Senate Committee Proposes Budget Amendments

The Aquinas Community Senate is currently debating some major budget revisions which will affect how money is given out and to whom it is given. Currently, the Senate budget is operated in a single semester allocation policy. This is due to the Senate receiving the money from the college on a per semester basis.

The Budget Committee gives out money to the different clubs and organizations on a single semester budget. However, some clubs are currently giving their entire yearly budgets at the beginning of the year. Because of the discrimination between clubs, the Budget Committee has proposed the following amendments to the Senate bylaws:

1. All Senate funded clubs and organizations will have a two-semester allocation system.
2. The Aquinas Times, the Thomist (yearbook) and WAQU will no longer have their budgets raised automatically the same percentage as tuition goes up.
3. The Budget Director has the right to create an "operating cushion" by setting money aside before allocation of budgets. The reasoning behind the first proposal is that, as stated before, the four largest expenditures of the Senate budget, the Programming Board, WAQU, the Thomist, and the Aquinas Times, are given their entire yearly allocations at the beginning of the year. This puts the Senate Budget in a crunch, says Budget Director John Langan, because they do not have sufficient funds to provide for all of the largest budgets at one time. This is because the Senate receives its allocation from the school at the beginning of each semester. If these four clubs are given their entire yearly allocations at the beginning of the year, this automatically creates an operating deficit. The second proposal eliminates the current equation used that increases these three clubs' budgets by the same percentage as tuition is raised. Just because tuition is raised by 4 percent does not mean that Senate's allocation from the school is raised by 4 percent, says Langan. Other factors are involved, mainly student enrollment. Included in this proposal is the stipulation that the Times, Thomist and WAQU would also have to go through a budget review and submit a budget proposal, which they currently do not have to do. "This makes these clubs more accountable," said Langan, and creates more equity between these clubs and the smaller clubs of Senate which already have to submit a budget proposal.

The reason behind the "operation cushion" proposal, says Langan, is that currently we "budget all of the money that we project we will have each semester. Then when other funds are requested, we routinely give it out and this contributes to the deficit problem." By creating a cushion, less money will actually be budgeted, but the same amount of money would still be available. The reasoning behind all of these proposals is to make the budget system more responsible. "The deficit is probably caused by many little things," said Langan. "And we are just trying to prevent as many of those as possible."

Langan would also stress that the purpose of the Budget Committee is to have the budget break even. "It is not to give clubs a hard time or make it financially difficult for anyone," Langan said. He added that Senate only has so much money to spend and it is up to the Senate to spend it wisely.

While Senate does not currently have any major problems, some could manifest very soon if something is not done. Senate Chair John Niedzielski said, "I think that everyone failed to see that we have loopholes in the budget process which could lead to problems in the future." He added, "The shock of the proposals seems to have overshadowed the minor problems the proposals are trying to fix."

"I don’t want to say that we have major problems, because we are quite financially stable, but there are still improvements to be made," added Niedzielski. He said that the Senate budget is running quite smoothly, but that the first semester deficit makes bookkeeping a nightmare. "Our goal is to break even. These proposals are hopefully going to allow us to do that."

The purpose of the Budget Committee is to have the budget break even.
Ice Storm Hits Grand Rapids
by Andy Pieper
Times News Editor

On Monday, November 27, all evening classes were cancelled because of a snow and ice storm that ravaged the Grand Rapids area. The weather began to take a turn for the worse at around 4:00 p.m. as freezing rain began to fall. Within 45 minutes, the roads were completely covered with a layer of ice and snow had begun to fall. This made the roadways especially tricky because the salt could not be dropped directly onto the ice.

When Aquinas awoke from its slumber Tuesday morning, four inches of snow had fallen. Aquinas barely missed heavier portions of the storm as 6-8 inches of the devilish white fluff had fallen only 15 miles north in Cedar Springs. Don’t fret, however, it is Michigan and temperatures will probably hit the high 80’s next week...

Get the snowbrushes and ice scrapers out...

Annual Euchre Tournament Held

by Melissa Wysocki
Times Contributing Writer

Cries of anguish, the slapping of hands, whoops of pride...all of these sounds and other vocals echoed through St. Joseph Hall as it hosted the hall’s second annual Euchre Tournament on Sunday, November 19. Sponsored by St. Joe’s Residence Hall Council, the event was open to all residents. Signing up with a partner and inventing a team name was all that was required to participate. “Euchre is one thing most residents in the hall share,” commented Krista Barringer, a resident of St. Joe’s and member of the team “Dos Chicas.” “It’s something different. It breaks the mundane cycle of everyday life,” added Barringer.

Begun last year by Rico Cammon and Mark Lyon, the tournament is an event which Cammon hopes will continue on as a tradition even after he has left St. Joe’s. “The tournament is a source of entertainment for the residents,” remarked Cammon, “and was a program requested by residents again this year.”

Twelve teams participated in this double elimination tournament, competing for the chance to have their name engraved on a plaque, and prizes such as $10 phone vouchers and free coupons for AQ Specials from Domino’s. The winners also received bragging rights over other residents in the hall. Being the best, when it comes to Euchre, can be a coveted title. Needless to say, the defending team consisting of Lyon and Cammon lost this year. “It just wasn’t meant to be,” lamented Cammon, “we fought hard, but...”

With the defending champions defeated early, the door was left open for other residents in the hall. Being the best, when it comes to Euchre, can be a coveted title. Needless to say, the defending team consisting of Lyon and Cammon lost this year. “It just wasn’t meant to be,” lamented Cammon, “we fought hard, but...”

Coming in behind Dodde and Colby were the “69 Girls” Erika Meyer and Sarah Fieldkamp, who attributed their winning to strategy and luck. “Lots of luck,” recalls Fieldkamp. “I wasn’t even signed up for the tournament. At the last minute I was asked and agreed ‘cause I like to play Euchre.”

A fondness for Euchre and a simple mastery of the game is all it takes to make a winner.

Road Runners” Recruit Prospective Students

by Erin Flynn
Times Contributing Writer

“Aquinas’ 1995 admissions interns are taking the office by storm,” claims Nancy Weaver of the Admissions Office. Admissions interns have the best of both worlds. They get a semester and a half of hands on recruiting experience that could lead to a career, plus they get the opportunity to travel Michigan (for free!) in a Dodge Neon. That kind of work beats term papers and finals any day.

The Admissions internship program has been helping students for several years now and currently enrolled Aquinas students are invited to apply for a semester internship position. This year’s program will run from August through December. The job description includes: flexible working hours, possibly more than 40 hours a week, a two week training period to learn about AQ programs, ten weeks of travel in the Great Lakes region (scheduling appointments to visit High School counselors and following up on prospective student contacts), representation of Aquinas at college fairs, weekly reports of all recruiting activities and expenses incurred, attendance at campus programs and staff meetings, assisting counselors with various projects, and giving tours.

The purpose of this program is to perform a vital function in the recruitment of prospective high school students. “Aquinas is the only college that has interns out in the field recruiting with this much responsibility,” said Weaver. She added, “Most colleges don’t allow their students (interns) to travel alone.”

Interns are often called “Road Runners,” because they travel great distances alone. Current interns Angie Schlosser and Scott David know the feeling well. David’s first week took him on an adventure 300 miles into the U.P. Along with the travel, these interns gain great benefits from their work. They improve their public speaking, organizational, and time management skills. Interns also learn professionalism and independence.

These positions are open to two students each year. If this sounds like the internship for you, contact the admissions office for information.

Lit Club Holds Induction Ceremony

by Sarah Mieras
Times Contributing Writer

On November 15, 1995 the Aquinas chapter of LAMBDA IOTA Tau held their annual induction ceremony. The Aquinas chapter of this national literature order has been established since the early 1950’s. In the 1990’s these inductions held such a prestigious honor they were announced in the Grand Rapids Press. Although this fame is no longer a benefit members still enjoy being a part of a national organization of literature lovers.

All of the new inductees had the choice of submitting scholarly papers or creative pieces. The only criteria was that the piece had to have been graded higher than a B in any class. Other requirements for initiation include being in their fifth college semester, and being an English major or minor in the upper 35% of their class. Currently 4 of the Aquinas chapter’s eight members are new initiates.

As part of the initiation ceremony, each new member read a week of original creative literature to the rest of the group. Of the initiation, Assistant Professor of English and advisor Miriam Pederson said, “It was a lively initiation because it was all creative works.”

Lively has indeed been the word to describe the Aquinas chapter over the past few years, mainly because of the introduction of the Lit Writ Club. The club is an organization that includes LAMBDA IOTA Tau members. Their main focus is on the reading and writing of literature, and also the appreciation of fine performances. If you’re interested in LAMBDA IOTA Tau or the Lit Writ Club, call their faculty advisor, Miriam Pederson, on how to get involved.
Decem ber 6, 1995

CAVA Sets Up Giving Tree for Charity
by Erin Flynn
Times Contributing Writer

Are you interested in helping out those less fortunate than you this holiday season? CAVA is striving to make the holidays a little brighter for families, and you can help.

The Advent Giving Tree is located in the lower level of Wege. The tree is decorated with assorted paper ornaments in the form of gift ideas. Participation is simple. All you need to do is choose a paper ornament from the tree and purchase what it reads. Another giving option is to donate any of the following: children and adults' socks, mittens, gloves, hats, scarfs, and underwear. Personal items such as toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, hairbrushes, or laundry soap are also acceptable, as well as a non-perishable food item such as canned goods, boxed noodles, peanut butter, jelly, juice, or cookies. Just place your unwrapped gift under the Giving Tree anytime between December 1st and December 20th.

Departments, residence hall floors, program houses, clubs, individuals, and groups of friends can also get involved in these great giving opportunities. CAVA is also sponsoring the Holiday Food Basket Project. This program lets groups adopt a family. If you want to get your group involved in this call Stephanie at extension 4109. Your group will be provided with a list of items needed. Items for the basket will range in cost from $30 to $40. During the week of December 11, you get to deliver the food to your adopted family.

CAVA provides simple ways to spread some cheer this holiday season that won't put a dent in your schedule or your pocket. Please take advantage of everything CAVA has done and participate in their advent giving opportunities.

"It is important to realize that there are less fortunate people in our surrounding community," said CAVA coordinator Stephanie Langstaff. "The holidays are an especially important time to give some of what we have to those who have nothing."

__________________________________________________

Wednesday, November 29 brought the induction of the first members of the Aquinas Chapter of the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society. This honor society recognizes academic achievement in adult students. The following members of the Iota Iota have been recognized for their 3.6 GPA:

Peter Albertini
Susan Barr
Sandra Bodley
Caitlin Breitner
Krista Davis
Richard Davis
James Emperor
Janet Giberson
Debra Heuss
Susan Holland
Dana Jenkins
Mary Kwiatkowski
Ronald Lemmon
Terri Nausieda
Jean Raymer
Michael Schmedicke
Gayl Stout
Laura Good

Mary Griggs
Paget Seymour-Helman
Dorothy Chudle
Mary Dean
Trudy Evans
Jeanne Troybienki
Monica Tyler
Linda Westbrook
April Evans
Mary Simot

Art Exhibit Showcases Faculty Talent

"Lineage II" by Dana Freeman

"Brahms Twice" by James Karsina

"Secrets" by Ron Pederson

Photo Showcase by Andy Pieper

THE AQUINAS TIMES IS LOOKING FOR WRITERS
NEWS, SPORTS, FEATURES, ENTERTAINMENT
GREAT EXPERIENCE!
CALL X4106 FOR INFORMATION
Do you have a lead foot? Have you been asked for your driver’s license and proof of insurance one too many times? Our prayers for higher speed limits, thanks to the U.S. Congress, have not fallen on deaf ears. But even though we love to recreate the Road Warrior movies every time we get behind the wheel doesn’t mean that it necessarily good for us, there are negative repercussions we must consider.

Anyone who has ever driven on the highways around Grand Rapids will quickly realize that whoever designed them must have been on drugs. A prime example is the infamous S-curve which looks like it was fashioned by someone on an acid trip using an Etch-a-Sketch. It would be utter suicide to increase the speed limit here or anywhere around such hazardous roads. It doesn’t take a genius to realize that people drive 65 miles and hit the brakes to avoid taking a bath in the Grand River. If the speed limit was raised to 65 or 70 (from the current 55 on urban freeways) people would tend to enter the downtown area at speeds in excess of 75 miles per hour, which would make an already bad problem a lot worse. Consider this quote from Traffic Engineer Brian Maki from the Michigan Department of Transportation. “We don’t think we’ll see an adverse effect in safety if you raise those (urban) roads to 65 after a field investigation of all the engineering aspects.” I have to wonder if this man has ever visited Grand Rapids where the roads weren’t designed by engineers but instead by the combined efforts of this area’s kindergarten students. The basic fact that our freeways were not designed to handle high speeds is easily apparent and therefore any increase in the posted speed limit is not a good idea.

It’s pretty much an unwritten rule that when you’re traveling in a 55 mph. zone chances are that you’re not going 55. Ask yourself this question: If the speed limit was raised to 70 mph would you drive at or below the posted speed limit? Most of us, myself included, tend to believe that there is an unwritten “code of the road.” This says that if you’re in the neighborhood of 5-10 mph over the speed limit your chances of being pulled over aren’t really that high. If the speed limit was raised there would be an initial period where people, as a whole, would tend to stay around the posted limits. But as time wears on people would get used to “crawling along” at 70 mph and would start to drive 75, 80, or maybe even 90 miles per hour. This is dangerous even if most people are traveling at the same speeds. All it takes is one person going 50 mph in a situation like this and then we’ve got real problems.

People love to point out that cars today are so technologically advanced that they are able to easily handle higher speeds. This is probably true but it can also be deceiving. Cars with double wishbone suspension, anti-lock brakes, power steering, or whatever other knick-knacks have an intoxicating effect, and make the driver think they are going slower than they really are. This is a problem because, although technology has changed dramatically in the past 30 years, human reflexes have not. It still takes us the same amount of time to slow down when we have one of those famous “white knuckled” drivers in front of us, or when Bambi decides to cross the road. If we’re zinging along at 80 mph then the time we have to react is cut down and inevitably more accidents will occur.

There are some highways in Michigan where raising the speed limit to 70 wouldn’t be an earth-shattering experience, but these tend to be farther north and away from heavily urbanized areas. If the Michigan legislature decides to raise the speed limit on a road-by-road basis then this will be in the best interests of this state’s drivers. If not, then there will be a whole lot more people taking an unexpected swim in the Grand River, which is not an entirely pleasant experience.

Last week, President Clinton lifted the federal speed limit on expressways and gave the states the right to set their own speed limits. Considering the fact that the majority of the population ignores the speed limit anyway, I don’t think that this is such a big deal.

Opponents may argue that the death rate in accidents will go up and this will cause insurance rates to go up, which will hurt all of us. I remember the same people claiming the same thing a few years back when Michigan raised its speed limit on rural expressways to 65 mph. Fortunately, they were wrong then and death rates haven’t increased.

People are going to drive as fast as they feel comfortable driving. While this does pose a risk to the others on the road they are traveling, it is a personal choice on how confident one is with their own driving skills. To put a universal limit on how fast a driver should travel is ridiculous because there are people out there who are safe drivers at 80 mph and there are also some people who are unsafe at 30 mph.

The fact that we spend as much money on enforcing the speed limit that we do shows how warped our priorities are. The Grand Rapids Press did an article last year in which they showcased the new radar gun which the State Police have developed. It cost over $2 million to research and develop this device which is not detected by radar detectors. Each gun also costs around $20,000 to put in each police car. While each police car is certainly not equipped with one of these new high-tech guns, it is interesting that when we get the money, we will be spending it on these “speed readers.” Of all the problems in our society, do we really need to spend the money on technology and fund the manpower to detect and hunt down the root of all evil—speeders? Somehow I think that money could be spent on more important programs. You could put an awful lot of 18-year old drug dealer/collage with that amount of money.

As citizens, think of the possibilities of no speed limits on some highways. Adjust the space between cars for stopping time and the trip to Detroit from Grand Rapids is suddenly less than an hour and a half. Driving could become a recreation. High speeds are undoubtedly a great natural rush for the young and testosterone driven. I foresee Spring Break mecca on rural highways where we college kids could pay $25 to drive a cherry red Corvette for 30 minutes at speeds of 130-150 mph. While certainly accidents will still occur here and there, it may be safer than spending that $25 on a vial of cocaine or bag of pot. Maybe we could stop funding the police on highways and use that money to begin developing a mass transit system. We wouldn’t have to worry about speeders if we all eventually traveled from place to place on a high speed train which hovered in the air, suspended there and moved along the track by the forces of magnets. This is certainly an expensive system but would be enormously beneficial to the environment and also cost efficient to consumers.

The fact is, we are worrying too much about how fast people are traveling in their own cars. In places where it is feasible, such as highways and rural roads, to construct their speed is ludicrous and usually, unsuccessful.

The Times welcomes guest editorials or ideas for the "Point/Counterpoint" page. Contact x4106 for info. (Andy and Eric often get tired of beating on each other...)
Budgeting Your Education: The Facts About Student Loans

By Eric VanGessel
Times News Editor

As students, we are constantly bombarded with choices regarding the financial woes of our college education. Unfortunately for most, the cost of tuition is simply too high for they themselves, their parents, or a combination of the two to afford. Therefore, many students tend to choose a college that not only matches their individual preferences, but also one that tends to be the most affordable.

In the past ten years, government funding for higher education has changed dramatically. Between 1992 and 1994, federally guaranteed student loans have grown by a whopping 69%, swelling to well over $18.9 billion. This represents a fundamental shift in the way government helps those students in a money-bind to finance a college education. In 1992, the federal government (which used to be the most popular form of aid) to federally guaranteed student loans.

The switch is primarily in response to exponential growth in tuition that has occurred in the nation’s colleges and universities. Another, and perhaps stronger, reason why loans have become so popular is the fact that Congress recently removed the ceiling that allowed parents to borrow only up to the total cost of four years of college, without regard to family need.

What compounds this problem is the lethargy with which lawmakers are coming to realize that an increasing number of students are unable to finish their degrees in the traditional four years. Also, in the recent Republican proposal to decrease funding for higher education, proposed cutbacks come in the form of further elimination of grants, leaving only loans.

Many note that the result of this borrowing will be an entire generation of graduates experiencing enormous debts, the likes of which have never been seen before. The ramifications are yet to be seen, but one thing is sure, repayment of debt will constitute a significant portion of future income.

For those contemplating graduate school the problem is (you guessed it) even worse. Pay special attention to the following general figures if you think grad school may be in the works for you:

• Many students, upon finishing a graduate degree, can find themselves anywhere from $25,000 to $50,000 in debt.
• At 8% interest spread over ten years it would amount to roughly $644 a month.
• For those administering law schools, here’s your not-so-money situation. Typically, law students take out a loan covering the cost of school, room, and board, and even some miscellaneous spending. This is due in large part to the inability of those pursuing such degrees to hold down any type of significant employment while in school. With costs averaging around $35,000 a year, payments can amount to around $1500 a month upon graduation.
• If one takes it to the extreme and analyzes the potential cost of med-school they will see that total loan amounts can be in excess of $100,000, which will require repayment terms around $1000 a month spread over a similar period.

The effects of such high amounts of debt are just now being felt and according to experts like Tony Hartle, Vice President of Governmental Relations at the American Council, they will begin show themselves in many painful ways in the near future. Among the most serious is the general trend toward moving away from lower paying careers, such as education. This also may deter many from seeking advanced degrees altogether.

Hartle further explains that many students simply fail to realize the amounts they will have to pay upon graduation. According to Hartle and the American Council’s Fred J. Galloway, many students simply do not understand the terms of their loans. Many are even surprised to learn that they have to repay the principle plus interest.

This was something graduate students have traditionally been exempt from paying. That grace however, could soon become a thing of the past. Congress is considering the elimination of these exceptions on student loans for those pursuing higher degrees. Right now the government pays the interest while graduate students are in school. Cutting this break would push the cost for many, past the point of affordability.

For students who contend that they have little choice but to incur the cost of their loans, the only alternative is to forgo college all together which, to many, is tantamount to giving up their peace.

Many students contend that they have little choice but to incur the cost of their loans. The fact remains, however, that a vast majority of us rely directly on student loans to finance our higher education, a trend that seems to be growing with little or no hope of changing in the near future.
Alright, now what's the deal with these aliens from outer space? Why, if they are so hyperintelligent, do they keep allowing us stupid Earthlings to recover their dead bodies and make films of their spacecraft? You know what I'm referring to—the latest hot topic on videocassette since Rodney King and the Zapruder film—the ALIEN AUTOPSY? SEE an Alpha Centaurian's insides, GASP at those strange, probing, oval-shaped (and lifeless) eyes, LET YOUR SKIN CRAWL when you count six (yes, six!) fingers! SHRIEK WITH FEAR AS—

Pardon me for interrupting, but what the hell is this? Grainy film footage of scientists wrapped in alien-proof coffins suits cutting open a little bulb-headed, multi-oid characteristics—two eyes, a head, a torso—creative sight; have you ever noticed how all these supposed aliens always have human-oid characteristics—two eyes, a head, a torso?—among the people who watch this stuff? Only one conclusion can be reached: people are obsessed with the unknown. Most of us can admit to being fascinated with the unexplainable; however, if it is eventually explained, all the fascination is gone. UFO's, ESP, the Loch Ness Monster, Spam—why don't we just leave it alone? It's more fun to think even Spock would come to this logical conclusion.

Sure, we all have unexplainable events that happen in our lives. Strange "coincidences" that quite possibly aren't coincidences, seeing strange apparitions, a giant Happy Meal box with blinking lights hanging on your house, maybe we should just let these things be, and they might eventually explain themselves.

The only statement I can make is: I don't know. Let it be. I'm a firm subscriber that, and I'm paraphrasing a Calvin & Hobbes strip here, there is firm proof that intelligent extraterrestrial life exists, solely because they haven't tried to contact us, the stupid Earthlings.

THE Crossword

ACROSS
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
1. Leaves out
2. Arose in a rage
3. Scared
4. How? (in holiday)
5. Exchange
6. Pink in peril
7. 16 cats
8. A Bridge over Troubled Water
9. Whipped
10. Meta
11. Garb
12. Unexplained
13. Dark
14. Religious belief
15. Holiday word
16. Painting on metal
17. Make amends
18. Shelf life
19. Inspire

DOWN
1. Space
2. Rone
3. Mrs. Nick
4. Charles
5. Nullifies a correction
6. They attract
7. Opera voice
8. Allen's
9. They say
10. Null

ANSWERS

4. Bedroom piece
5. Police
6. Special account
7. Business
8. Mongolia
9. "I'm a rat"
10. Fertile team
11. Dinosaur
12. Hoarfrost
13. Amphibian
14. Halibut
15. Gi
16. Impair
17. Brought on
18. Tracker's help
19. Teacher's aide

THE Crossword

WANTED!!
WE ARE THE TIMES, LOSING OUR BELOVED COMPANION, CURTWOZNIAK, TO THE IRELAND PROGRAM NEXT SEMESTER. THEREFORE, WE NEED SOMEONE TO FILL HIS SHOES AS FEATURES EDITOR. INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD CALL X4106 FOR INFORMATION AND TO SET UP AN INTERVIEW. HELP MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE--WORK FOR THE TIMES!

December 6, 1995
PAGE 6

THE AQUINAS TIMES 1995-1996

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Assistant Editor
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AQUINAS TIMES
1607 ROBINSON RD, S.E.
GRAND RAPIDS, Ml
49506
(LOCATED UPTAIRS IN THE COOK CARRIAGE HOUSE)
PHONE: (616) 459-8281
EXT. 4106
In the last four weeks, we have heard much news coming directly from the front lines of the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia. This has given me cause to review the federal budget discussions. As far as I can tell, not many people care about (let alone understand) the latest efforts to overhaul the budget.

It is a sad reality.

After fifteen years of lip service to the great injustices and terrible consequences of federal debt, both parties have finally agreed to undertake the project of balancing the books by 2002, whatever that means.

I would guess, by now, as the current political power players carve out their futures while carving up our bank accounts, a few of us might actually care. But in fact, the most repeated poll that I have seen in the last two weeks has been the American public's perception of who is to blame for the current budget problems. Who is to blame?

Who the hell cares. In fact, whoever comes out on top in that poll should be given due credit. For fifteen years, all Americans have sat back and watched as an irresponsible government, under the guise of defense, social responsibility, supply-side economics, and other excuses, have spent our future away. Then, when a coalition of Republicans and Democrats come together to solve the greatest fiscal problem since 1933, we only look for someone to blame.

No credit goes to Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, or any other self-proclaimed budget cutter, all of whom act more interested in their own image come November of 1996 than they do in the future.

At different points this year, I have supported the work of both Clinton and Gingrich, for their efforts to do something about this mess. But after the past few weeks of showmanship, the two look convincingly like the politicians of old (no matter what Bill's approval rating books like). Clinton, in this credit, has supported many programs that are progressively working to build for the future and not just maintain the past. But the best thing he can do for our future is work to balance the budget.

I hope that after all of the past few weeks' efforts to make the other side look worse, there will actually be something worthwhile, in the form of a balanced budget.

But if all it amounts to is another round of "Let's win the latest poll and worry about the future another day," then I don't care who Clinton is running against, for they could probably do it better. Enough is enough.

Our system of checks and balances has become a shady image of checks with clearly no thought of balance. The current budget problems will not cause the collapse of the United States, but it could certainly lead to the loss of our economic well being and our international leadership. The real injustice of this is that it probably would not happen until we "college kids" are about to take over the powers and responsibilities of the country.

In fact, in 2015 (when I am only 41), under the current system, every penny of tax revenue will go to fund one of exactly three government programs: Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

This means we will not be paying taxes for one soldier to defend our country, not one grant to renovate an elementary school, not one subsidy to help a kid through college, and not one dollar to help pick the homeless man off Division off the streets. In only twenty years, every last dollar will go to our so-called entitlement programs. Does anyone care, yet? Do I think we do?

We pay politicians (but not in 2015) our tax money to plan for the future, and to most, the future has been the next election. At this point, there is one thing I don't care about, whether they have a D or an R behind their name - support the politician who is worried about his or her next election. This is 2015 and he or she could probably do it better. Enough is enough.

Sincerely,

Gary Sudborough
Bellflower, CA

P.S.—This letter should in no way be considered a condemnation of the sacrifices of American soldiers, or the various military interventions of the past fifty years. The point of this letter is simply to point out the amazing lack of concern for America's future that has been exhibited by so many of our elected officials.

The decision to go to war in 2002 should have been made by a truly bipartisan government, with the focus of a balanced future. In 2015 and beyond, we should be able to focus on the needs of our current generation, without the distraction of a government that is more concerned with the needs of the next election cycle.
X-mas Tree Lore

For thousands of years around the time of December 25, people have dragged evergreens into their homes. Today almost every American house has a “Christmas Tree,” some for religious reasons, others for cultural ones. Many of us are unaware of the history behind our actions. The earliest recorded instance of a “Christmas Tree” or “Evergreen” being decorated in mid winter was in 1510 in Latvia, which is part of the former Soviet Union. It was recorded that the tree was decorated, and burned. In 1531 in Germany, the modern custom of decorating Christmas trees was first recorded. Here evergreens are taken into the house and used to protect the home from evil spirits. It was believed that their ability to stay green all year long was a sacred characteristic. From this point on the “Christmas” tree became a seasonal ritual in almost every country around the world. At one time, the Roman Catholic church banned the use of Christmas trees for their connection with old pagan solstice rituals. However, the tree was such a strong part of the culture that its use continued until the Catholic church adopted it as a sanctioned Christian symbol, despite its pagan origins.

In the celebration of this history, the Aquinas Women’s Studies Center and the Women’s Studies Club will be co-sponsoring an evergreen tree for the holidays. Aquinas will host English professor Rusty Potts as a guest speaker on the origins of the Christmas Tree in the Ballroom this week.

In the true spirit of giving alive its essential meaning of the true meaning of the season, why not look into a new, very special kind of gift made possible by Aquinas College’s Haiti Connection program. As part of the program’s objectives for 1995-96 school year, the Haiti Connection set out to “Establish a sister-school relationship with The Andre Pierre Community Trade School (located in Borel, a small village in the Arichon Valley of Haiti).” That objective has already been met. After visiting the school earlier this year, Father John Grathwohl (right) posed with Domon (left), a guide, and Principal Gaston (center) of the Borel School.

The Academic Achievement Center in AB 320 needs to fill several volunteer/ for credit/ paid positions in the following areas: 1. Tutors in all subjects 2. Individuals to organize study groups in specific courses 3. Readers for the disABled 4. Peer to peer coordinating internship If interested please schedule an appointment with Karen Broekstra at extension 3711.


Wanted!!! Individuals, Student Organizations to Promote SPRING BREAK EARLY MONEY and FREE TRIPS CALL INTER-CAMPUS PROGRAMS 1-800-327-6013

Music Industry Internship National music Marketing/ Management company based in L.A. seeks RESPONSIBLE, OUTGOING music/marketing intern in Grand Rapids, sophomore or above in college. Know your market well and be VERY into NEW, ALTERNATIVE music. Please call (213)368-4738 for more info.

Giving Something Special: The Haiti Connection

The Christmas Season. A time for people around the world to reflect on what is truly important: family, friends, and of course, a return to good old fashioned American materialism. Instead of worrying about whether or not the tie that you bought Uncle Chester is going to match the suspenders that he hasn’t worn since he ripped through the paper you so meticulously wrapped them in last year, why not open your mind to a new alternative.

Father John Grathwohl (right) poses with Domon (left), a guide, and Principal Gaston (center) of the Borel School.
"Indie Rock" Infiltrates Cook Carriage House

Toy Story

by Duffy Cavanaugh

Times Contributing Writer

Tom Hanks, winner of a handful of Oscars, and Tim Allen, '90s television funny-man. What do these two have in common? They are both co-starring in the new movie Toy Story—well at least their voices are. Toy Story is a new adventure in virtual reality. It is the first movie that is fully animated by computer imaging. It's a delight to see computers do their thing and the story gets a laugh as well.

Woody (Hanks) is a western toy action figure who's got it all. He's the favorite toy in the room and with that, he is the chairman of all the toys. When the kid leaves the room, an all-clear call goes out and the toys come to life, and a whole new community is found among all the toys in the room. But wait! It's the boy's birthday and he's having a party. With the lookouts posted, the toys left in the room find out that there is a new toy coming into play (no pun intended).

The kids from the party all come in the room to play with the new toy. Buzz Light-Year (Allen) then gets set down with a flourish and the kids all leave the room for cake and ice cream. Buzz wakes up and believes he is the real favorite toy in the room and with that, he is the chairman of all the toys. When the kid leaves the room, an all-clear call goes out and the toys come to life, and a whole new community is found among all the toys in the room.

Woody, however, has better ideas. In fear of losing his spot in the kid's heart, he is bent on downplaying Buzz in any way he can. From here the adventure really begins. With all the toys giving their two-bits it really adds to the enjoyment of this film.

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Buzz Light-Year and mistakenly thinks that he's on a foreign planet, so he goes a laugh as well.

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**HOPS AND BARLEY**

Thomas Manley  
The August Brewing Company

With a picture of a manley-looking, muscle bound fellow gripping a frothing mug of lager on the label of Thomas Manley amber lager, you may expect this beer to be just another in a long line of brews aimed at those oh-so masculine types who could care less about heads, aromas and distinct taste, but rather, whether or not the alcohol content is more than Lite Ice. On the contrary, though, this beer was a pleasant surprise when a fellow staff member coaxed me (twist my arm) into trying a pour.

Unlike many of the microbrews that are popping up across the country — from Soho to Boston and beyond — Thomas Manley has potential to become a favorite of both the casual and the more serious beer drinker.

Brewed in the cozy little village of Harbor Springs, MI (up near Petoskey, for the geographically challenged), this amber lager has a deep, rich red appearance and a nice, lacy head when poured properly. The aroma is decent — a somewhat sweet and spicy scent — and the flavor is kind to the taste buds with its smooth, sweet and well-rounded taste.

Thomas Manley goes down smooth, with a pleasant aftertaste, and is a great beer for Christmas Eve or Christmas day dinner, especially when served at just a bit cooler than room temperature. (*** 1/2)

By Jerome Ford  
Times Contributing Writer

*Remember to catch Grand Rapids sensation, alternative group TROLL FOR TROUT on Thursday, December 7 in the Cook Carriage House at 8:30 pm. The show is FREE and is part of the Thursday Night Carriage House Concert Series, sponsored by Programming Board and WAQU. Also, as part of the series, Aquinas' own DOMESTIC PROBLEMS will be performing and holding their debut CD preview party at 9:30 on Thursday, December 14. This show is also FREE and promises to be a party you will never forget.

**UNDERGROUND CHUCK**

All right, forget the two-for-one deals of Little Caesar's or the late night "Aquinas special" from Domino's (although we college students do love our dorm room staples dearly), get ready for authentic "za" at its best. And guess what, you don't have to swim the ocean to Italy to get it (although that may help you work up a mighty appetite).

That's right folks, tucked away in East Grand Rapids' own cozy little Gas Light Village district is Pallino's Woodfired Pizzeria (located just a few doors down from 7-Eleven). Pallino's conjures up original, traditional Italian pizzas, as well as some of our "Americanized" versions of the delicacy.

With Pallino's wide range of toppings — including everything from pepperoni and roasted mushrooms to oven-roasted chicken and calamari — and a variety of cheeses, including feta and goat cheese. A Pallino's woodfired special has a taste that many will include performances by the VOCAL JAZZ, JAZZ ENSEMBLE, PERCUSSION, CHORUS, and the HANDBELLS group.

**COMING EVENTS**

- Dec 7: Coffeehouse Concert at Bethel United Church of Christ, 7:00 pm.
- Dec 8: AQSA's Annual Holiday Show at Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, 7:00 pm.
- Dec 9: Winter Wonder League at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, 7:30 pm.
- Dec 10: Christmas Caroling at Aquinas College, 4:00 pm.
- Dec 11: Annual Black & Blue Ball at Aquinas College, 9:00 pm.

**MILKHOUSE BRAND**

Bred to be Milked

by Joe Thuerkauf  
Times Contributing Writer

I have to credit most of the stars this time around to the fact that this band, Milkhouse, is a gathering of local talent. There are many musical influences expressed on the release of Milkhouse's sophomore effort. To avoid insulting the band, I will refrain from listing them, but let's say MTY would be proud.

There were only a couple of really driving songs this time around, but there's no reason to take my opinion as gospel: I reviewed the tape while working from 3-6am. My judgment was a bit numb, but I can say that the music didn't exactly keep me alert—which is definitely a legitimate basis for criticism. I did think "Pipe" and "Bl Lay" were pretty good, but the song "ID Structure" sounds just like "Bl Lay" and the lyrics to "Pipe" seemed kind of cliché. However, I recommend that you give it your own chance to be good or bad—Milkhouse isn't exactly my cup of tea. (**1/2)

**ON AND AROUND CAMPUS**

* In other campus news, the MIDDAY MUSICAL MADNESS series continues on December 7, at 12:20 pm in room 113 of the AMC. Also, check out the ANNUAL COLLAGE CONCERT on December 10, at 4:00 pm in the Kretschmer Recital Hall. This show will be sure to show off the many talents of Aquinas music students and will include performances by the VOCAL JAZZ, JAZZ ENSEMBLE, PERCUSSION, CHORUS, and the HANDBELLS group.

**CD REVIEWS**

Bruce Springsteen  
The Ghost of Tom Joad

by Jeff Maloney  
Times Business Manager

Being a big fan of The Boss, I couldn't wait to get my hands on his new CD. When I walked into Vinyl Solution to buy the CD, I didn't even know the name of the album, or where to find it. Obviously I looked in the new-release section and there it was. At first I had to take a second glance at it to make sure it was the same Bruce Springsteen that I had heard my older brothers listen to as I grew up. Sure enough it was, but it didn't look like anything that Bruce had ever put out before. But, being the big fan that I am, I had faith that Bruce would not let me down.

After putting out classic albums such as Born to Run, Darkness on the Edge of Town, Born in the U.S.A. Lucky Town, and Better Days, I was looking forward to another set of all-American tunes talking about the blue-collar worker who just got back from Vietnam and is trying to put his life back together. Well, I was right about the content of the songs, but not about them being classic Bruce songs.

As I listened to the title track, "The Ghost of Tom Joad," I was taken back to the days of old, when the harmonica was a given in almost every one of Bruce's songs. The song starts out slow, but it will definitely be a Bruce classic. Unfortunately, songs 2-12 sound exactly like the first one. As I listened to the songs, I was hoping for something that would remind me of why I liked Bruce in the first place—songs like "Darlington County," "Working on the Highway," "Glory Days," "Born to Run," and "Dancing in the Dark." I found no such song. As I got to the final song, "My Best Was Never Good Enough," I was stunned to find that the song was so forgettable.

I guess my expectations were too high, and anything put out by the Boss that's not as good as his old stuff was bound to get a negative rating from me. Unless you are a die-hard Bruce fan, and I don't think there are many of you out there, don't plan on wasting ten dollars on this one. Nice try Bruce, maybe you should stick with the kind of music that won you so many adoring fans over the last 20 years. (**1/2)

Troll for Trout  
Perfect Existence

by Joe Thuerkauf

If asked how I would define the Grand Rapids area band Troll for Trout, I'd reply "intelligent adult contemporary." But I over looked TPF's unique fusion of acoustic driven rock with Steely Dan-esque jazz. Their album, Perfect Existence, was an arranged debut with just enough hooks to keep one entertained as lead singer Michael Crittenden discloses while composing. The song, "Bring on the Future," is a Midwestern rocker's definition of a great song; it combines meaningful lyrics ("This is your last chance on the future") with homegrown harmonies. The majority of the material on this is well-written and arranged, but a perfect existence this CD does not make.

The background vocals on Perfect Existence could be a little tighter, and the levels could be balanced a little more effectively. But this is merely a technical critique solely for you overly technical music snobs. The "average listener" side of me (the side that screams "Give me frosting!") finds this disc intelligent and entertaining. (***)
Men's Basketball Bounces to .500

On Wednesday, November 29, the Aquinas men's basketball team hosted the Lakers of Grand Valley. The starting lineup of Brandon Lowe, Jim Richards, Troy Wilson, Joe Crittendon, and Bill Lengemann came out strong and ready to play in the first half. Richards hit a baseline jumper, Wilson found Lowe for two quick buckets and Crittendon had two from downtown to give the Saints a 12-6 lead. The men continued to set the pace on both ends and control the score until GVCSU took their first lead (15-16) with twelve minutes of play left in the lights, but not enough to close the gap. Avid Saints fan Travis Hardin noticed "The Saints came out less aggressive in the second half and couldn't come back. Grand Valley just wanted it more."

Freshman Michael Jackson also compared the two halves, "In the first half we were intense, aggressive, and ready to play and in the second we slowly fell apart, we became flat."

The Lakers outscored the Saints 54-31 in the second half and won 89-63. Besides outscoring Aquinas, GVCSU outrebounded AQ with 18, 14, and 10 points, respectively. Leading rebounders were Richards and Jackson with seven each.

Top scorers for the Saints in the non-conference game were Lowe, Wilbon, and Crittendon with 16, 15, and 10 points, respectively. The Saints fan Travis Hardin noticed "The Saints had a very positive and much needed leadership for Federov and fellow Soviet forward Slava Kozlov. To illustrate this fact, the five Russians (Federov, Larionov, Kozlov, Konstantinov, and Fetisov) accounted for seven goals and fifteen points in a recent 11-1 annihilation of the Montreal Canadiens. This performance raised Detroit's offense to the third best in the league."

In addition to the offense, the Red Wings have enjoyed some very inspired and solid net-minding from goaltender Chris Osgood. Osgood, as his teammates have dubbed him, has been key in placing Detroit first in the league in goals against average. They have even been key in placing Detroit first in the league in goals against average. They have even been the key in placing Detroit first in the league in goals against average. They have even been the key in placing Detroit first in the league in goals against average. They have even been the key in placing Detroit first in the league in goals against average.

Already this season, the Red Wings have made large strides in regaining the confidence of their fans. The recent acquisition of Igor Larionov from the San Jose Sharks has provided Detroit with a very positive and much needed leadership for Federov and fellow Soviet forward Slava Kozlov. To illustrate this fact, the five Russians (Federov, Larionov, Kozlov, Konstantinov, and Fetisov) accounted for seven goals and fifteen points in a recent 11-1 annihilation of the Montreal Canadiens. This performance raised Detroit's offense to the third best in the league.

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IM Volleyball Heats Up
by Angie Walden
Times Contributing Writer

It is cold outside, but inside things are starting to heat up. It is now nearing the middle of the intramural volleyball season and teams are competing for one of four births into the playoffs. IM volleyball consists of eleven teams, but only a select four will make into the championship round. The teams play on Sundays, Mondays, and Wednesdays at 9:00, 10:00, or 11:00 in the field house.

This year IM volleyball has eleven teams. There are six players for each team on the court at one time—three guys and three girls. Although some teams have more serious and competitive attitudes, fun is the priority. As a spectator, Julie Salmonson said, "Each team plays hard and has a lot of fun." Dana Samotis, from Shuck the Corn, said, "We have a lot of fun playing and we also have a lot of fun winning." Katie Murphy, from The Units, stated, "We aren't the best team, but we play hard and have fun and that's all that matters."

If you ever want to go and watch some volleyball and cheer on your fellow class mates, go to the next game. As for the teams, keep up the good work and we can't wait to see who will be in the final four championship.

INTRAMURAL VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

Team won lost pct.
1. Finger Lickin' Good 5 0 1.000
2. Shuck the Corn 4 1 .800
3. The Spankers 3 1 .750
4. Bennett's Buddies 5 2 .714
5. Spiked 3 2 .600
6. Brooke's Bombers 3 3 .500
7. Free Ballers 2 2 .500
8. The Unit! 2 4 .333
9(t). That's All You 1 4 .200
9(t). Stuff in the Mouth 1 4 .200
11. AQ Staff 0 2 .000

Ho Ho Ho...

Once again Christmas time is upon us. Children are busy putting their wish lists together, while Santa is busy figuring out how to deliver all of the Christmas goods. The same is true in the world of sports. In the spirit of Christmas, this column will demonstrate what's on the minds of our favorite sports teams and what they can come to expect. Let us begin!

Team: Detroit Lions
Christmas Wish: To win a playoff game.
How Santa Delivers: Barry Sanders, Scott Mitchell, Herman Moore, Brett Perriman, and the rest of the offense lead Detroit to 6 straight victories to finish out the regular season. Then in the first game of the playoffs, the Lions "D" shows up and the Lions beat the Green Bay Packers 24-14.

Team: Michigan State Spartans Football
Christmas Wish: A win in the Independence Bowl
How Santa Delivers: Tony Banks throws for three touchdowns and Mr. Greene runs for another as the Spartans knock off the LSU Tigers 28-21.

Team: Detroit Pistons
Christmas Wish: The playoffs in April
How Santa Delivers: Grant Hill scores 25 a game. Joe Dumars stays healthy. Allan Houston continues to shine, while Tho Ratliff and Otis Thorpe pull down the boards. Terry Mills hits another game winner, this time over a mountain, and the Pistons are back in the playoffs.

Team: Northwestern Wildcats
Christmas Wish: To get to the Rose Bowl
How Santa Delivers: "Hail To The Victors" and an undefeated conference record.

Team: Michigan Wolverines Basketball
Christmas Wish: To get to the NCAA's Sweet Sixteen
How Santa Delivers: Traylor becomes Michigan's most productive freshman since Chris Webber. Sophomores Taylor, Ward and Baslon pick up their games in the tournament, and despite finishing 3rd in the Big Ten, the Wolverines get to the Sweet Sixteen before bowing out.

Team: Grand Rapids Mackers
Christmas Wish: To win the CBA title
How Santa Delivers: Ray Jackson and Charles Thomas continue to shine, and two mysterious newcomers bring the CBA title to Mackerville.

Team: Detroit Red Wings
Christmas Wish: The Stanley Cup
How Santa Delivers: Chris Osgood becomes the number one goalie and gives the Red Wings something they never had - dependability. Meanwhile, the high octane offense cannot be stopped. Yzerman scores the game winner and the Wings beat the Penguins in six.

Team: Detroit Tigers
Christmas Wish: Respectability
How Santa Delivers: Newly hired GM Randy Smith and a bunch of no-names keep the Tigers around the .500 mark, although nobody seems to care.

Person: Buster Mathis Jr.
Christmas Wish: A win over Tyson
How Santa Delivers: Due to Don King's suspension from Atlantic City, Tyson is not allowed to fight Mathis—or Mathis wins by forfeit.