doubt the Cougars every year, and Thatcher said he

really is not sure why.

"We always seem to be there in the end," Thatcher said.

Thatcher said the team is focusing on not only league play, but also how it performs at the end of the season.

"How you play throughout the year is a testament to how your team is, but you still have to win at the end of the year," Thatcher said.

The Cougars will host the MACHA Tournament at the East Alton Ice Arena. Thatcher said that the Cougars not having to travel to compete in the tournament is helpful.

The Cougars host Northern Illinois University in a divisional match-up at 10:45 p.m. on Friday and 3 p.m. on Sunday at the East Alton Ice Arena.

"We look to take both of those games," Thatcher said.

Freshman Kendall Price and sophomore Daniel Guarino lead the Cougars with 10 goals each.

Meanwhile, the SIUE junior Varsity Club Hockey team is working to improve in the 2007-08 season.

Junior Varsity Head Coach Matt Kaiser said the JV team has always been kind of a second thought in the Silver Division, in which it competes.

"Our JV team has kind of struggled the last couple of years," Kaiser said.

But the team has seen improvement in the win column so far this season, already surpassing last season's total of three wins. The team is 5-7 this season.

"That's a big step for us," Kaiser said.

Kaiser said new additions to this season's team, freshmen Nick Wehrle and Nic Rolla have made a positive impact on the team.

"They've definitely been a huge addition to our team," Kaiser said.

Another reason for the team's improvement this season is because, according to Kaiser, the team is giving a better effort.

"I think we're working a lot harder," Kaiser said.


Jacob Boone can be reached at jboone@alestlelive.com or 650-3524.



Pete Ridens/Alestle

Current SIUE Junior Varsity Club Hockey Assistant Coach Jason Walker (above) is one of the graduated players who are now returning to the bench as a coach. Walker, along with Head Coach Matt Kaiser, and Assistant Coach Austin Jones, will use their previous ice experience to help mold future players.

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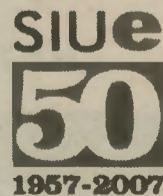
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BANNER from pg. 10

Banner is the most recent SIUE player in a long line of college stars who turned pro. The most notable players include former SIUE defender Steve Trittschuh, who played for MLS' Colorado Rapids and Tampa Bay Mutiny for six seasons and the U.S. National Team in the 1990 World Cup, according to soccerhall.org. Former star Addae Rique, who put up eye-popping numbers with 14 goals and 10 assists in just one season at SIUE, joined for the St. Louis Steamers of the Major Indoor Soccer League in 2004, according to the team's Web site, as did Cal Thomas.

Huneke would agree with Hamlett when he said Banner's two-way style of play will help him in the long run.

"He's on the left side of the field, so he has to be left-footed," Huneke said. "It's a position that means you have to defend as well as attack, and when you're attacking you've got to be able to win the one-on-one battles out wide."

"What Mike has at his arsenal ... I think that's what makes him a valuable asset," Huneke said.

The Fire played a tale of two seasons during the 2007 campaign. Chicago was off to a hot start in its first month with a 3-0-1 record and after two months with just one MLS win, the Fire fired then-Head Coach Dave Sarachan, according to the team's official Web site.

After an interim stint by Hamlett, the Fire brought Juan Carlos Osorio aboard to coach the team. Osorio led Chicago to an overall 10-10-10 record and the playoffs.

Banner said the seesaw season added to his already busy experience.

"I never thought I could learn so much in my first year, from the coaching change, to the business side of things," Banner said. "It's a very long season, and I'm looking forward to next season with a year under my belt."

"Obstacles are a part of life ... so the injuries I sustained this season were just another learning experience," Banner said.

Banner compared Osorio's coaching style to Huneke's in a sense that they both prefer aggressive mindsets with the ball.

"(Osorio) is also very, very passionate about soccer," Banner

said. "In addition, he has great relationships with his players. He demands a lot out (of) us."

In addition to his memorable year with Osorio, Banner also enjoyed some good times with his teammates, whether it be former Georgetown teammate Jeff Curtin or recently-retired captain Chris Armas.

"The locker room is always entertaining," Banner said. "Jokes and pranks (are) being played. I enjoy the locker room talks."

Banner said the player he learns most from is forward Cuauhtemoc Blanco, who came over to the Fire this season and helped spark the playoff run with four goals and seven assists.

"Playing with Blanco in practice is pretty exciting," Banner said. "He has played in World Cups. He is very experienced. I've already learned a lot from him (and) look forward to learning more."

Fun aside, Banner said he understands MLS is a business and with the Fire, "winning is the only thing that matters."

With the late-season surge behind them, Hamlett said Banner is expected to come in next season, compete for a spot on the 18-man roster and help the Fire reach the playoffs once again.

"In our eyes, we feel he's made progress," Hamlett said. "We're excited to see him when he starts next preseason."

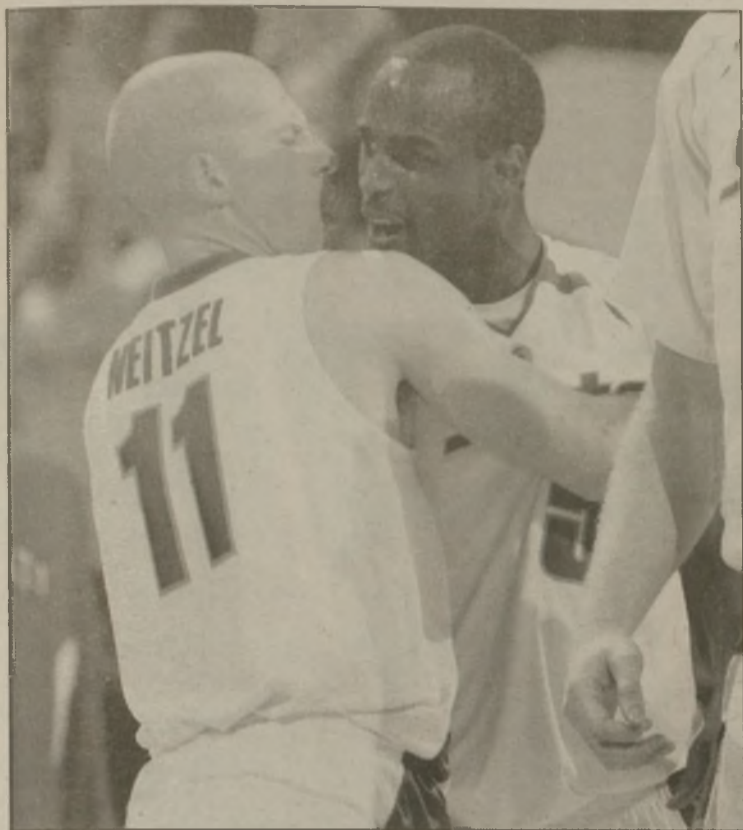
Huneke, who recently finished his last season as SIUE's head coach, said he hopes he has given Banner what he needs to do well in the MLS.

"You'd like to think that you created the environment to help his development that put him at this point," Huneke said. "I think that we have a good program for improving players and fortunately from my experience I have good, credible relationships with professional coaches."

"They trust me and that's kind of nice to know," Huneke said.

Zach Groves can be reached at
zgroves@alestlelive.com or 650-3524.





Julian H. Gonzalez/Detroit Free Press/MCT
Michigan State Drew Neitzel, left, has a big hug for Travis Walton after NC State calls a timeout in the second half on Wednesday, November 28, at the Breslin Center in East Lansing, Mich.

No. 9 Michigan shoots down Bradley University

by Shannon Shelton
Detroit Free Press (MCT)

PEORIA, Ill. — Michigan State expected nothing less than a tough game Tuesday night at Carver Arena.

And they got it.

In front of 11,597 fans, the largest crowd in Bradley history, the ninth-ranked Spartans came back from a nine-point deficit with clutch three-pointers from Drew Neitzel and Kalin Lucas to win, 66-61.

Bradley might be a mid-major program from the Missouri Valley Conference, but most people know teams from "The Valley" are competitive. Bradley made the final 16 in the NCAA tournament in 2006.

"If anybody ever talks about mid-majors, I would be the first to raise my hand and say, 'No, this is major college (basketball) at its best,'" MSU coach Tom Izzo said about the experience. "This is as good an environment as we've played in. It was a huge win for us, and I mean that."

It was a historic night for Bradley, which distributed free T-shirts for a "white out" in the crowd. No other team ranked in the nation's top 10 had visited Bradley since 1977.

The atmosphere was tough for the Spartans (7-1), who fell behind by nine points twice, once in the first half and once with

13:55 left. The Braves (6-3) led, 51-47, with about five minutes left.

Neitzel, who was 3-for-15 in the first 35 minutes, drained a three-pointer. Drew Naymick dunked. Then Lucas hit a short jumper with three seconds left on the shot clock to give MSU a 54-51 advantage with 3:37 left.

Goran Suton and Raymar Morgan each picked up their fourth fouls with about eight minutes remaining, but Morgan made two late free throws to help MSU keep its lead in the final seconds. Morgan finished with a team-high 15 points and added seven rebounds, and Suton, who fouled out with 25.2 seconds left, had a game-high 11 rebounds.

"It was tough," Neitzel said. "I was a little hot early, hit a couple of shots real early in the game, but then they just weren't falling. Especially in the second half, I had some good looks, but they were in and out. You just have to keep shooting."

"We're trying to get back to our roots ... to win some games on the road and try to get a little more toughness," Izzo said. "I thought our rebounding tonight, especially on the offensive end, was the difference."

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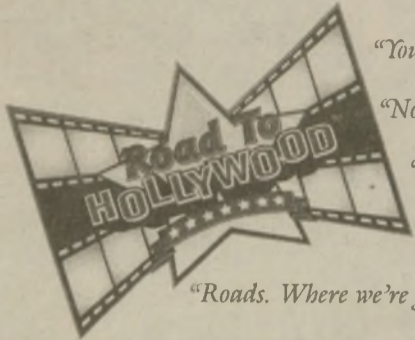
12
IS NOT THE NEW
21

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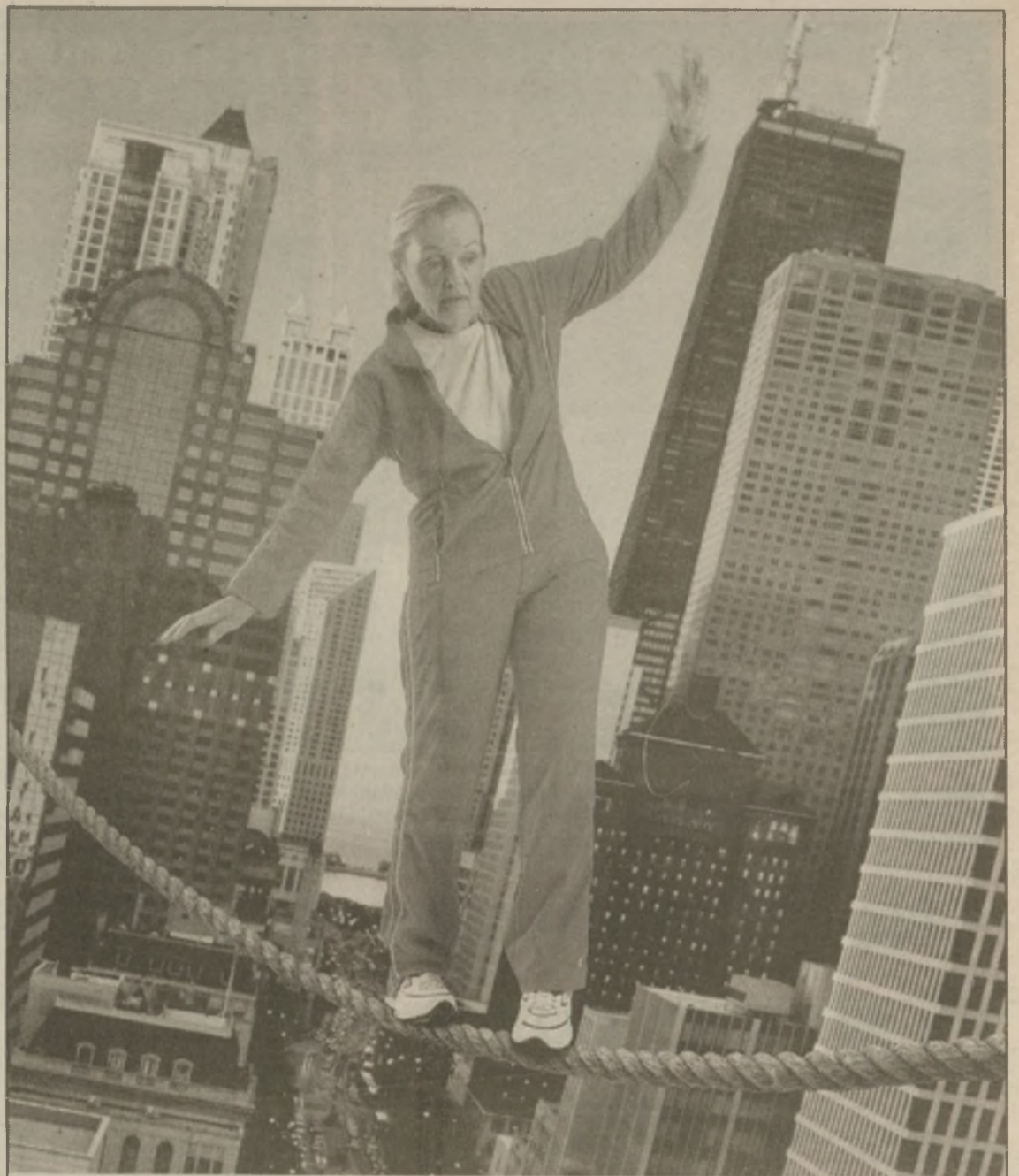
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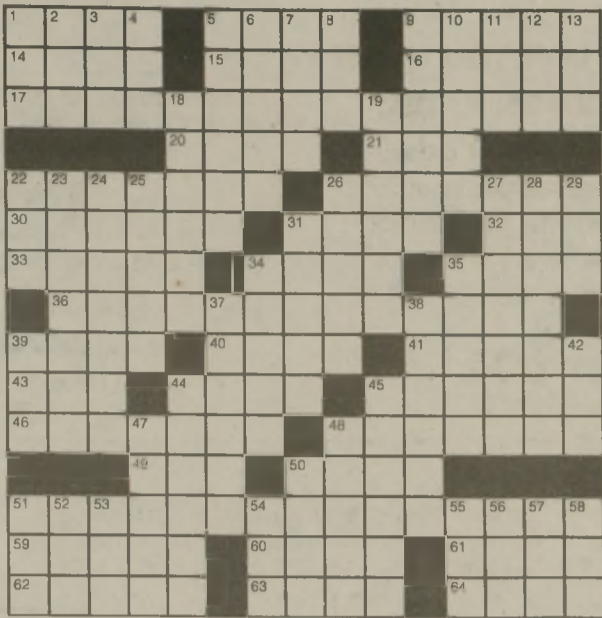


THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Laughingstock
- 5 English bloke
- 9 Select few
- 14 NASCAR word
- 15 Hole up
- 16 Fills completely
- 17 Encroaches upon
- 20 Gluttons
- 21 -de-dah
- 22 Loving squeeze
- 26 Gives the sack
- 30 Self-defense art
- 31 Small swallows
- 32 Actor Kilmer
- 33 Crumble away
- 34 Old Testament prophet
- 35 Lima location
- 36 Coerces
- 39 Japanese soup
- 40 Acts on a preference
- 41 Fine-feathered duck
- 43 Hydrogen's number
- 44 Creamy white cheese
- 45 Term of office
- 46 Musical note
- 48 Female greeter
- 49 Sympathetic attention
- 50 Tiniest bit
- 51 Gives a mild rebuke
- 59 Gas stove light
- 60 Styptic substance
- 61 Canyon sound
- 62 Irish poet of note
- 63 "Slippery" shade trees
- 64 Podiatrist's concern



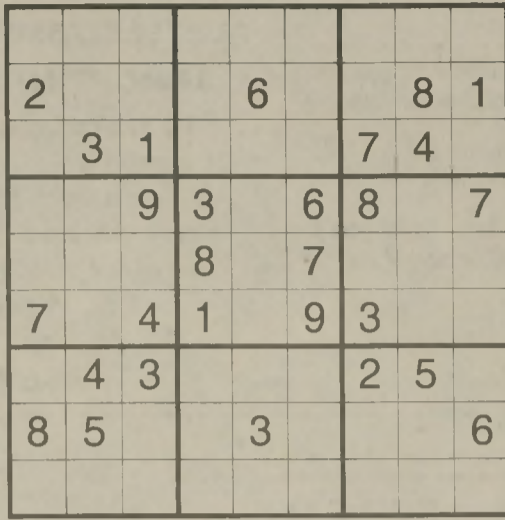
- 4 Go one better
- 5 Prime quality
- 6 Be contingent on
- 7 Brouhahas
- 8 John Hancock implement
- 9 Some test segments
- 10 Latticework strips
- 11 Figure skater Midori
- 12 Links starting place
- 13 Slalom trail
- 18 Upsurges
- 19 Slip away
- 22 Supplement, with out
- 23 Cocktail favorite
- 24 Window-shopped
- 25 Boom box
- 26 Pride members
- 27 Late
- 28 Grangers
- 29 Gripe
- 31 Struck powerfully
- 34 Meat stock jelly
- 35 Pinto horse
- 37 Bullfighter
- 38 Teeter-totter
- 39 Dad's love
- 42 Doc in training
- 44 Fantastic times
- 45 Clan emblems
- 47 Place to catch the bus
- 48 Boring
- 50 never get off the ground
- 51 See from afar
- 52 Remain unused
- 53 In the style of
- 54 Scotsman's denial
- 55 Arena off.
- 56 Bar rocks
- 57 Cow or hen
- 58 Little shaver

DOWN

- 1 Pump fuel
- 2 Not in the running
- 3 Swallowed

SUDOKU

By Michael Mepham



Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

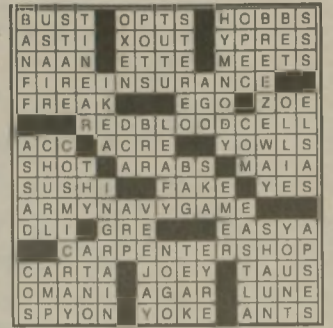
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Tuesday's Answers

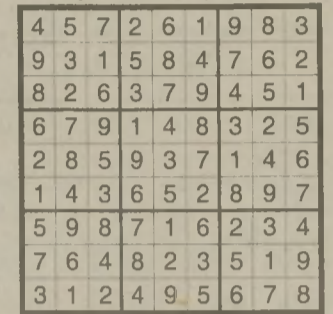
THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams



SUDOKU

By Michael Mepham



Girls & Sports

By Andrew Feinstein



Mystic Stars: weekly horoscope

By Lasha Seniuk

Week of Dec. 10 - Dec. 16, 2007

ARIES (March 21-April 20)

Early this week, a close friend or lover may reveal private ideas or hidden aspirations. Family planning, long-term home goals and emotional security are strong themes. Loved ones may ask for special consideration concerning delicate relationships or unusual announcements. Remain dedicated to group priorities and all will be well. Wednesday through Saturday accents unique romantic invitations and complex social proposals. Stay alert: powerful emotions are highlighted.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20)

Romantic timing and social privacy are vital to the success of new relationships. Some Taureans will this week be asked to improve their daily schedules or adopt special obligations. Lovers and long-term friends have your best interests in mind: remain attentive and expect personal information to be positively utilized. Later this week, a close relative or trusted friend may openly discuss private career regrets or workplace triangles. Stay balanced and encourage change.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Messages from old friends and/or yesterday's social expectations will demand a quick response this week. Someone close may now need to clarify their past words, ideals or intentions. Remain open. Although powerful emotions are involved, progress will be steady and reliable: expect positive results by early next week. Thursday through Saturday, many Geminis will experience a wave of newfound business confidence and social ambition. Don't hold back: it's time for change.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Property managers or bank officials will this week ask for detailed financial documents. If so, expect proof of legal commitments to also be required. Don't hesitate to discuss delicate issues with authority figures or managers: your interest and unique ideas will be appreciated. After Friday, dedicate extra time to family discussions. Loved ones

may now need approval for a recent series of controversial business plans. Offer encouragement: bold attitudes will be rewarded.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Over the next few days, co-workers may purposely reveal mistaken facts or private information about a colleague. Areas of concern are financial permissions, legal requirements or past job history. Emotional outbursts may be unavoidable. If so, verify all assumptions with written documents. Risk is unnecessary. Later this week, some Leos may be asked to mediate a complex family dispute. Opt for actions over words: loved ones will respond positively to bold decisions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Quotas, team accomplishment and successful contracts are now a top priority for authority figures. Before mid-week, key officials will attempt to sway the opinions of corporate leaders. Political influence and job performance are now strongly related: expect minor tensions, changes in leadership or unusual policy reversals over the next 18 days. Late Saturday, a previously silent friend may offer an unexpected romantic compliment. Remain diplomatic: passions may be high.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Family divisions or minor romantic disagreements are now unavoidable. After Tuesday, expect lovers and close relatives to postpone important social plans, offer strong opinions or cancel group events. Underlying issues involve changing family loyalties, small jealousies and private resentments. Remain patient. Clarity will soon return. Thursday through Saturday, physical energy and social interest may be low. Enjoy private events and pamper the body: all is well.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)

News from potential employers or business partners may this week arrive without warning. Rare financial opportunities will soon require careful discussion. Family diplomacy

and social timing are vital: ensure loved ones are completely informed before accepting controversial placements or new job assignments. After Friday, a friend or relative may require emotional support. Private celebrations, family gatherings and forgotten invitations may be a key concern: offer kind words.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)

Friends disagree concerning invitations, social activities or group priorities. Planned events may be quickly changed or rescheduled. Pay special attention to private romantic attractions or ongoing flirtations. Someone close may feel emotionally exposed. If so, unexpected reversals will prove draining: watch for minor social tensions. Later this week, a new colleague may introduce a controversial business solution. Listen carefully: creative improvements will be fast and positive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Unexpected debt or missed payments will this week require careful planning. Although resources may be low, expect reliable gains in the coming weeks. For many Capricorns, financial opportunities, secondary income sources and new assets may soon be an ongoing theme. Stay focused on daily responsibilities and ask for extra time. Your needs are valid. After Friday, a new friend may push for greater involvement in your personal or family life. Trust your first instincts.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21-Feb. 19)

Minor romantic or social comments may this week trigger unnecessary resentment. Choose words carefully and clearly explain all private intentions. At present, loved ones may feel misunderstood or isolated. Refuse, however, to be drawn into the past: repeated social problems will soon require new solutions. After Thursday, a revised daily schedule or series of family gatherings will help build confidence. Encourage long-term acceptance and group participation.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20)

Mistaken facts and cancelled invitations will this week be emotionally draining. After Monday, expect close friends and lovers to openly criticize group plans or predictable relationships. Over the next few days, loved ones may challenge the validity of trusted routines. Don't be unnerved. For many Pisceans, social agreements will soon be re-established. Later this week, a past financial error may create unusual workplace tensions. Go slow and wait for clear answers.

If your birthday is this week: The coming few months will usher in complex social and family changes. After mid-January, expect long-term friends and relatives to need extra approval for their home plans or proposals. Emotional reactions may be intense: watch for loved ones to be mildly possessive of your loyalty, time and attention. Almost 2 years of vague social or romantic commitments will fade between mid-January and late February. After Feb. 26, a powerful era of romantic fulfillment is due to arrive. Love relationships will change the nature of your daily commitments and family goals: stay focused and respond quickly to all serious decisions from loved ones and all will be well. Much of the next eight months will bring steady job improvements and new career ambitions. Financial security is now on the rise: remain open to all new proposals.

(For a private consultation, please visit www.mysticstars.net.)

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