

Index

News .....1-3  
Opinion .....4  
A&E .....5  
Sports .....6,7  
Classifieds .....8

# The Alestle

Alton - East St. Louis - Edwardsville

## 'The Lady Cries Murder'

See A&E



Wednesday, June 23, 2010

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# Weathering the storms on campus

by A.J. Sanson  
Alestle Reporter

There is a saying in the Midwest, if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes. However, when severe weather hits as it did last Tuesday, waiting five minutes is not advised. Knowing where the storm shelters are located on campus and the procedures for when severe weather strikes can be beneficial for every student and faculty member.

The e-Lert system, which notifies students of severe weather, is overseen by the Emergency Management and Safety Department and was first introduced in 2008. Students can sign up for the system under the campus safety tab in the current students section of the SIUE website. Thomas Brueggemann, assistant director of Emergency Management and Safety, praises the system.

"The system is excellent. We have one of the highest

sign up rates in the US and we've had great user feedback," Brueggemann said.

However, the Emergency Management and Safety Department isn't directly in charge of sending out the texts. That is the duty of the shift commander from the campus police department. Police Captain Tony Bennett said the e-Lert system is a team effort.

"When severe weather is in the area we have spotters on the lookout," Bennett said. "We also work with other law enforcement in the area to help notify the community."

However, pushing the send button on the initial notification text is the easy part.

"The all clear text is the most difficult part. We rely on the National Weather Service, we check online and our dispatch is linked to the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System out of Springfield," Bennett said. "We make the best judgment decision we can."

Bennett also noted that the one downside to e-Lert is

that not all students or faculty members are signed up for it. He urged those who are not signed up to be aware of the locations of warning sirens and the designated shelter areas in the buildings on campus.

Director of Facilities Management Bob Washburn said the recent stormy weather hasn't caused any major setbacks in the construction going on around campus.

"Anytime it rains, it hinders progress," Washburn said. "But everything is going very well. Dunham Hall had some water damage to the theater last week which we are still assessing, but it is still on time for completion, and the roof of Alumni Hall may possibly be done earlier than expected."

According to Director of Housing Mike Schultz, there are about 450 students living on campus this

SHELTERS/pg.2

## Blagojevich called 'detached' by former aide

by Bob Sexter and Jeff Coen  
Chicago Tribune

Rod Blagojevich may have been governor of Illinois, but often appeared to do everything but run the state, dwelling instead on his political fortunes and his family's finances, two former top aides to Blagojevich testified at his political corruption trial on Monday.

Bradley Tusk, once Illinois' deputy governor, said Blagojevich quickly grew detached after taking office in 2003. The governor was rarely in the office, hard to track down and even tried to shake down his political pal Rahm Emanuel, Tusk said.

Blagojevich was frequently unavailable when crucial decisions needed to be made on signing or vetoing bills, Tusk said. The responsibility for giving an up or down to legislation, Tusk said, often was ceded to him, even though he was all of 29 years old. "He wasn't always engaged in the process," Tusk said, adding that he once had to hunt down the governor at his tailor.

Meanwhile, John Harris, the chief of staff arrested with Blagojevich in 2008, said the governor in his last months as the state's chief executive was busy plotting his escape from elected office, weaving personal moneymaking schemes and ordering retribution be served on those who declined to help.

Harris, testifying under a plea deal with prosecutors, said Blagojevich spoke of packing the University of Illinois board of trustees so it would one day hire him as an adjunct professor. He also told Harris to explore paid state posts for Blagojevich's wife, Patti, as well as lean on financial firms that did business with the state to hire her, Harris said. When two of those firms balked, Harris said he was ordered by Blagojevich to turn off their spigot of state business.

The portrait of Blagojevich woven by Tusk and Harris was of someone who was cavalier about his responsibilities to voters and not shy about using his

BLAGOJEVICH/pg.3

## BP disaster affects local area



Sean Roberts/Alestle

An Illinois resident fills up her SUV at the Edwardsville BP station on Buchanan Street.

by Jason Frazier  
Alestle Reporter

Many people across the country have an opinion about the disaster in the Gulf Coast region due to the BP oil spill, including showing their displeasure with boycotts and protests aimed at BP service stations.

Boycotts and protests against BP service stations may have a more profound impact on the local families and owners. In a recent article on CNN.com, Jeff Lenard, a spokesman for the National Association of Convenience Stores, said these types of actions will hurt the local owners rather than the corporation as a whole.

"So, whether you are protesting by marching or by not buying gas, you are hurting the small business, but you are really not hurting BP," Lenard said.

Boycotters of BP will not only hurt owners but also employees. Cahokia BP employee Cecillia Harvey said they are sorry for what is going on in the Gulf Coast but boycotting will cause more of a negative effect locally than corporate.

"Why boycott BP? It's not the owner or employees of this gas station's fault," Harvey said. "We feel for the people suffering in Gulf Coast but if people are not coming or getting ran off by protestors that is taking away from our families and livelihood as well."

Senior Spanish and geography major Trevor Hart said he has never been a regular customer of BP, but the oil spill would not affect his decision to buy gas from a BP service station.

"Personally I never went to BP in the first place, but I would never go out of my way to avoid BP gas stations," Hart said. "I wouldn't boycott since they are locally owned; it's also important that the people working there keep their jobs."

Boycotting may seem like an unreasonable action to take. Senior biology major Adam Nowland said he is worried it could have a trickle down effect on the economy.

"Boycotting BP, if they are locally owned, will just further take the economy down further instead of proving

BP/pg.2

**BP** from pg.1

a point," Nowland said. "For a boycott like this to even be close to effective it has to be nationwide on a large scale since BP makes so much money."

Large-scale damage has already been done. Sophomore speech communication major Brett Hart said he hopes BP assumes the responsibility of making the situation better.

"Somehow I hope BP takes responsibility and reimburses all the families affected for all the trouble," Brett Hart said. "Overall the best solution is to get the oil spill cleaned up as soon as possible."

A press release on BP.com said BP has paid \$104 million to residents along the Gulf Coast for claims filed as a result of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. BP claims team member Daryll Willis said in the same press release BP has shifted its concentration to getting money to those in need along the Gulf Coast.

"Our focus has been on getting money into the hands of fishermen, shrimpers, condo owners and others who have not been able to earn income due to the spill," Willis said. "We have also been addressing the larger, more complex claims and have been successful in sending more checks to commercial entities."

Trevor Hart said he feels that BP has dropped the ball in many aspects of this situation.

"With all the animals dying, the negative impact it's having on the economy in that area and it's taking BP a long time to come up with a solution, I'm just pretty upset about the situation as a whole," Trevor Hart said.

Nowland said he likes the direction BP and President Obama are moving in.

"President Obama has started to speak out and get some things done about it. I like the \$20 billion they made BP set aside to aid the people affected," Nowland said. "I don't think it should be placed on [the] American public to do everything. BP should assume responsibility for their actions."

The BP mistake may have been costly, however senior mass communications major Whitney Hamilton said she does respect them for taking responsibility for their actions.

"It has been said that there are other parties that are responsible as well and are not admitting to the accusations. I think all that were [involved in] the cause of the spill should start with an apology and assist with the cleaning up however that may be," Hamilton said. "Though I'm disappointed about what happened with the oil spill, I appreciate BP finally admitting they were in the wrong and paying for the damages."

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**Out with the old**

Sean Roberts/Alestle

Old desks from the 500 side of Cougar Village sit on a sidewalk outside an apartment complex. The campus apartments will receive new desks for the upcoming fall semester.

**SHELTERS** from pg.1

summer, which is the time of the year severe weather is more likely.

"In the residence halls, students are told to go to the low-level inner hallways," Schultz said. "They can also seek shelter in a first floor bathroom and make sure to stay away from glass."

Schultz also noted it is helpful for students to take advantage of the alert system offered by the university.

"All students should be signed up for e-Lert," Schultz said. "There are tornado sirens on top of

Rendleman Hall and one in Cougar Village, but the official way for students to be notified of severe weather is the e-Lert system."

For a list of all the storm shelter locations in the buildings on campus, visit [http://www.siu.edu/FACILITIES/campmap/maps\\_Ed.htm](http://www.siu.edu/FACILITIES/campmap/maps_Ed.htm).

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**BLAGOJEVICH** from pg.1

powers -- legally or not -- for personal and political benefit.

The backdrop for much of Tusk's testimony was a charge by prosecutors that Blagojevich in 2006 tried to shake down Emanuel for fundraising help in exchange for the release of a \$2 million grant promised to an experimental Northwest Side school. Emanuel, now the chief of staff for President Barack Obama, at the time was a member of the U.S. House, and the school was in his district.

Blagojevich promised the grant, to build an athletic field, as a favor to Emanuel. The school, the Chicago Academy, began construction in the summer of 2006 expecting the state money to show up soon to pay contractors. When it did not arrive, contractors threatened to stop work, a school official testified Monday.

Tusk, now a New York political consultant, said he fielded complaints from a "very upset" Emanuel and took those concerns to Blagojevich. "He said before the grant could be released he wanted Congressman Emanuel's brother to hold a fundraiser," Tusk said, adding that Blagojevich appeared dead serious about holding the grant hostage.

Emanuel's brother, Ari, is a top Hollywood talent agent who is known for his prowess in raising political money from donors in show business.

Tusk said he then called lobbyist John Wyma, who was close to both Blagojevich and Emanuel, to make sure that Wyma did not pass along the governor's threat. Then, Tusk said, he contacted Blagojevich's general counsel Bill Quinlan to make sure he also reined in the governor. "You need to get your client under control," Tusk said he told Quinlan.

Tusk turned in his resignation the next month, though he remained a few more months until after Blagojevich's 2006 election. In an interview following his testimony, Tusk said he had

always intended to leave at the end of Blagojevich's first term but added that he was "disturbed by what I heard" from Blagojevich.

Harris' testimony in many ways echoed that of Tusk. Harris said he found Blagojevich intensely focused on family money issues and landing a well-paying job for his wife. One of Blagojevich's ideas was to appoint her to the state's Pollution Control Board, Harris said, mostly because the post paid more than \$100,000.

"I told him I didn't think it was a good idea," Harris said, adding that he informed Blagojevich that she lacked the legal qualifications for the post, which required technical expertise in pollution control.

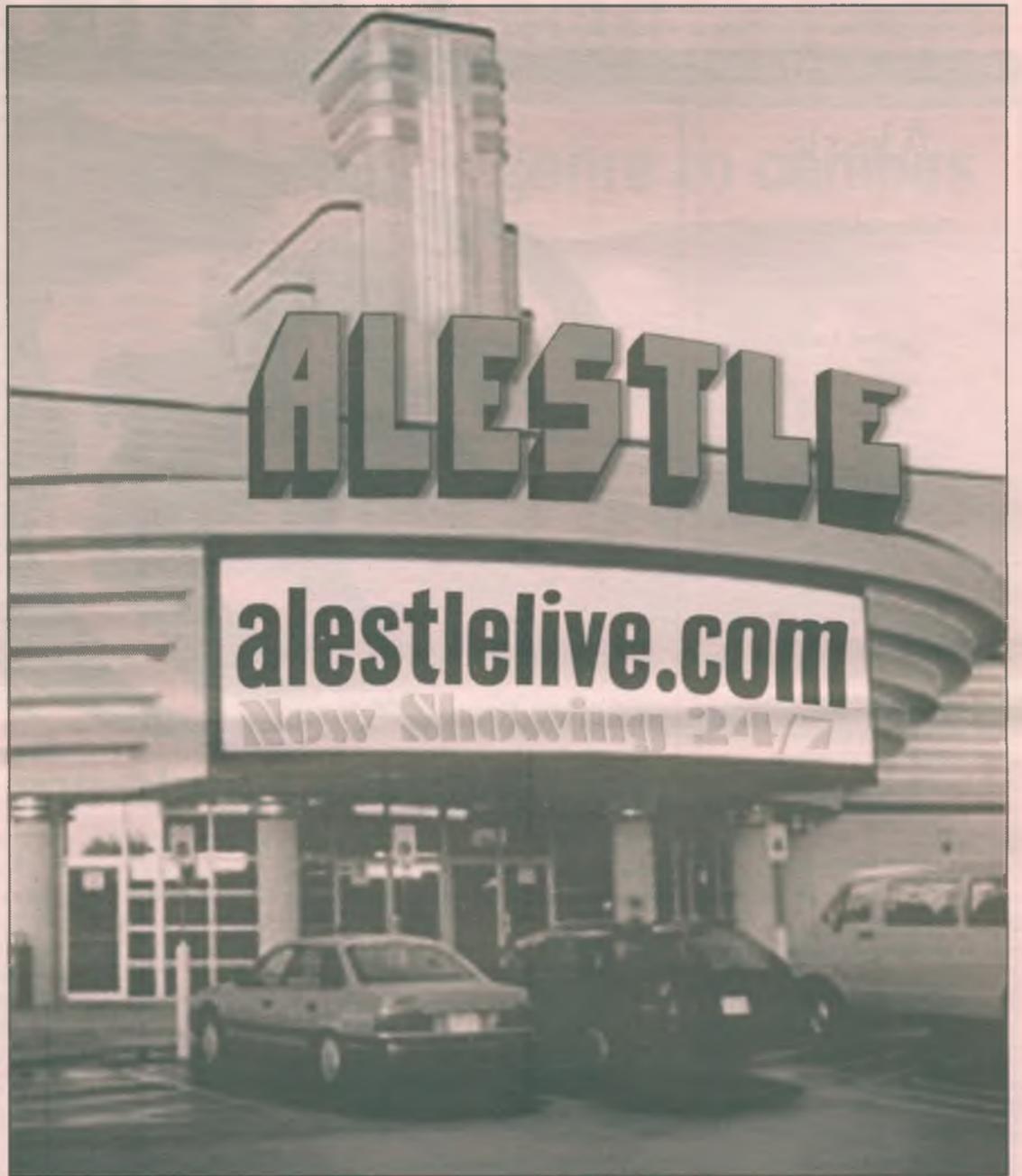
Harris said he also told the governor that the post required a lot of reading and research and attendance at weekly meetings. Harris said Blagojevich had left the impression he wanted something for his wife "that paid but didn't require a lot of work or a lot of time."

Harris said Blagojevich floated the notion of hiring his wife to work on his own staff as a senior policy adviser. He also pushed him to find financial firms doing state business who might be willing to take on Patti Blagojevich, who had received a license to be a financial adviser.

Harris said he contacted two firms -- Citibank and Ariel Capital -- though he made it clear to both he knew they couldn't hire her and didn't really wish them to try. They didn't, though both granted interviews to the governor's wife, Harris said.

Blagojevich grew angry when those jobs didn't pan out, ordering Harris to block state business for the two firms. "He didn't think they had done enough to help Patti," Harris said.

*News can be reached at news@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.*



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**SIUE POLICE BLOTTER**

**6-16-10**

Police responded to a burglar alarm at the Library Storage Facility at Supporting Services. The alarm was set off by a cleaning crew that failed to disarm it. A building engineer was dispatched to reset the alarm.

**6-18-10**

Police met with the resident assistant in Cougar Village 424 after a report of a suspicious odor of cannabis. Police met with a resident and determined there was no odor.

**6-20-10**

Police took a report of \$20 stolen from a female's room in Bluff Hall.

**6-21-10**

Police responded to an active fire alarm at the Early Childhood Center. The alarm was activated and reset multiple times during the night. The building engineer advised it was possibly due to the humidity and he would have an electrician inspect the alarm.

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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. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar and content. However, care will be taken to ensure that the letter's message is not lost or altered.

Letters to the editor will not be printed anonymously except under extreme circumstances.

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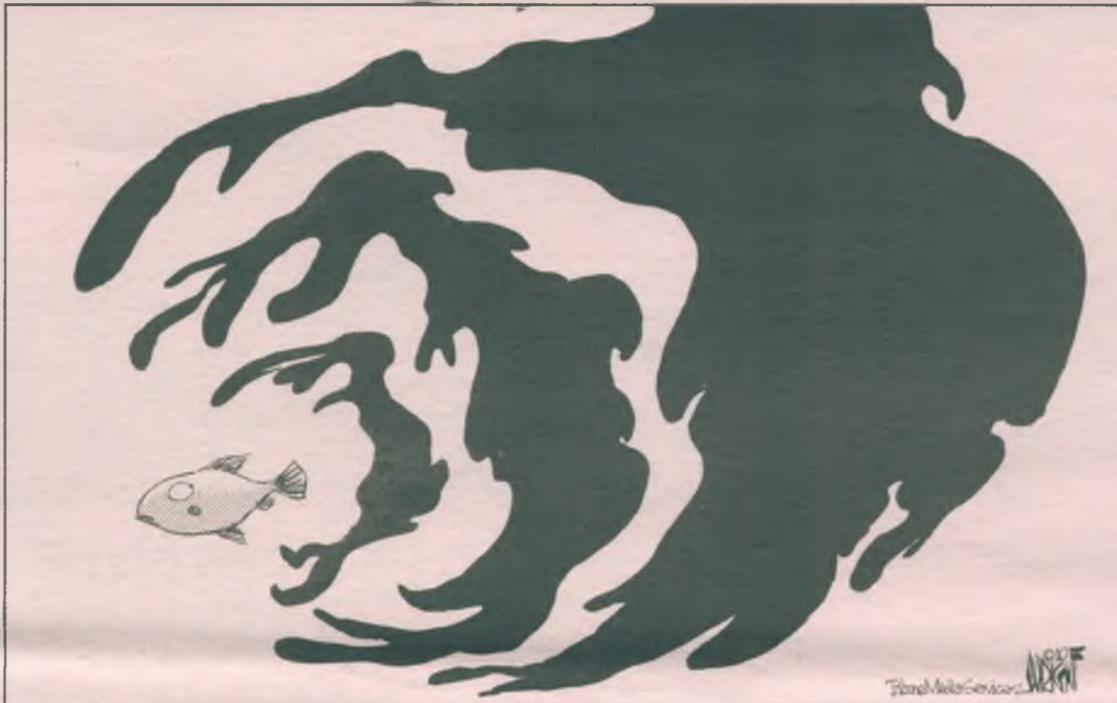
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## Washington's hands are not clean from BP spill

Last Thursday, a subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives opened what many hailed as "landmark" congressional testimony into the exact actions of BP



**Justin Wingerter**  
Alestle Reporter

involving the Gulf oil spill. Every major news organization was in attendance, each reporter ready to record the action. All the cameras were hoisted as the pompous flair of a House committee was set to unleash its collective anger – and the anger of the nation – on the BP brass.

Within 10 minutes the credibility of the subcommittee, its investigation and the federal government was as tainted as the water in the Gulf and southern Atlantic.

The Associated Press called it the apology heard 'round the world. Republicans went into damage control and Democrats went on the attack. Pundits hit the airwaves in an attempt to wax poetic on the meaning of it all. No slander was too verbose, no defense too unjustifiable.

"I am ashamed of what happened in the White House yesterday. I think it is a tragedy

of the first proportion that a private corporation can be subjected to what I would characterize as a shakedown, in this case a \$20 billion shakedown," Representative Joe Barton of Texas told BP CEO Tony Hayward.

He then apologized to the embattled executive for the federal government's criticism of BP and the creation of a \$20 billion fund for claims arising from the worst environmental disaster in the nation's history.

Barton has received over \$1.4 million from oil and gas companies in his congressional career according to OpenSecrets.com, which tracks such figures. He also worked as a consultant to Atlantic Richfield Oil and Gas Company prior to his time in Congress. While it should shock no one that a Texas congressman has taken money from the oil industry, Barton's position as a senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee raises the question of where his loyalty lies: with the people of his district or "Big Oil." His comments Thursday appear to answer that.

Of course, corruption does not reside in any one party or branch of government. As Democrats went on the offensive following Barton's comments, they conveniently failed to mention their own ties to oil interests. The single largest recipient of campaign donations from BP in 2008 was President Obama who raked in \$77,000 from the oil giant. And who

is the leading beneficiary of gas and oil company contributions this year? Democratic Senator Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas with \$286,000 in "donations."

The result is Congress attempting to be bipolar: to play the role of the hard-hitting critic that its constituents want in addition to the benevolent puppet the oil industry needs it to be. Consider Congressman Charlie Melancon and Senator Mary Landrieu, both Democrats from Louisiana. While both have rhetorically lambasted BP and called for restitution, they have simultaneously sought to rescind a moratorium placed on offshore drilling.

So what are we to make of Barton's unexpected apology to BP's executives? While politically destructive and incredibly moronic considering his well-known ties to the country's oil giants, his openness towards his true constituents – those that pay for him to remain in office – should be applauded. After all, according to his spokeswoman, Barton is a hardened critic of "Big Oil."

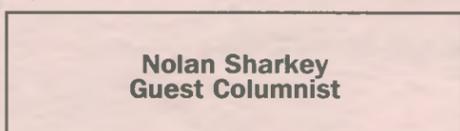
"How he feels about BP is not related obviously to his campaign contributions because he is extremely critical of BP," Barton's spokesperson said.

Yes, extremely critical, even apologetically so.

*Justin Wingerter is a junior mass communications major from Granite City. He can be reached at [jwingerter@alestlelive.com](mailto:jwingerter@alestlelive.com) or 650-3531.*

## University loan bill not as dangerous as some claim

When Gov. Pat Quinn signed Senate Bill 642 into law June 8, 2010, I was a little skeptical about the direct consequences that would result from this bill. Should a state allow its universities to open up a tab of IOUs when the state's financial well has long been dry? After this bill became law, I decided to



**Nolan Sharkey**  
Guest Columnist

spend some time becoming acquainted with this 85-page law.

The information found on pages 12-22 in regards to the new borrowing allowance at SIU has persuaded me to defend this new law. Like many students, I heard rumors that SIUE would not be able to open its doors for the fall semester if they did not receive some financial support owed to them by the state. This law will put those rumor and worries to rest.

Contrary to common belief, this law

forces the state to be more financially responsible. I originally saw this act as a way for universities to get in deep financial debt with financial institutions. However, legislators ensured that such an issue would be near impossible. On pages 19 and 20 of SB 642, the legislators ensured that any line of credit must be paid in full one year after the creation of the loan or within 10 days after the state reimburses that credit. Also, on page 18, the legislators ensured that any borrowed money must be used solely for expenses in fiscal year 2010.

This borrowing will optimize conditions for local businesses, while it also reinvests money into the local economies. Bonds and loans will be under the direct authority of the Bond Authorization Act, which will have the face value set at a 3.5 to 9 percent interest rate. Selling these bonds and accessing loans from financial institutions will allow for local economies to flourish.

The only possible downside to this new

law lies within page 20, where it reads, "Any borrowing... shall not constitute a debt, legal or morale, of the state and shall not be enforceable against the state." Universities will have the sole responsibility to repay these loans, but I do not see that becoming an issue. SIUE was ranked number one in the state last year for being the most efficient university with state allotted finances. Hopefully they continue this reputation working with SIU Carbondale as both campuses utilize the \$75 million they intend to borrow in the near future. As a student at SIUE, I would personally like to thank legislators Senator William Haine and Representative John Bradley, who sponsored and worked hard to pass this law, which will directly support our university.

*Nolan Sharkey is a junior business major from Fairview Heights. He can be reached at [nsharke@siue.edu](mailto:nsharke@siue.edu).*

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## 'The Lady Cries Murder' brings film noir genre to campus

by Jason Frazier  
Alestle Reporter

An unsolved mystery will be tackled this week in "The Lady Cries Murder," featured in Dunham Hall.

"The Lady Cries Murder" will have a vintage feel to it. Director Mark Bacus, assistant to the provost for Human Resources, said the play reminiscent of older crime dramas.

"It's a 'send-up' of the old film noir crime dramas of the late '30s and '40s," Bacus said. "The great twist is that our play is a story within a story, at the very least."

Bacus said the story centers around a detective story becoming reality instead of fantasy.

"A rich radio play producer has purchased a detective story from a young Raymond Chandler, who popularized the crime noir genre with his private detective Phillip Marlowe series," Bacus said. "The producer proceeds to rewrite the story for his weekly radio show. As he explores alternative story twists, the characters from Chandler's story spring to life and their intriguing story unfold."

The characters in "The Lady Cries Murder" may remind audiences of Hollywood stars from the past, and Bacus said some of the characters are ones you would expect to see in this type of play.

"The play pays homage to characters like Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Peter Lorre, Sydney Greenstreet and Edward G. Robinson," Bacus said. "It is rounded out by many of the characters one would expect to bump into in such a detective story such as hard boiled cops, dim-witted tough guys

and a femme fatale who changes identity as often as she changes dresses."

This play called for double casting. Cast member and SIUE Public Affairs Director Greg Conroy said the audience shouldn't be worried about this because the characters have contrasting characteristics.

"I play two parts in the play, a tough private investigator Miles Swordfish and an intelligent attorney William Kreskin. A majority of the cast has the responsibility of playing two distinctive parts," Conroy said. "The playwright made the parts so distinctive the audience will not be confused."

The twists and surprises make it essential to pay attention. Bacus said he is still left scratching his head because of them.

"It's a play that requires a lot of focus. It's challenging in that regard. I have to imagine it'll be one of those plays you'll talk about for some time after you've left the theater," Bacus said. "Heck, I've been watching the story unfold night after night for four weeks now and I'm still trying to figure out all the twists and surprises."

There is something for everyone to enjoy watching this production. Bacus said one way or another the audience will laugh.

"I think it's entertaining on many levels. Fans of the film noir genre will get a kick out of the parody element. They'll recognize famous, iconic lines from the old movies that have been turned upside down and inside out," Bacus said. "Others will love the physical, near slap-stick quality of it. Bottom line: it's a funny play."

SIUE education librarian Matt Paris will also take on the task of playing two



Sean Roberts/Alestle

**Philip Dlamind, played by Todd Moore, is in the midst of a breakdown, points and yells at castmate Emily Reutebuch, who plays both Miriam and Angel in the play.**

roles during the play. Paris said there are many reasons for people to attend a showing of "The Lady Cries Murder."

"It's a really fun, fast paced show with a lot of elements such as music and comedy. It spoofs the detective genre which many people know about," Paris said.

Bacus said the twists in the play are an exciting element most should enjoy.

"You got to love a play where everybody ends up pointing a gun at somebody else," Bacus said.

The lighting in this play enhances the atmosphere, according to Bacus.

"The members of the production team have brought together a triumphant

combination of set, light, and sound design that has now been implemented to reveal a very convincing film noir atmosphere of shadows, pools of cool light, and long, low shafts of warm, late afternoon light," Bacus said. "This thing drips mood."

The play will be showing June 23-26 at 7:30 p.m. and June 26 and 27 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for the general public, \$12 for senior citizens, non-SIUE students, and SIUE faculty and staff. SIUE students with valid Cougar Cards can get one free ticket. Call the Fine Arts Box Office at 650-2774 for more information.

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## Edwardsville church hosts Musique de Chambre

by Justin Wingerter  
Alestle Reporter

It's the lighting one first notices. The fluorescent glow from the high ceiling intermingles oddly with the natural light as it enters through the stained glass depictions of biblical imagery. The religious relics rest in the center, shining as if to showcase the church's piousness.

The night's concert venue, the First Presbyterian Church in Edwardsville, becomes alive in its contrasts. The bibles and psalm books take a place behind the programs in the seats. The American flag becomes the backdrop as the Christian flag lies unseen in a distant corner. Secular music takes hold in the sanctuary; piety gives way to production.

The crowd, perhaps 50 in number and much older in age, shuffles into the dim room and among the pews, split in the middle. Formality of dress is the norm; the photographer appears out of place in denim. Regardless, he begins his work, breaking the silence of the incommunicative crowd with the camera's clicks. He draws the collective and weary eye of the crowd but little else.

A bespectacled man, Robert Raymond, acts as the master of ceremonies. His black slacks and white shirt seem fitting for the setting even as his resplendently red tie contrasts with his delicate demeanor.

Two of the three performers take

their place. They're on the floor of the church, even with the pews, never approaching the symbolic heights of the preacher's stage or the cross, symbolic of man's supposed place below the gods and those that would invoke their name. The black piano plays in the shadowy light from the nearby stained glass window. The glass depicts a dark scene covered in hellish fire. The sonata begins.

The music is slow and somber from the start, rarely peaking into fanciful climaxes. It is "Sonata in A Minor"—nearly two centuries old — by the Austrian great Franz Schubert. Performers and audience members alike show little emotion, performers under full concentration and the audience much the same.

The masterful string work by violoncellist Marta Simidchieva allows for the shaking effect of the sonata, much to the pleasure of the quaint audience. Her fingers creep along the unique instrument's neck, quivering at every stop before continuing almost independent of her mind which races to register each note. Pianist Linda Perry meanwhile remains locked in utmost concentration, her fingers dancing across the keys in effortless movements followed by definitive strokes. The piano she now controls appears large and dominant, its blackness in stark contrast to the pale walls and painted glass windows.

The clarinet of Mac Hinson breaks the silence that precedes the second

piece. Its characteristically smooth sound becomes ever sweeter to the audience as their hearing adjusts to the wind instrument. Perry's piano begins but remains in the wake of the clarinet and in its background. The audience remains unmoving apart from peering in annoyance at the photographer and his incessant clicking.

The students in the crowd stand out like proverbial black sheep. Their mandatory attendance is understood by the performers. Their disinterest in the performance is understood by all. They look about in search of understanding or an antidote to their apathy.

Hinson and Perry wax poetic in "Clarinet on the Town" as the clarinetist rises to perform without the aid of sheet music. The jumpy, piercing notes occasionally fade off into rhythmic series, only to return to the jovial.

The final piece is the Brahms classic "Trio in A Minor." The performers take the floor as dusk breaks across the city, plunging it into darkness. The unnatural fluorescents become the room's only light as the three professors play through Brahms' four movements, ending definitively and much as the evening's music began: slow and somber. After a series of bows, handshakes, and goodbyes, the night has reached its end.

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Sean Roberts/Alestle

**SIUE faculty Marta Simidchieva (top) and Mac Hinson (bottom) were part of a faculty performance at the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Edwardsville.**



Sean Roberts/Alestle

The Red Storm is gearing up for a new season and pitching its organization to incoming freshmen during Springboard to Success.

## Springboard to a storm

### Student section wants to grow with SIUE

by Allan Lewis  
Alestle Sports Editor

Like Head Coach Lennox Forrester and the rest of SIUE's men's basketball coaching staff, Assistant Athletic Director for marketing Jason Coomer and Red Storm President Felix Burkart have been doing some recruiting of their own during the offseason at Springboard to Success.

Forrester's task, trying to find hidden talent across the country to position SIUE for success on the court may be more of a challenge than what the Red Storm is facing. Its task however is not being taken lightly in year three of SIUE's transition to NCAA Division I.

As many coaches have referred to the state of SIUE athletics as being on the "ground level", Coomer and Burkart seek to build a stronger foundation in the stands - bringing together school spirit, a true university experience and new traditions. These aspects are just as vital to the Red Storm as they are to other student sections across America.

Because of this, Coomer said timing could not be better for students to start out their time at SIUE.

"We are helping freshmen realize they are here at a great time," Coomer said. "This is the largest class in the history of SIUE and they are at the ground floor of this transition. They will be the first class to see firsthand the opportunity for postseason play and the excitement that brings."

Burkart said the Springboard presentation, which includes a guest appearance by the giant sphere used for the "human hamster jam" at halftime has spurred some interest in the organization which became

officially recognized by SIUE Student Government in February.

"We are trying to get people excited about it," Burkart said.

Burkart took over the Red Storm last year, and felt obligated to step up and save a student section without a leader.

"Brock Elmore graduated and I assumed there was no one else to take over it," Burkart said. "I talked

the Blue Crew at DePaul and a graduate assistant in event management and ticketing at Ohio State. Under his direction, SIUE has seen its attendance numbers rise steadily. In its last season as a Division II program, SIUE averaged 980 fans. In 2008-2009, it rose to 1,052. Last season, SIUE drew 1,593 fans per contest. Five of last year's home games, including one against Ohio Valley Conference champion Murray State, were played during holiday breaks without students on campus.

While these factors point to a steady increase in fan support, Coomer said the job isn't quite finished.

"There is always room for growth and we don't rest just because our numbers are up," Coomer said. "We want to be the leader in the OVC and keep moving forward. We stress at springboard that we want great student fans. When you turn on ESPN and see great student fans, we want to be those fans."

The current leader in the OVC is Murray State, averaging 4,020 fans per game, roughly the capacity of the Vadalabene Center.

At the first nine Springboard sessions of the summer, Coomer said incoming students have had numerous questions about the OVC, the NCAA's transition process and tickets - which many did not realize are a free perk issued for paying the mandatory Athletic fee along with tuition.

"When I walk out I want to get across a solid understanding that tickets are free to students," Coomer said. "We get a lot of questions about opponents and one thing we find is they are asking

**'We want to be the leader in the OVC and keep moving forward. When you turn on ESPN and see great student fans we want to be those fans'**

**-Jason Coomer,  
Assistant Athletic Director**

to [Coomer] and said I was really interested and thought it was a perfect opportunity."

Coomer saw Springboard as a platform to generate interest in SIUE athletics, particularly men's basketball, because the orientation program is something every new student has to go through.

"It was not only an opportunity, but something we needed to do for the student body," Coomer said. "We try and make them aware of what SIUE is all about, where we are going, how we are going to get there."

Before coming to SIUE in 2008, Coomer was the adviser for



Sean Roberts/Alestle

Top: athletes in grades eight through 12 work on their setting skills during SIUE's Elite Setters Academy camp in the Vadalabene Center Monday. Bottom: Volleyball head coach Todd Gober demonstrates setting techniques to campers.

## Compete with the elite

by Justin Wingerter  
Alestle Reporter

Volleyball head coach Todd Gober and his team is hard at work this week hosting the Elite Setters Academy camp in the Vadalabene Center. The camp is for students in grades eight through 12 and runs through Thursday evening.

The opening night workout emphasized several different techniques ranging from footwork to hand placement. Gober made it clear from the start what was going to be expected of the 36 girls in attendance.

"I'm going to challenge you guys this week," Gober said. "You'll go home and know when you did it right and when you didn't."

Senior Sydney Winslow was one of five current and former Cougars serving as counselors for the week's camp.

"I take part [in the camp] to spread volleyball around the area and help girls reach their potential," Winslow said. "It's good to see them grow."

Carly Thebeau, a freshman at Edwardsville High School, said she hopes to play at the collegiate level one day and was one of the three-dozen girls taking part in the camp.

"It's really fun. It's teaching me a lot of new stuff," Thebeau said. "I just hope I can improve a lot while I'm here."

Gober stressed the importance of the mechanics, or the "little

things" as he put it, in the camp's first night. He did this through instruction followed by repetitions of the sport's technical aspects.

"We focus mostly on technique and making sure the kids leave feeling it was a tough camp; it was challenging," Gober said. "We don't just try to make it fun, although that's part of the focus to make it an enjoyable camp experience."

The Athletic Department's summer camps and clinics bring hundreds of high school athletes to the campus each summer. Although "a very small percentage" of those at Monday night's camp will go on to play at the collegiate level according to Gober, the coach feels that the camps are an effective recruiting tool.

"It helps recruiting not only from the athletics perspective but also for the university. It's just great exposure for [SIUE]. We try to improve our attendance constantly," said Gober.

Gober says that although some girls come from as far as Chicago and Kansas City to take part, most of the campers are within a commutable distance. For students like Thebeau, the camp means an opportunity to learn what it takes to be a college athlete in hopes of securing their future dreams.

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**STORM**  
from pg. 6

about which institutions are a part of the OVC and about 70 percent of those students know people at these other schools and so there is a natural rivalry with our fanbase.”

Traveling to some of those other schools for games is also a new possibility for the Red Storm next basketball season, with a schedule filled with regional and OVC opponents, and the newfound possibility of funded trips through Student Government.

“Since we are officially a club SG can get us money to travel more through the Red Storm,” Burkart said.

Other new plans Burkart has for next season include “theme games,” but don’t expect World Cup style Vuvuzela horns because the NCAA has a ban on artificial noisemakers.

“There are going to be things like afro night,” Burkart said. “We are going to try and bring a party to the game.”

Athletics are a big part of what Coomer and Burkart had to say to SIUE’s incoming class, but there is more to it.

“Whether it is going to an event, joining a club team or whatever at least do something,” Coomer said. “There is a strong correlation between students active on campus and the level of satisfaction with collegiate experience and retention.”

Coomer said the worst

mistake a freshman can make is to skip a game they would like to attend because a friend would not.

“There is going to be a time when you want to do something and a roommate says they are not interested,” Coomer said. “You do not let your friends determine what your collegiate experience is going to be like. You are going to meet more people.”

Mens basketball is not the only sport the Red Storm supports. Last season, the organization was active at womens basketball, softball, baseball and men’s and women’s soccer contests, something the Red Storm will continue to do this year and in the future.

“In the past the focus has been mainly on basketball, but we support every other sport possible,” Burkart said.

Winning is something Coomer said is on the minds of most incoming students when considering whether or not to support SIUE athletics. Coomer said to consider something different.

“Everybody wants to win and I understand that way of thinking,” Coomer said. “Nobody wants it more than our coaches and athletes and its hard sometimes to step back and realize it takes time to build a program. We are moving in that direction.”

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